

# WELCOME TO FEAR CITY



A Survival Guide for Visitors to the City of New York

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The incidence of crime and violence in New York City is shockingly high, and is getting worse every day. During the four month period ended Apr. 30, 1975, robberies were up 21%; aggravated assault was up 15%; larceny was up 22%; and burglary was up 19%.

Now, to "solve" his budget problems, Mayor Beame is going to discharge substantial numbers of firefighters and law enforcement officers of all kinds. By the time you read this, the number of public safety personnel available to protect residents and visitors may already have been still further reduced. Under those circumstances, the best advice we can give you is this: Until things change, stay away from New York City if you possibly can.

Nevertheless, some New Yorkers do manage to survive and even to keep their property intact. The following guidelines have been prepared by a council of firefighters and law officers to help you enjoy your visit to the City of New York in comfort and safety.

Good luck.



- 1. Stay off the streets after 6 P.M.** Even in midtown Manhattan, muggings and occasional murders are on the increase during the early evening hours. Do not be misled by the late sunsets during the summer season. If you walk in midtown at about 7:30 P.M., you will observe that the streets are nearly deserted.
- 2. Do not walk.** If you must leave your hotel after 6 P.M., try not to go out alone. Summon a radio taxi by telephone, or ask the hotel doorman to call a taxi while you remain in the hotel lobby. Follow the same procedure when leaving the restaurant, theatre, or other location of your evening activity.

- 3. Avoid public transportation.** Subway crime is so high that the City recently had to close off the rear half of each train in the evening so that the passengers could huddle together and be better protected. It has been proved that increasing the number of Transit police officers will cause a reduction in subway crime, but the announced decreases in Transit patrol will have the opposite effect. Accordingly, you should never ride the subway for any reason whatsoever. In midtown Manhattan, you may, at only slight risk, ride the buses during daylight hours only.
- 4. Remain in Manhattan.** Police and fire protection in other areas of the city is grossly inadequate and will become more inadequate. In the South Bronx, which is known to police officers as "Fort Apache," arson has become an uncontrollable problem. If you remain in midtown areas and restrict your travel to daylight hours, emergency service personnel are best able to provide adequate supervision and protection.
- 5. Protect your property.** Theft has become so great a problem that the City is urging everyone to engrave identifying numbers on all property, and the Police Department has purchased special engraving pens which are made available to the public. If you walk on Madison Avenue or in other major midtown locations during business hours, you will observe that many merchants keep their doors locked and will admit customers only after careful inspection. After hours, they protect their premises with special heavy safety gates. Accordingly, you should observe the following precautions.
- 6. Safeguard your handbag.** If you carry a handbag or similar personal luggage, try to hold it firmly with both hands whenever you are in public. Never let it out of your hands; above all, never let it out of your sight. Places that seem most secure, such as restaurants or cocktail lounges, are often the most dangerous. Even a moment's inattention can result in a serious loss.
- 7. Conceal property in automobiles.** If a package is visible on the seat or floor of your automobile, even though the vehicle is locked, there is an excellent chance that your property will be gone when you return. Accordingly, all property should be locked in the trunk or the glove compartment. Do not park your car and then transfer property into the trunk; you will probably be observed. All property should be secured before you arrive at your parking place. Remember also to keep all doors locked and all windows closed when you are in the vehicle. Remember too that auto thefts have increased this year.

**8. Do not leave valuables in your hotel room, and do not deposit them in the hotel vault.** Hotel robberies have become virtually uncontrollable, and there have been some spectacular recent cases in which thieves have broken into hotel vaults. At present, bank vaults appear to be the only depositories that offer an acceptable degree of security for personal property.

**9. Be aware of fire hazards.** The Fire Department is severely undermanned at present and further reductions are in prospect. Accordingly, you may have to evacuate quarters without assistance if fire should occur from either natural or malicious causes. Try to avoid buildings that are not completely fireproof and familiarize yourself with exits and escape routes wherever you are. In hotels, try to obtain a room that is close by the fire stairs.

*These guidelines have been prepared and distributed as a public service by the Council for Public Safety, Room 516, 299 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10007.*