

Tips for Taxi & Livery Drivers: Dealing with Workplace Violence



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call 1-800-352-4649 ext. 6418 or write to
the Western Iowa Tech Community
College at 4647 Stone Avenue, Sioux City,
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This booklet deals with workplace violence
and the risks to taxi and livery drivers.



Quiz Answers

- 1. False
- 2. True
- 3. True
- 4. True
- 5. True
- 6. Avoiding eye contact; hostile stare; snarling, looking angry, looking hostile; sudden movements; tensing of the body.
- 7. “I just started.” or “It’s been a slow day/night.”
- 8. How you look sends a definite message to others and implies that you should be treated professionally.
- 9. To make sure that someone didn’t leave something dangerous in the cab.
- 10. Make eye contact, smile, greet the passenger.

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Shocking Facts

Taxi and Livery drivers are 60 times more likely than other workers to be murdered while on the job!

183.8 out of every 1000 drivers have been victims of a nonfatal assault.

75% of workplace assaults are not reported.



Test Yourself

- 1. The majority of attacks occur when the driver is outside of the cab. T F
- 2. Risk factors include: working at night, dealing with strangers and working alone. T F
- 3. Shields have been shown to decrease attacks. T F
- 4. Failure to report acts of violence increases the risk. T F
- 5. It is a good idea to keep the doors locked when the cab is unoccupied. T F
- 6. List three (3) kinds of body language that may indicate a threat.
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
 - 3. _____
- 7. If a customer asks if you've been busy, you should respond with _____

- 8. Why is a professional appearance important? _____

- 9. Why is it important to check the back seat of your cab before your shift? _____

- 10. List ways that you can humanize your self:. _____

Answers on next page

Summary:

- Remember — it can happen to you!
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Be alert to passenger behaviors.
- Install and **USE** appropriate safety equipment.
- Look and act in a professional manner.
- Keep you vehicle clean and in good working order.
- Don't flash cash.
- Humanize yourself — make eye contact, smile, etc.
- Clarify destinations and know your city.
- In a violent or potentially violent situation — stay calm and cooperate.
- Report all acts and threats of violence.

Pattern of Attacks

There's a pattern:

- 94% of the attacks occur when the driver is inside the cab.
- 85% of the fatal injuries are gun shot wounds.
- 82% of the assaults occur at night.
- 74% of the deaths are due to head and neck injuries.
- 64% of the deaths are from gunshots to the head.
- 66% of the assailants are under age 20.
- 47% of the assailants act alone.
- 25% of the assailants are outside the cab.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, taxi drivers are victim to more violent assaults (184 per 1,000 workers) than any other occupation with the exception of police (306 per 1,000) and private security guards (218 per 1,000).

Why You're At Risk:

- Working with the public
- Working alone
- Dealing with strangers
- Working in high crime areas
- Working in isolated areas
- Language and cultural differences
- Working with cash
- Working at night
- Working long hours—creating fatigue



The public has a general disrespect for the profession, which often results in drivers being treated poorly.

What to do if . . .

5. **Keep your cool.** Maintain a calm, professional tone of voice. Swearing, yelling, pointing, etc. can aggravate a minor situation into a major conflict.



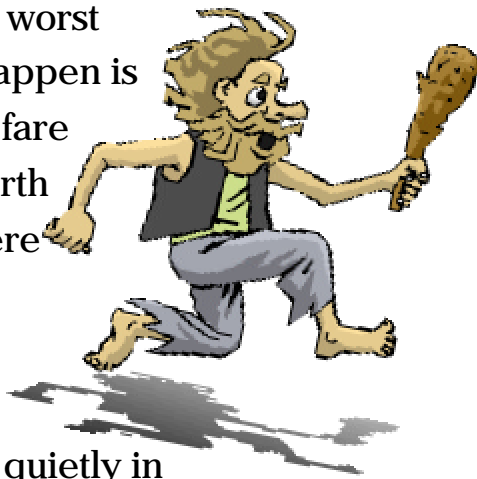
6. **If you are threatened with a weapon,** experts advise that you try to remain calm, behave in a cooperative manner and look for opportunities to get help.



No amount of money or property is worth risking your life!

What to do if . . .

1. **Use whatever emergency communication system you have** (trouble lights, code words with dispatchers, open mike, radio signals, etc.)
2. **Don't chase someone down if they fail to pay.** The worst thing that can happen is that you lose a fare — that is not worth your life or severe injury.
3. **When faced with an angry outburst** speak quietly in brief statements, it is OK to let them blow off steam.
4. **When dealing with a “Know It-All”, don't argue.** You can point out facts, but allow them to “save face.”



Why You're At Risk

Be alert to bystanders when you are dropping off. If one person hails you (or the call says it is one passenger), and more suddenly arrive — drive on.

Drivers often become complacent about safety measures.

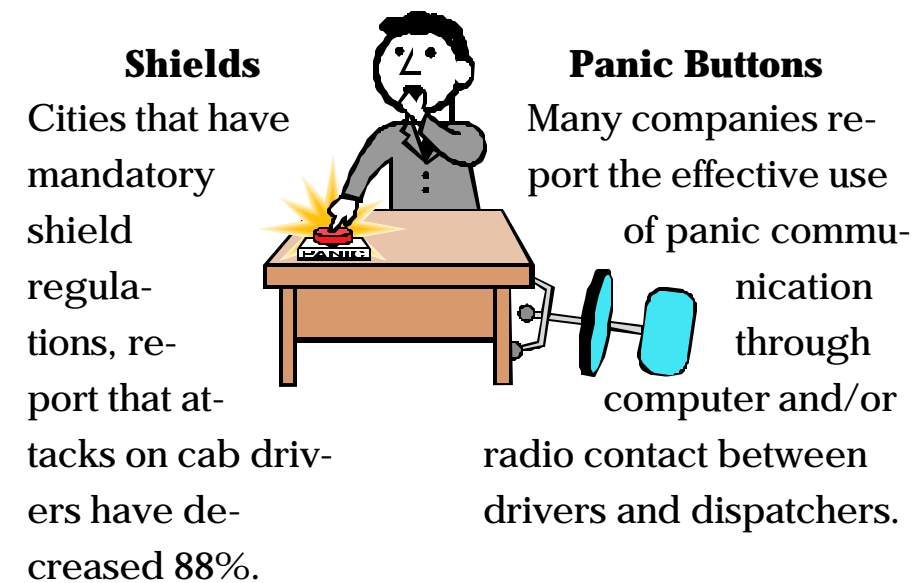
Failure to report acts of violence (robberies, assaults, threats, harassment).

Lack of training

Many drivers state that safety equipment is cost prohibitive.

Safety Equipment:

Various **SAFETY EQUIPMENT** is available and can be an important safety tool.



Trouble Lights

Flashing safety lights can be installed in the rear and grill of the vehicle which the driver can activate when threatened. The **Key** to the effectiveness of this equipment is public and law enforcement education and cooperation.

More Personal Behavior

- **Humanize yourself to the passenger.** Make eye contact, smile, greet the passenger. Studies indicate that people who commit acts of violence often need to dehumanize their victims.
- **Sometimes language can be an issue. Always clarify with passengers their destination.** If they say, “fortieth and eighth” you may want to clarify, “fortieth or forty-eighth?” If in doubt you may want to carry a pad of paper and ask the passenger to write the address down.



Personal Behavior:

- **Know your city.** Nothing irritates a customer more than a driver who does not take a direct route or does not know how to get to their destination. You also need to know where you are in case of an emergency situation.
- **Keep an eye on passengers through use of the mirror.**
- **Have a good attitude.** Polite, friendly, respectful behavior not only will probably increase your tips, it increases the odds that you will be treated in a similar manner.
- **Always ask single passengers to move from directly behind you (cite company regulations, etc.)**



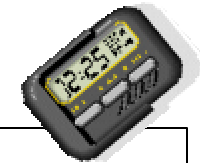
Safety Equipment:

First Aid Kits:

Be sure to keep a first aid kit in your vehicle in case of emergency.

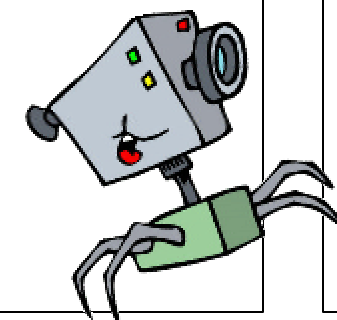
Caller ID:

Dispatcher use of Caller ID will help trace location of fares.



GPS

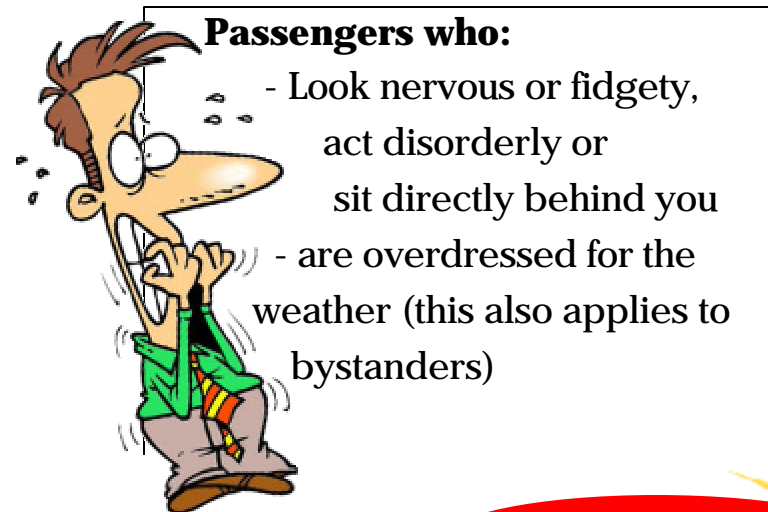
GPS is not a physical deterrent. Some feel that this can assist in the event of a problem.



Cameras

Cameras are not a physical deterrent to crime. Some feel that because they are visible and could help identify attackers afterwards, they may act as a deterrent.

Things to look for:



Safety First

Watch for others:

Be alert to bystanders when you are dropping off. If one person hails you (or the call says it is one passenger), and more suddenly arrive—drive on.



More Car Habits:

1. Start every shift by making sure that your vehicle is in good working order. Further, carefully check to make sure that a previous passenger did not leave anything dangerous in the cab.
2. Never leave your vehicle running when you are out of the vehicle.
3. Keep a spare key on you.
4. **USE THE SAFETY EQUIPMENT YOU HAVE!** Open shields are useless.
5. Rehearse emergency communication procedures with your dispatcher.



Car Habits:

1. Keep your doors locked when not occupied. This can prevent someone from entering without your knowledge and can help you direct passengers to the right rear seat.
2. Keep windows up.
3. Never turn down an alley or dead end. If the delivery is on a dead end, back down, keeping the front of the taxi facing out so you can make a quick escape.
4. Do not get out of the cab in a deserted area.
5. Keep your vehicle clean, both inside and out. This helps you present a professional image.

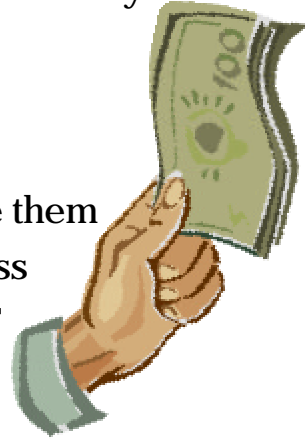


Body Language (and things to observe):
Do they avoid eye contact?
Do they utilize a hostile stare?
Do they snarl, or look angry or hostile?
Watch for sudden movements or tensing of the body that can signal that the person is "ready to fight."



Dealing with Money:

- Keep a limited amount of money on you.
- Don't flash cash.
- If given a large bill, take them to a well-lighted business to get change—EVEN IF YOU HAVE CHANGE AVAILABLE YOURSELF!
- If you have the capability, encourage credit or debit cards.
- Don't tell a customer that you've been busy! Be polite, but you may want to consider saying: "I just started." or "It's been a slow day/night."



Personal Habits:

1. Avoid driving fatigued — you are not as alert about passengers and/or driving conditions.
2. Don't wear expensive looking jewelry—it could make you a target for a robbery.
3. Avoid wearing anything around your neck that could be used to choke you.
4. Use good grooming and daily hygiene. Dress in clean, comfortable and nice clothing. How you look sends a definite message to others. A professional appearance not only makes you feel better about yourself, but implies that you should be treated professionally.
5. Be friendly and cooperative with police. This can serve you well if you are ever in trouble.

