

**GLOV**

**DC'S GLBT ANTI-VIOLENCE TASK FORCE**

# Safety Tips and Victim Resources

Updated November 2011

## TIPS TO AVOID BEING A VICTIM OF A CRIME

Bias-motivated crimes can't always be avoided, but there are some precautions you can take as a LGBT person to help minimize your chances of becoming a target and therefore a victim.

- Stay out of dark, isolated places where an assailant could be waiting for you and where there are few if any people who could come to your aid if you are attacked. This includes alleys and parking garages, places a potential attacker could hide. Dark alleys make it difficult to see what is around you.
- Don't travel alone, especially after dark. Safety is always in numbers.
- Do not walk drunk or impaired. You increase your risk of being targeted.
- Observe your surroundings - know who and what is around you at all times. Stay away from areas and people you know could be dangerous. Stay out of anti-gay bars and other businesses. Don't put yourself in harm's way.
- When leaving a bar, restaurant or other establishment or exiting Metro, refrain from putting on your head phones or talking on your cell phone. You will stand less of a chance of being targeted and will not be as distracted from knowing what is going on in your immediate surroundings.
- Trust your instincts and don't trust strangers. Don't accept rides from strangers. If you're stranded somewhere, call someone for help - someone you know and trust.
- Plan an escape route. Whether you're in a parking lot, at a park or at a club, look for escape routes that could save your life if you are attacked. Knowing where to turn to get you to safety can buy you some valuable time.
- If you feel threatened, call 911 immediately. Don't be embarrassed - it is better to be safe. Have your cell phone ready and charged.

### Empowerment

To the extent you feel comfortable, you could consider self-defense training, which can increase your options and help you prepare responses to slow down, de-escalate, or interrupt an attack. Self-defense is a set of awareness, assertiveness, and verbal confrontation skills with safety strategies and physical techniques that enable someone to successfully escape, resist, and survive violent attacks. A good self-defense course provides psychological awareness and verbal skills, not just physical training.

If you do choose to carry a non-lethal self-defense aid such as pepper spray, DC law requires that you must register the device at a local police station. This allows law enforcement officers to know exactly who is carrying any type of defense spray and to help make sure they are used in a lawful manner.

## WHAT TO DO DURING AN ASSAULT

**Make a Scene:** If you are being physically attacked, the first thing to do in order to prevent further injuries is to make a scene. You should scream as loud as possible and try to gain the attention of others around you so that they can get help. The more noise you make, the more likely it will be that someone will help.

**Try All Possible Ways to Get to Safety:** If you are being attacked, you should try to be thinking of the best way to free yourself from your attacker. Whether you divert the attention of the attacker or strike out at them to throw them off guard, it is important to get to safety as soon as possible so that the attack will stop.

**Identify Your Attacker:** Take mental notes about the crime and the criminals. Pay attention to the number of attackers, their ages, sex, ethnic backgrounds, appearance, clothing, weapons, voices, nicknames, special characteristics, and unusual behavior or identifying marks.

**Combat the Bystander Effect:** Research shows a bystander has to make five decisions before deciding to help. Below are tips to maximize the chance a bystander will make the decision to act. The key to combating the bystander effect is not to be a silent victim.

**Do I notice something happening?** In order to help, a bystander must first notice what is happening. Many people are in a hurry and don't notice what is happening around them.



If you are being attacked, make a commotion that will be heard. Sometimes carrying a whistle can help with this. You must do whatever you can to gain the attention of a bystander.

**Is the situation an emergency?** Does a person really need help? People are often uncertain as to what they are seeing and whether it is an emergency that requires action.



Specifically verbalize you are being attacked, and need someone to help. Point to a bystander, so he/she feels personally responsible and explicitly state you need them to help.

**Am I responsible?** Research finds that with more people around, there is a diffusion of responsibility. Bystanders assume that others will act, so they are not personally responsible.



Point to a specific bystander. Call out to a specific bystander by what they are wearing: "Hey, you! Guy in the blue t-shirt and hat! Call the 911!" Sounds silly but it is a good method for singling out someone for responsibility.

**What can I do?** Often people are unsure of their abilities (training or skills) to help in a given situation. They may be concerned that they might make the situation worse.



People who might not help because they don't know what to do will be likely to help if you tell them specific and detailed actions to take.

**Will I intervene?** Bystanders must weigh the costs or dangers of intervening. Will I be harmed? Will I be sued? People are often concerned about getting in trouble if something goes wrong while helping.



The more people are aware of bystander effect, and recognize the reasons why they might not help when they know they should, the more likely they are to overcome the effect and come to the aid of a victim. Simply getting word out about this phenomenon alone will increase the chance of more people helping in an emergency.

## WHAT TO DO AFTER AN ASSAULT

### ***Call the Police***

Immediately call 911 and seek medical attention if needed.

Report the incident to MPD.

If you are alone, call a friend to be with you. The police may or may not be trained in dealing with members of the LGBT community. Make sure you have someone with you who is going to be your support and witness the police's response.

Get the responding officer's name and badge number. The officers who take the details of your situation should give you a crime reference number and tell you how to find out about the progress of your case.

Write down and give the responding officer a description of your attacker (age, race, height, weight, hair, clothing...) and a description of his/her vehicle (type, color, & license plate number). If you can, give the officer the exact wording of what was said. If there were witnesses, point them out to the police.

Obtain a copy of the police report for your records.

### ***File Reports***

Contact the GLLU, which provides 24 hour assistance to members of the LGBT community and the police department. The on-call cell number for the GLLU is **202-506-0714** and the email is [GLLU@dc.gov](mailto:GLLU@dc.gov)

Report the crime to your local LGBT Anti-Violence project – GLOV at [report@glovdc.org](mailto:report@glovdc.org)

Report directly to the FBI at [washington.field@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:washington.field@ic.fbi.gov)

### ***Get Support Services***

You don't have to deal with the emotional and mental strain of an anti-gay offense alone. There are anonymous services available in your local area that can assist you with dealing with the police, finding counseling, and other services.

### ***Seek Professional Help***

Talking through the incident can help facilitate the healing process. Seek out a gay-affirming therapist to help you through the process.

## RESOURCES

### Law Enforcement Services

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#### D.C. Hate Crimes Hotline

Established by the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to assist victims of hate crimes.

**202-727-0500**

#### MPD Gay & Lesbian Liaison Unit (GLLU)

Provides 24-hour police response to the LGBT community, including assistance with law enforcement investigations, safety training, training to MPD, and support to other agencies.

1369-A Connecticut Ave., NW

Washington, DC 20036

202-727-5427 (office)

**202-506-0714 (on-call)**

[gllu@dc.gov](mailto:gllu@dc.gov)

#### MPD Asian Liaison Unit (ALU)

Serves the Asian community in DC via outreach, conducting follow-up investigations in the event of hate crimes and provides 24 hour on-call assistance

616 H Street, NW

Washington, DC 20001

**202-724-8009**

[Asian.Liaison@dc.gov](mailto:Asian.Liaison@dc.gov)

#### MPD Latino Liaison Unit (LLU)

Serves the Latino community in DC via criminal investigations, victim and witness assistance, home and school visits, and outreach.

1800 Columbia Road, NW

Washington, DC 20009

202-673-4445 (office)

**202-498-9829 (on-call)**

[latinoliaison.unit@dc.gov](mailto:latinoliaison.unit@dc.gov)

#### MPD Deaf & Hard of Hearing Unit (DHHU)

Provides services to individuals in the deaf and hard of hearing community.

**TTY 202-727-5437**

202-698-0289 (office)

#### Local FBI field office

See [When to Contact the FBI](#) for more information on when to report suspicious activities and crime.

601 4th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20535

**202-278-2000**

[washington.field@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:washington.field@ic.fbi.gov)



## Government Resources

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### [DC Office of Victims of Services](#)

Administers federal grants and appropriated funds supporting government agencies and community organizations to provide assistance to District victims of crime.

John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 407  
Washington, DC 20004  
**202-727-3934**

### [Crime Victim Compensation Program](#)

Assists victims of violent crimes and their families with crime-related expenses such as funeral and burial costs, medical and mental health costs, and lost wages. Through the services of a victim advocate, crime victims receive assistance in filing applications; locating victim service programs, support groups, or mental health counselors; and handling quality of life issues that arise after victimization.

DC Superior Court, Building A  
515 5th Street, NW, Room 104  
Washington, DC 20001  
**202-879-4216**

### [DC Office of Human Rights](#)

Investigates complaints of unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, education, and public accommodations. Provides training to government agencies and private sectors in areas such as diversity, sexual harassment, and language access compliance.

441 4th Street, NW, Suite 570 North  
Washington, DC 20001  
**202-727-4559**

### [Victim Witness Assistance Unit, U.S. Attorney's Office](#)

Provides assistance to victims and witnesses of serious crimes in crisis intervention, referrals, court appointment, special services (children, the elderly, and handicapped victims), language interpretation, and compensation claims assistance.

Judiciary Center Building  
555 Fourth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20530  
**202-514-7130**  
[dc.outreach@usdoj.gov](mailto:dc.outreach@usdoj.gov)

[Mayor's Office of GLBT Affairs](#)

Provides constituent services and info to the GLBT communities through community outreach and public education. Trains, advises, and assists the Mayor and DC Government on the needs of GLBT residents.

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 221

Washington, DC 20004

**202-727-9493**

[glbt@dc.gov](mailto:glbt@dc.gov)

[Office of the Attorney Gen. for DC, Neighborhood & Victim Services](#)

Assists victims and witnesses to crimes by juvenile offenders. Services include short term counseling, support through the judicial process, and making appropriate referrals.

441 4th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20001

**202-727-3400**

[oag@dc.gov](mailto:oag@dc.gov)

**LGBT Support Services**

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[Gays & Lesbian Opposing Violence \(GLOV\)](#)

Volunteer-based organization devoted to reducing violence against LGBT individuals through community outreach, education, advocacy, and case monitoring. GLOV also seeks to assist victims by advocating on their behalf, encouraging reporting, and providing a community of support.

1318 U Street, NW

Washington, DC 20009

**202-682-2245**

[report@glovdc.org](mailto:report@glovdc.org)

[Lambda Legal National Headquarters](#)

Engages in education and advocacy for civil rights and equality, and provides legal information and resources, on behalf of people in the LGBT community.

120 Wall Street, Suite 1500

New York, NY 10005-3904

**212-809-8585**

[DC Trans Coalition](#)

202-681-3282

Grassroots organization fighting for full civil rights for transsexual, transgender, and gender-diverse people in D.C. Meets every first and third Tuesday of the month between 7:30 and 9:00 pm.

Whitman Walker Clinic

1711 14th Street NW

Washington DC, DC 20009

**202-681-3282**

[dctranscoalition@gmail.com](mailto:dctranscoalition@gmail.com)



[Whitman Walker Clinic](#)

Social, psychological, and HIV/AIDS services for the LGBT community. Includes primary medical care as well as mental health programs, dental services, legal services, and support groups.

1701 14th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
**202-745-7000**  
[wwcinfo@wwc.org](mailto:wwcinfo@wwc.org)

[Sexual Minority Youth League \(SMYAL\)](#)

Social, psychological, and emotional support/assistance to LGBTQ youth ages 13-21. Main areas include life skills and leadership development, counseling, health and wellness education, safe social activities, and community outreach and education.

410 7th Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
**202-546-5940**  
[Supporterinfo@smyal.org](mailto:Supporterinfo@smyal.org)

**Community Support Services**

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[D.C. Crime Victim's Resource Center](#)

Provides effective pro bono legal representation and support for the assertion and enforcement of victims' rights in DC. Will represent victims of crime throughout the criminal justice process, including pretrial, trial, appellate matters, and post-sentencing matters including parole.

1411 K Street, Suite 1400  
Washington D.C., 20005  
**202-638-0273**  
[info@dccrimevictims.org](mailto:info@dccrimevictims.org)

[National Center for Victims of Crime](#)

The nation's leading resource and advocacy organization for crime victims and those who serve them.

2000 M Street NW, Suite 480  
Washington, DC 20036  
**202-467-8700**

[National Organization for Victim Assistance](#)

Promotes rights and services for victims of crime and crisis everywhere through national advocacy, direct services to victims of crime, assistance to professionals and membership activities and services.

510 King Street, Suite 424  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
24/7 Information and Referrals for Victims of Crime and Disaster: **1-800-879-6682**  
**703-535-6682**

