



United States Army Criminal Investigation Command

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Sexual Assault Prevention:

CID provides tips on how to minimize your chances of becoming a victim

FORT BELVOIR, Virginia, June 13, 2007 – Although Sexual Assault Prevention month has passed, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, commonly known as CID, wants to keep sexual assault prevention in the forefront by sharing ways to prevent becoming the victim of sexual assault and educating the Army community on what to do if they become a victim.

According to CID Special Agent Stephanie James, sexual assault is a crime that occurs between two or more people and there are numerous ways individuals, particularly females, can minimize the chance of becoming a victim.

James said people should always be alert and learn to trust their instincts in all situations.

"If a place or person makes you feel unsafe, it probably is," emphasized James who has successfully investigated hundreds of cases throughout her career. "People should always look for signs of trouble such as strangers in private areas or persons loitering in suspicious places, or people who make you feel uncomfortable. If you sense trouble, trust your instincts and get to a safe place as soon as possible. If you feel you are in danger, attract help anyway you can."

According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) and the Army's Sexual Assault Prevention Program's website, about two-thirds of sexual assault victims in the United States knew their assailants. "Acquaintance rape," which includes date rape, refers to those rapes that occur between people who know one another. "Date rape" refers to situations in which one person has consented to go on a date with another person and that person then rapes him or her. Another statistic backed by numerous studies indicates that about half of all U.S. sexual assaults involve the use of alcohol by the offender, the victim, or both.

According to a CID spokesman, the Army community in which Soldiers and their families live and work is safer when compared to civilian communities and national crime statistics. The majority of sexual assaults or rapes investigated within the Army community are not the type of

crimes that include a stranger breaking into a victim's house or hiding in their car, although it can and does happen, but are more likely between persons who know each other or share some familiarity.

"We find that many allegations of sexual assault occur on weekends when a Soldier consumes alcohol in excess and returns to their quarters afterward," explained James. "When a Soldier is unconscious from too much alcohol, they are unable to give consent. In this situation, if an individual proceeds to have sex with an unconscious person or a person who is unable to consent, they are committing a crime."

James stressed two points that she feels are very important in reducing the possibility of becoming the victim of an assault in "acquaintance-type crimes."

"Bottom line, women need to lock their doors wherever they reside; especially in a barracks," said James. Regardless of how safe or trusting a person might feel living in their barracks or residence, they should always be mindful of security and lock their doors when they enter."

The second point is using the buddy system. James said that women should always use the buddy system when going out – especially if they are going to drink alcohol.

"Use the buddy system and if a female needs help getting back to their barracks or residence, ask a female friend to accompany them."

Other ways to minimize the chances of becoming a victim according to CID and the National Crime Prevention Council are:

- Be aware of your surroundings — who's out there and what's going on.
- Being prepared means staying in groups, traveling with a buddy and knowing there is safety in numbers.
- Never leave your home key at an auto repair shop with your car key.
- Walk with confidence. The more confident you look, the stronger you appear.
- Always safeguard your personal information.
- Remember: "No" means "No." If you do not want to be intimate with another person, tell him or her clearly. Use a confident voice and body posture.
- Match your body language to your words - don't laugh and smile while saying "No."
- Do not just "go along" for the wrong reasons.
- Watch out for warning signs or "red flags" from your partner in intimate situations
- Don't let drugs or alcohol cloud or hinder your judgment.
- Be assertive — don't let anyone violate your space.
- Don't prop open self-locking doors.

- Watch your keys. Don't lend them. Don't leave them. Don't lose them. And don't put your name and address on the key ring.
- Use the buddy system, especially if you are going out at night and alcohol is consumed.
- Watch out for unwanted visitors. Know who's on the other side of the door before you open it.
- Be wary of isolated spots, like underground parking garages, offices after business hours, and apartment laundry rooms.
- Avoid walking or jogging alone, especially at night. Vary your route. Stay in well-traveled, well-lit areas.
- Have your key ready to use before you reach the door — home, car, or work.
- Park in well-lit areas and lock the car, even if you'll only be gone a few minutes.
- Drive on well-traveled streets, with doors and windows locked.
- Never hitchhike or pick up a hitchhiker.
- Keep your car in good shape with plenty of gas in the tank.
- In case of car trouble, call for help on your cellular phone. If you don't have a phone, put the hood up, lock the doors, and put a banner in the rear mirror that says, "Help. Call police."

The Department of the Army released a proclamation last April during Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The proclamation stated that sexual assault is a crime and contrary to Army values and mission readiness. Leaders and Soldiers have the responsibility to prevent and reduce the associated risks of sexual assaults from occurring in their units and work environment.

When reporting sexual assault, the Army has restricted and unrestricted reporting for active duty Soldiers, according to James. This gives a victim the choice for making a complaint without going directly to law enforcement officials. However, it is important whom the victim talks to regarding an incident of sexual assault.

"A restricted report provides confidentiality to the victim without making a complaint to law enforcement," James said. "The victim can make a restricted report to medical authorities, the Chaplain, Unit Victim Advocate and the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator. However, if the victim reports an incident to their commander, the commander is then obligated to notify CID. If the victim tells their best friend and the friend notifies law enforcement, an investigation will be initiated."

If a victim wants to report a sexual assault to law enforcement it should be done as soon as possible after the assault. Victims can notify Military Police, civilian police, their chain of command or CID directly. The victim should remember to preserve as much evidence as possible.

CID officials recognize how traumatic and difficult a sexual assault can be for victims, but at the same time stress how vital evidence can be.

“It is very important for us to obtain as much information and evidence as possible and as soon as possible, said James. “The victim should not shower, or brush their teeth or touch or disturb anything at the crime scene,” James said. “If possible, it’s important a victim writes down every detail they can remember right away.”

“If the victim has sustained an injury, they should seek immediate medical attention and let the medical personnel contact the appropriate law enforcement agency, said James.

“Bottom line, we want to do everything possible to ensure we bring to justice anyone who has committed a sexual assault and more importantly we want to help prevent it from happening in the first place,” James said.

For more information on policy, prevention and training, visit the CID Web site at www.cid.army.mil and click on the Victim’s Assistance link.

Editor’s note: To download high resolution versions of the CID Lookout logo visit http://www.cid.army.mil/lookout_logos.html

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CID Lookout is a U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command (USACIDC) initiative to partner with the Army community by providing a conduit for members of the Army family, to help prevent, reduce and report felony-level crime.

The USACIDC, commonly known as CID, is an independent criminal investigative organization that investigates serious, felony-level crime such as murder, rape, sexual assault, robbery, arson, fraud, and even cyber crime or intrusions into the Army networks (see CID Cyber Lookout).

Solving and preventing these types of crime cannot be achieved solely by CID Special Agents and the Military Police. Together, professional law enforcement officers and the Army community must work hand-in-hand to fight serious crime. As such, CID is *On Point for the Army* and depends heavily on Soldiers, family members and civilian employees to *Be On The Lookout* and provide assistance in keeping the *Army Strong* and safe.

CID Lookout provides the latest information to the Army community aimed at helping Soldiers protect themselves, their families and to reduce their chances of becoming crime victims.

For more information on CID or to report a felony-level crime or provide information concerning a crime, contact your local CID Office or the Military Police, or visit www.cid.army.mil.