

Women's Safety Guidebook

Staying Safe in Your Daily Life



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Created by:
Sikh Women's Aid

This safety guide has been created in collaboration with Kiran Johal, a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) activist in the West Midlands. This is in response to the fear and anxiety felt by women and girls across the West Midlands following a series of attacks against Sikh and Panjabi women.

We want every woman and girl to know that you are not alone, that your fear is valid, and that there are practical steps you can take to feel and be safer in this guide.

We refuse to let fear silence or weaken us; instead we will turn that fear into power, solidarity, and action.



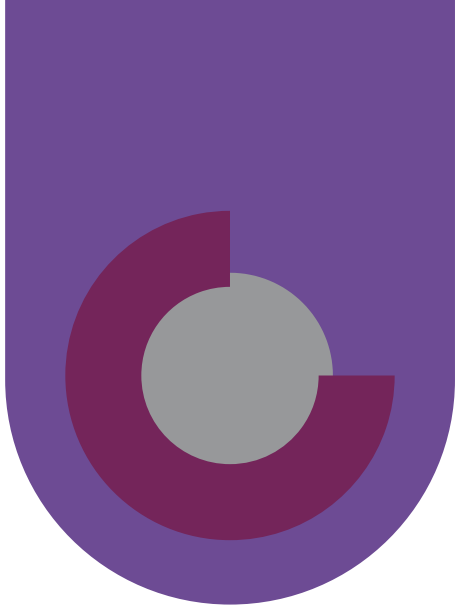


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Useful Contacts

When walking **Alone**



Walking alone should never make you feel afraid. These steps can help you stay aware, visible, and in control:

- **Stay alert and confident** — walk with purpose, keep your head up, and limit distractions like loud music or texting.
- **Stick to well-lit, busy routes** — avoid shortcuts through alleys, car parks, or parks after dark.
- **Share your live location with someone you trust** using WhatsApp, iMessage, or Find My Phone.
- **Keep essentials handy** — have your phone or keys ready, not buried in your bag. Keys can be used to make noise if needed.
- **Trust your instincts** — if something doesn't feel right, cross the road, change direction, or go into a shop or petrol station.
- **Carry a personal alarm or whistle** to attract attention instantly.
- **Plan ahead** — know your route and tell someone what time to expect you.

Remember: Your safety comes first. It's okay to change your plans or ask for help.

When Driving

Safety doesn't stop once you're behind the wheel. Whether you're commuting or driving home at night, follow these simple habits:



- **Check your back seat** before getting into your car.
- **Lock your doors** as soon as you get in.
- **Avoid parking in dark or isolated areas** — choose spaces near entrances or under lighting whenever possible.
- **Stay aware of your surroundings** — if you feel uneasy, don't approach your vehicle until you're sure it's safe.
- **If you think you're being followed**, don't go home. Drive to a police station, hospital, or 24-hour shop and call 999 if you're in danger.
- **Keep your phone charged and accessible** in case of emergencies.



Your car should be a safe space — trust your instincts, stay alert, and never hesitate to seek help or change your route if something doesn't feel right.

When Using Taxis



When using taxi or rideshare services like Uber, Bolt, or private hire vehicles, take these precautions before and during your journey:

- **Check the driver and car details** match the app before getting in.
- **Sit in the back seat**, preferably diagonal from the driver.
- Share your trip details with a trusted friend or family member through the app or by text.
- **Avoid sharing personal information** such as your address, workplace, or social media with the driver.
- **Trust your gut** — if something feels off, end the trip in a safe, public place.
- **Use official apps only** and avoid accepting rides from unregistered drivers.

Remember: always know who's driving you. You're in control — it's okay to end a journey if it doesn't feel right.

When When Out Socialising

Going out should be enjoyable and safe. A few simple habits can protect you and your friends:



- **Keep an eye on your drink** — never leave it unattended or accept an open drink from someone else.
- **Go out together and leave together** whenever possible.
- **Plan your journey home** — know your last train or bus times or pre-book a trusted cab.
- **If you feel unwell or unsafe**, speak to bar staff or security and use the discreet code “Ask for Angela” to get help.
- **Avoid oversharing your location** on social media while out.
- **Trust your friends and yourself** — if one person doesn’t feel right about a situation, listen.



Remember: Enjoy yourself, but stay aware. If something feels unsafe, ask for help, your wellbeing is more important than politeness.

When Online



Online and digital safety is just as important as physical safety. Protect your privacy and digital wellbeing with these simple steps.

- **Only share your location** with people you know and trust.
- **Know your phone's emergency features** — both iPhone and Android allow you to quickly alert police or share your location silently.
- **Keep your emergency contacts updated** and easy to access.
- **Avoid posting your live location** publicly on Instagram, Snapchat, or other apps.
- **Use strong passwords** and privacy settings on your accounts.
- **Be cautious with personal information** — even seemingly small details (like your routine or address) can reveal more than you think.

Remember: Your digital space is your personal boundary too, protect it the same way you protect your physical one.

At Home **Safety Planning**



Your home should be your sanctuary. These small steps can help create a safer environment:

- **Lock all doors and windows**, even when you're home.
- **Use deadbolts or door chains** for added protection.
- **Add a door wedge or jammer** to your bedroom or main entrance if you live alone.
- **Install a peephole or video doorbell** to check who's at the door before opening it.
- **Keep spare keys only with trusted people** — not hidden outside.

Remember: Your home should feel secure and peaceful. Small actions make a big difference.

Making Your Home Look Occupied

If you live alone or are away from home, these tips can help deter unwanted attention:



- **Use light timers or smart plugs** to switch on lamps or the TV when you're out.
- **Keep curtains and blinds** closed at night so others can't see inside.
- **Avoid posting updates on social media** showing that you're home alone or away on holiday.
- **Ask a trusted neighbour or friend** to check in on your home if you'll be away for a while.



Remember: Creating the appearance that someone is home is a powerful deterrent. Keep your plans private when you're away or alone.

Strengthening Home Security



Extra security doesn't need to be expensive, it's about being prepared and visible.

- **Install a basic alarm or camera system**, even a small Wi-Fi model helps deter intruders.
- **Keep outdoor areas well-lit with** motion-sensor lights at doors and gardens.
- **Don't leave spare keys under mats or pots**; give them to someone you trust instead.
- **Label valuables discreetly** and record serial numbers where possible.

Visible safety measures protect you and your peace of mind. Good lighting, secure locks, and basic alarms go a long way to making your home safe and secure.

Being Smart About Visitors

Your front door is a boundary. You have every right to control who crosses it — no one should make you feel pressured to open your door.



- **Never open the door to strangers** without verifying who they are.
- **Use your peephole or camera** to see before answering.
- **Ask for identification** if someone claims to be from a company or delivery service.
- **If you're unsure, don't open the door** — genuine visitors will understand.
- **Report suspicious callers to the police** on 101 (non-emergency) or 999 if the threat escalates.



Remember: Trust your instincts. A safe “no” is always better than an uncertain “yes.”

Safety When Home Alone



Feeling safe starts with being prepared. A few simple habits can make you feel more secure:

- **Keep your phone charged** and close by.
- **Know emergency shortcuts** on your phone to reach 999 quickly.
- **Lock your bedroom door** at night if it helps you feel safer.
- **Have an escape plan** - know how you'd exit quickly during a fire or break-in.
- **Stay connected** - tell a trusted friend or family member if you're spending the evening alone.

Remember: Keep your phone close, know your emergency plan, and stay connected with people you trust. You are not alone.

Everyday Safety Habits

Safety isn't about fear, it's about awareness and empowerment. Here is a quick summary of key safety advice covered in this guide:



- **Don't share your address publicly** on social media or selling platforms.
- **Keep valuables out of sight** from windows.
- **Get to know your neighbours** - friendly connections mean extra eyes looking out for you.



- **Trust your instincts** - if something feels "off," listen to that feeling.
- **Call for help early** - you're never wasting anyone's time by asking for support.

Remember: Look out for one another, check in on friends. Turn fear into power. Awareness, confidence, and community are our protection.

About Sikh Women's Aid

Who we are

Sikh Women's Aid (SWA) is the UK's only by-and-for specialist support service led by trained Sikh and Panjabi professionals. We were founded in 2021 to ensure that Sikh and Panjabi women and girls across the UK, especially those experiencing or at risk of abuse, can access help that truly understands their culture, faith, and language. We exist to break the silence around abuse and to create safe spaces where women and girls can be heard, believed, and supported.



What We Do

We provide a culturally and faith-informed response to violence against women and girls, including:

- **Domestic Abuse** – physical, emotional, psychological, and financial abuse.
- **Sexual Abuse and Exploitation** – including sexual violence and grooming.
- **Faith-Based and Spiritual Abuse** – where positions of religious or community trust are misused to control, manipulate, or silence victims.
- **Advocacy and Crisis Support** – practical help with housing, police reporting, safeguarding, and legal advice referrals.
- **Emotional Support and Counselling** – through trained, trauma-informed staff who speak Panjabi, Hindi, and Urdu.
- **Education and Awareness** – workshops, community talks, and national research on gender, power, and abuse within Sikh and Panjabi communities.

We also work alongside statutory agencies, faith institutions, and other women's organisations to promote safeguarding and accountability within our communities.

West Midlands Support Agencies

West Midlands Police - Report hate crimes, non-emergencies, and access victim support.

☎ 999 (emergency) | 101 (non-emergency)

🌐 www.westmidlands.police.uk

Victim Support - West Midlands - Free, confidential emotional and practical support for victims and witnesses of crime.

☎ 0300 303 1977 (local) | 0808 16 89 111 (24/7 support line)

🌐 www.victimsupport.org.uk

Rape & Sexual Violence Project (RSVP) - Specialist RASSO service offering counselling and advocacy for survivors of sexual violence.

☎ 0121 643 4136

🌐 www.rsvporg.co.uk

Birmingham Mind - Mental health and wellbeing support across Birmingham and the West Midlands.

☎ 0800 019 8818

🌐 www.birminghammind.org

Black Country Mental Health - Community-based mental health and wellbeing support services across the Black Country.

☎ 01384 685060

🌐 www.blackcountrymentalhealth.org.uk

How to access support at Sikh Women's Aid

If you or someone you know needs support, you can reach us in confidence:

☎ **Helpline:** 0333 090 1220

✉ **Email:** info@sikhwomensaid.org.uk

🌐 **Website:** www.sikhwomensaid.org.uk

📍 Based in the West Midlands, serving Sikh Panjabi women and girls across the UK.



Keeping safe whilst Living life

ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਜੀਉਂਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਰਹਿਣਾ



DOWNLOAD HOLLIEGUARD PERSONAL SAFETY APP

ਹੌਲੀਗਾਰਡ (Hollie Guard) ਨਿੱਜੀ
ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਐਪ ਡਾਊਨਲੋਡ ਕਰੋ।



CARRY A PANIC ALARM WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES

ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ
ਇੱਕ ਪੈਨਿਕ ਐਲਾਰਮ ਰੱਖੋ।



COMPLETE OUR SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE

ਸਾਡਾ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨਾਵਲੀ
ਫਾਰਮ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰੋ।