

Complacency/Personal Safety

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Though one would assume that one's own company terminal would be a safe haven for all drivers, it appears that with the influx of non English speaking people in specific areas, that might not be the case.

Recently on satellite radio a lady driver with a major company, called in and told of troubles for women along the southern border. It seems that while at her company's terminal using the restroom, some males entered the facilities. When she tried to tell them they were in the 'women's facilities' they indicated that they didn't speak English. She went on to tell of another lady company driver who had been assaulted in the same terminal while showering by more men who 'didn't speak English'. Though there were other drivers near, none came in answer to her cries for help.

In past articles, we have addressed personal safety in truckstops, rest areas and in our trucks, but there are other places where we should feel relatively safe, but are perhaps not. As women drivers, we have to use facilities in all types of places, at all times of day and sometimes we find that there are not facilities for women at all. We are in dark and lonely places at night. What should you do?

WAREHOUSES/MILLS/JOBSITES...many older warehouses are like caves, ill lit and with many obstacles and narrow walkways. Restroom facilities are often far away from dock areas and many do not have facilities for women. Newer warehouses may have women's facilities and may be better lit. During the day they are hubbubs of activity with people moving around. At night, either new or old are more apt to be deserted.

Always tell your loader/unloader or the shipping clerk privately where you are going and approximately how long you will be gone.

If there are only male facilities, then ask either another female, if one is around, or another driver to guard the door for you...make sure that there are locks on the door and check before entering if there is anyone in there.

Carry your cell phone with you.

Do not stop to visit with anyone along the way.

Equip your truck to take care of essential personal needs in emergency situations...a coffee can, lined trash can or portie pottie work well.

If you are going into a job site after dark to park until morning, DO NOT advertise where you are on the cb, or get out of your truck until the crews start arriving in the daylight.

If you have a dog, walk it at the last truck stop or safe place before you get to the pick up/delivery location.

COMPANY TERMINALS/DROP YARDS...of all places one's own terminal should be a safe haven for the company's drivers both male and female.

Check to make sure that there are adequate locks on the doors to the stalls and showers. If there are not, request that your company install them.

Tell a dispatcher or another company employee if possible if you are going to take a shower... give approximate time you will be...then check back with them when you are done. Ask them to come check on you if you are too much longer than what you say you will be.

Ask another lady driver to go with you...yes, I know the stories about women not being able to go without another but we are talking personal safety here.

Ask another driver to guard the door.

Put your personal possessions, ie: billfold, jewelry, in a zip lock bag and take them in the shower with you.

Wait until daylight hours to take a shower if possible. There is more activity in the day time.

If you are at a terminal in a bad area and there is security or shop personnel available, ask them to walk you to and from your truck.

If there is no security, get a mag light to light your way, shine it from side to side. Check under trailers you might walk next to.

Have your keys in your hand before you get to the truck or to your car.

If the lot is not adequately lighted, ask your company to add lighting.

Go into the parking area with your bright lights on. Go slowly and watch for movement.

SHOPPING MALLS/DISCOUNT STORES...many of us shop at night when we have time at all night malls and stores.

Always park where it is well lit.

Only take what you need into the store...don't carry extra cash...use a credit or debit card.

Leave your purse, if you carry one, in the truck.

Have your keys in your hand before you get to the truck.

Pay attention to cars or people moving around or near you.

It is better to use a cart to carry your purchases back to the truck unless you only have one bag...it keeps your hands free.

Hopefully, you will never have to deal with being assaulted in any way. You have to stay alert and aware of the dangers that face all of us out in the world. Complacency is the biggest problem we face...thinking that we are safe when in reality, we may not be. Knowledge of the dangers will make you prepared to deal with them and hopefully avoid them.