



FSA - Keeping You Safe

Stay Safe with These Parking Lot Safety Tips

When it comes to safety, parking lots can be an unexpected danger for both drivers and for pedestrians. That's because, unlike in many locations, cars and people are sharing the same space all day, every day. In addition to threats of accidental danger (such as collisions or distracted driving), parking lots are also vulnerable to threats of theft and physical violence.

As with most public safety concerns, there are ways to protect yourself when visiting parking lots. You should always be alert and use common sense when navigating a high-traffic area, and parking lots and garages are no exception. Here are a few parking lot safety tips to help you stay on guard.

Parking Lot Safety for Drivers

According to the National Safety Council, tens of thousands of crashes take place in parking lots and garages every year. Here's how to avoid becoming one of those numbers.

- Stay focused and alert whenever you're behind the wheel. It doesn't matter if you're in a parking lot or on the freeway, going 7 mph or 70. The danger is still there.
- Don't text and drive – ever. In addition to being a bad idea, it's against the law in Florida.
- Don't speed and use even more caution in inclement weather.
- When finding a parking spot, don't cut across lanes to save time. Stay in the designated lanes.
- Obey traffic signs in the parking lot and remember to use your turn signals.

In addition, it's incredibly important to anticipate pedestrian traffic. Keep an eye out for adults, children, strollers and shopping carts, especially when backing out. Tragically, 9% of pedestrian deaths in parking lots occur as a result of backup incidents, according to the NSC. Look twice, and never assume the road is clear behind you. Use your mirrors, but also physically turn your head to look.

Parking Lot Safety for Pedestrians

Due to being large, often-isolated spaces, parking lots and garages are also considered highly vulnerable to crime. This is particularly true for large-scale parking lots, such as those found at a shopping mall. Many of these crimes

For more tips please visit the Florida Sheriffs Association's Crime Prevention Tips: flsheriffs.org/crime-prevention.

are “crimes of opportunity,” and result when [criminals check for unlocked car doors](#). Women may also be particularly vulnerable when loading or unloading shopping bags, buckling in children or searching for keys. Criminals look for easy targets, and you’re an easy target when distracted.

Here are a few smart ways to protect yourself when walking in a parking lot or garage:

- Park in well-lit areas, under a light if you can.
- Park close to your destination, such as the front of the store.
- Try to use main entrances and exits instead of side doors.
- Don’t linger.
- Don’t walk while distracted, reading on your phone or while wearing headphones.
- Use main walkways to navigate the parking lot instead of weaving between cars.

One of the easiest things you can do to prevent theft is always lock your car doors. Roll up your windows, and tuck valuables out of sight before leaving your vehicle.

When returning to your car, always try to have your keys in hand before you get there. Check the backseat before you get in, and then immediately lock the doors once inside. Don’t sit and linger scrolling on your phone.

Stay Safe with FSA

As with most dangers, you shouldn’t live in fear of parking lots, but it’s always a good idea to be prepared and use common sense. Don’t be an easy target. Walk carefully, drive with caution and always be aware of your surroundings. It might save your life.

If you see something suspicious in a parking lot or garage, call your local sheriff’s office or 9-1-1 to report it immediately.

The Florida Sheriffs Association is committed to helping you stay informed and stay safe. You can read more crime and public safety tips [here](#).

For more tips please visit the Florida Sheriffs Association’s Crime Prevention Tips: flsheriffs.org/crime-prevention.