

Safety in Vancouver

Vancouver is a very safe city. There is little chance that a traveler or resident will have problems. Under certain conditions, however, trouble can happen anywhere.

If you follow a few simple rules, your stay in Vancouver should be trouble free. The purpose of this pamphlet is to familiarize you with the city and provide guidelines for a safe visit.

1) Consumer Protection

If someone takes money by lying to or tricking another person, it is called fraud. Although it is not a common problem in Vancouver, fraud can be found in many forms. A few tips should help to protect you.

☞ When you buy something, obtain a receipt and ensure that you have been charged the correct amount. Ensure that the amount of the receipt and the amount charged to your card are the same and correct. Make sure that you get your own credit card back from the shopkeeper.

☞ Never give a credit card number or copies of your card to anyone unless you want to buy something. If someone asks you for financial information, ask why?

☞ Never pay someone in order to collect a prize. It is illegal to make someone pay for a prize.

☞ If you rent an apartment make sure that you see the apartment first and that you pay the landlord by cheque. Never give cash to a landlord.

☞ If you respond to an advertisement of a conversation partner or tutor, be extremely careful. Meet only in a safe place and always take a friend. Never pay tutors in advance.

☞ Carry your bag over your shoulder but not around your neck. You can be hurt if someone tries to take it.

☞ Never carry large amounts of cash. Almost every store takes credit cards, cheques, or traveler's cheques. Never carry more cash than you can afford to lose.

☞ Don't pull out cash from your wallet in public areas. This can be a temptation to a robber.

☞ Although host families are usually very honest, houses can be robbed. Also, children might take things. Never leave money at your home. VCC can help you open a bank account. Find a safe place for your plane ticket, passport, and other valuables. Also be careful with valuables in the school, library, and mall's.

2) Personal Protection from Theft & Street Crime

If you follow a few simple rules, you will probably not be affected by crime. Most of this is common sense.

On the streets:

☞ Ask someone you know for advice about the best route to events, restaurants, and shopping.

☞ At night, walk in well-light and well-traveled areas.

☞ Wherever you go, try to take a friend. Students who travel in groups do not usually get lost and are rarely victims of crime. They also have more fun!

- ☞ If somebody wants your money and is threatening you with violence, give them the money and quickly report the robbery to police by calling 911.
- ☞ Do not fight back and do not carry a weapon in your bag. Weapons are illegal and might be used against you.
- ☞ Some areas, such as East Hastings Street, have high crime rates. Ask your teacher or friends about dangerous places, and don't go there.
- ☞ The most common type of crime in Vancouver is petty theft. Do not leave your backpack, purse or camera unattended in a library, restaurant, or classroom.
- ☞ If someone asks you for directions or some other sort of help, stay a safe distance away from them.
- ☞ Some people in Vancouver ask strangers for money. These people are often called panhandlers. Some panhandlers suffer from drug or alcohol addictions. If you give money to these people, you might encourage their addictions. There are agencies that provide free meals and shelter for street people. If you want to help, you can give to a good charity.
- ☞ Always be aware of your surroundings.

Out at Night:

Vancouver is a very safe city and residents are generally friendly but you should remember these points:

- ☞ If you go to a club or a bar, you should go with friends. You can still meet people but you will have a group to help you out if you have problems.
- ☞ If you plan to drink alcohol, be sure to arrange a way to get home. Never drink and drive in Canada. The penalties are harsh.
- ☞ It is fun to meet new people but don't give strangers the power in your relationship. Don't let strangers buy you a drink or give you food unless you see it being prepared. Drugs are common in some clubs, so it is important to be careful.
- ☞ Do not let people give you a ride home unless you bring along a friend, and never hitchhike.
- ☞ Always walk facing oncoming traffic.
- ☞ Tell your friends where you live and how to get you home if you are too confused to do so after a night out.
- ☞ If someone you meet at a social event is bothering you, tell them to stop. Do not worry about hurting their feelings or being nice. If you aren't clear, they might not stop. If they continue to bother you, tell someone in the place where you are.
- ☞ If you want to stop a relationship with someone, be very clear about the fact that you don't want to see them anymore. If they continue to bother you, make sure that you tell a teacher or a friend about the situation. Do not keep harassment to yourself. If they continue to bother you, contact the police. It is illegal in Canada for someone to contact you after you have told them to stop. If you are not sure what to do, discuss the situation with someone at the school.
- ☞ If someone bothers you, say go away!

3) Bus, SkyTrain, and SeaBus Safety

- 👉 You can buy a Transit Pass or bus tickets at any 7-Eleven store.
- 👉 Do not display money, jewelry, or other valuable items in public. Keep a little money in an outside pocket so you will not need to open your wallet.
- 👉 Keep your wallet in an inside pocket and keep your purse or backpack closed and in your arms.
- 👉 Be discreet when looking at maps.
- 👉 Do not fall asleep in a public place.
- 👉 Bicycles can be stolen easily. If you leave your bike in a public place, use a good lock.

4) Emergency Contacts

- 👉 In Vancouver, the telephone number for emergency services is 911📞. This is for the Police, Fire Department, and Ambulance Services. You do not need coins if calling from a pay phone. Interpreters are available.
- 👉 You should also know where the closest hospital and police station to your home are located.
- 👉 If you are a victim of crime, no matter how small, report it to the police. Canadian police are very professional and helpful. Other services are also available to help victims. The number for the Victim Information Line is 1-800-563-0808📞.
- 👉 You should tell your school if you have problems. You can usually contact someone at VCC at 604 443 8600📞. Our office is open Monday - Friday.