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## **SITUATIONAL AWARENESS DURING COVID-19**

Considering the recent restrictions surrounding the COVID-19 "Shelter in Place" Order from Governor Inslee, Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound has compiled the following safety tips to better protect ourselves during these unprecedented times.

In the late afternoon of April 20 in West Seattle, a woman was approached by what was described as a "strange man in a van" who wanted her to get in his vehicle. She was able to run and get away. The day prior, two children were able to escape a man who attempted to lure them into a van in the Burien area. Both incidents occurred in broad daylight with no other people around.

Due to the quarantine orders in place, our neighborhoods have much less traffic and fewer pedestrians out in public, which makes it easier for criminal activity to flourish. It now becomes more important than ever to be aware of your surroundings to keep you and your family safe.

When out on a walk, running errands, or exercising, Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound suggests the following:

- ❑ Be aware of your surroundings. Recognize what would be considered "normal" for your neighborhood or what seems out of place. Are there any unfamiliar vehicles or people that appear to be watching or following you?
- ❑ Have your cell phone with you, and call a friend if it seems someone is following you. Make sure you give the description of the person and the vehicle to your friend.
- ❑ If you feel safe enough, take a photo of the person and/or vehicle.
- ❑ If you are POSITIVE someone is following you, either on foot or in a vehicle, do your best to get away and CALL THE POLICE.
- ❑ Walk with a friend, and stay on arterial streets instead of deserted roads or alleyways.
- ❑ Consider carrying pepper spray.
- ❑ Make yourself aware of any escape routes where you could run if need be.
- ❑ Trust your "gut instinct," and do what you feel you need to do to extract yourself from what you feel is a bad situation. Remember, there is "NO HARM IN A FALSE ALARM."