

Washtenaw County Community Mental Health

*WCCMH Protocol for Promoting Automobile Safety  
in the Community*

**While you are driving:**

- Always wear your seat belt
- Lock all doors
- Do not tailgate
- Drive “defensively”
- Do **NOT** use a cell phone or text while driving
- Keep radio and other noises to a minimum so that you can hear emergency vehicles.

**When you park:**

- Plan where you park
- Circle the area once
- Check for suspicious activity
- Park in a well lit area
- Park where you have a good view of the situation
- Park in such a way as to not get blocked in
- Park so you can enter and exit your car easily (street side)
- Keep valuables out of sight
- Know your plan before exiting auto, i.e., the address, and reason for the visit, etc.
- Look for problems before unlocking your car door
- Carry only the necessities out of the car
- Lock your car
- Have your keys ready before you arrive at your car

**When you transport clients:**

- Always lock doors
- Always have seat belts on all passengers and driver
- Avoid transporting an agitated client unassisted
- Don’t allow clients to smoke in the vehicles. No smoking policy also for staff
- Drive in the right hand lane if at all possible
- Keep right arm relaxed, but free, to avoid client from grabbing gear shift or assaulting driver

- Never leave car keys anywhere but in your possession
- Take all bottles and other objects that may be used as a weapon out of the car
- Avoid making controversial comments to client while car is in motion
- If client has released the seat belt, unlocked the door, and opens it wide enough to exit, take your foot off the gas pedal and slowly apply the brakes. If possible, grab client by the clothing around the waist area using your shoulder as a shield and balancer. Slow the car to a stop.
- If client tries to use force, remove feet away from the gas pedal and brakes. This will give better upper body strength and give more concentration to steering and use the emergency brakes