

# SAFETY TIPS FOR TAXI DRIVERS



FIRST PRINCIPLE

[norfolk.police.uk/firstprinciple](https://norfolk.police.uk/firstprinciple)  
[suffolk.police.uk/firstprinciple](https://suffolk.police.uk/firstprinciple)

## Top Tips

Always trust your instincts. Refuse a fare if you have any doubts about your safety.

Minimise the amount of cash you carry.

Make sure your controller or a trusted adult knows where you are via a radio, lone worker device or even app on your phone.

Use your verbal skills and body language to de-escalate any confrontational situations if you can.

Call police immediately on 999 if you feel in imminent danger.

Report all non-urgent incidents to police at <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/contact-us/report-something> or on 101

Although it may seem obvious, always ensure your vehicle is in good condition so it won't let you down in an emergency. This is especially important if you share a vehicle

## PREVENT CRIME

## PROTECT COMMUNITIES



**NORFOLK**  
CONSTABULARY  
*Our Priority is You*



**SUFFOLK**  
CONSTABULARY



**As a taxi driver you are working alone with strangers, often in isolated places and carrying cash. Taking people off the streets or from ranks with no knowledge of their home address or telephone number means that if they cause trouble you are especially vulnerable. If you work at night you are likely to have to deal with people who have drunk too much alcohol. All this means you may be at risk of violence. This guide is to help you to think of things that you can do in advance and when you are out working.**

## Adjustments to your vehicle

- You can fit your car with a screen to protect you. Screens are made from materials that withstand a knife attack or hard body impact, and can be fitted and taken out easily. Make sure any opening is to the side and not directly behind the driver's head.
- Installing CCTV cameras has been shown to lead to reduced threats and violence against drivers. Signs in the vehicle can highlight the presence of CCTV to passengers. Cameras can be bought or rented, and the cost may be offset by reduced insurance premiums. They can be useful when there is a dispute with a passenger – it is not just your word against theirs.
- Fitting a convex mirror that gives you a full view of the rear of your car will help you to see what a passenger directly behind you is doing.

## Things to carry with you

- A spare key, in case an assailant throws your keys away.
- A mobile phone.
- A note pad and pen to record incidents.
- An emergency card with your name, date of birth, blood group, allergies and a contact number for emergencies.
- An explanation of the fare structure, so that you can explain it to a passenger who feels that you are over-charging them.

## Electronic payment

- Consider using an app or card machine to take payment as this reduces the amount of cash you have in your vehicle.

## Cash management

- Never say to a customer that you have had a busy shift or that business is good. This will alert them to the fact that you may have a lot of cash in the

vehicle. If asked, you could say that you have recently started your shift.

- If you can, drop off cash during your shift so that you carry as little in your car as you can. Always keep your cash hidden from view in a secure box and try to hide the cash in several places around the vehicle until you can deposit it securely.
- Consider pre-payment where possible.

## Stay in control

- Trust your instinct – you have the right to refuse a passenger if you think they may present a risk. The way a person speaks or dresses may not reflect their behaviour, so always be alert.
- You know that working at night carries most risks of violence, especially as many passengers will have been drinking. Make sure you are not tired – you need to be alert at all times.
- Try to use ranks with Taxi Marshalls if they are available.
- Control passenger access to the front. Keep the doors locked until you are ready to accept a fare. Only open the windows enough to speak to people without them being able to reach in. Only let them sit in the front if you wish.
- Communication with the passenger is important. Be polite and pleasant.
- Make eye contact with the passenger when they get in the car. This helps to establish a relationship with the passenger. It also gives them the message that you could identify them.
- When you travel outside your licensing area, agreeing the fare before you set off can reduce the risks of violence over a fare dispute later, when you may be in an isolated place.
- Be ready to explain the fare structure to a passenger. Many violent incidents arise from fare disputes.
- Explain the route you plan to take if you are going a long way around (for example in order to avoid road works) so as to prevent a dispute over the fare.

### If you are linked to a control centre

- Use your radio to tell them where you are going. This will mean the controller has the information, and the passenger will know they do. Alert the controller of any changes along the way.
- Have a pre-arranged code word that you can use if a passenger becomes threatening, so that you can call for help without making the passenger suspicious.
- Most control rooms will have GPS and can track the progress of all vehicles. Drivers have a silent button which they can activate in an emergency, which flags up their vehicle on the controller's screen.

### If you feel threatened

- Try to stay calm. Take slow, deep breaths – this may help to lessen your anxiety.
- Be aware of your own actions and how they may be seen. Non-confrontational verbal and body language may be enough to diffuse a situation
- If you can, drive to a brightly lit, busy place. These are often covered by CCTV.
- If you have a purpose-built taxi or a car with a screen you are likely to be safer staying in your cab than getting out. However, never risk your safety to protect your vehicle.
- Do not attempt to run after a passenger who owes you their fare. Your safety is more important than the money.

### If you are attacked

- Do not try to fight back – it is most likely to make the violence worse for you.
- Use your horn and lights to attract attention.
- Contact your control room or call 999 to get help.
- Gather as much information about the person as you can (e.g. their clothes, accent).

### After an incident

- Write down everything about the incident – a description of the passenger, what they said and did.
- If you did not call them at the time, report all violent incidents to the police. Be prepared to make a witness statement. It may take time, but it may prevent the violence in the future – for you and other drivers.
- Share your experience with other drivers so that they can avoid the same situation.
- When sentencing offenders, courts have been advised to take particularly seriously assaults against people who are providing a public service, especially those who are vulnerable because they work alone at night.
- Bilking (making off without payment) is a criminal offence. Report incidents to the police and be prepared to make a statement.
- You may be able to recover the costs of damage to your vehicle through the small claims system.

### Getting home safely after work

- Remain alert after you finish work.
- If you have to travel home after finishing a shift, try to travel with someone else. Avoid any shortcuts, especially through alleyways or parks. Stick to busy, well-lit areas. Avoid talking on the phone or having headphones in as you are less likely to hear someone approaching.

### Securing your vehicle

- Never leave any cash or electronic equipment in your vehicle at any time.
- Always lock doors and ensure all windows are fully closed.
- Activate your alarm and immobiliser.
- Physically check the door is locked and that the alarm has set

## First Principle: Related links

Check out all of our Crime Prevention information using the following links or by using the QR code to take you to the First Principle Pages Alternatively go to our website at <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/> and look in the 1<sup>st</sup> Principle A-Z of Crime Prevention.

Allotment Security  
Anti-Social Behaviour  
ATM Security  
Beach Hut Security  
Boat Security  
Building Site Security  
Business Security  
Caravan Security  
Caravan Storage  
Card Security  
Catalytic Converters  
Church Security  
Cold Callers  
Commercial CCTV  
Counterfeit Banknotes  
County Lines Advice  
for Landlords  
Cyber Crime  
Cycle Security  
Dangerous Dogs  
Dog Fouling  
Dog Theft  
Domestic CCTV  
Domestic Violence  
Farm Security  
Fraud Prevention  
Grooming  
Hate Crime

Heating Oil  
Home Improvements  
Home Security  
Home Security for  
Tenants  
Horses and Stables  
Keyless Vehicles  
Key Safe Security  
Lock Snapping  
Mopeds and Scooters  
Motorcycle Security  
Neighbour Disputes  
Occupiers Liability  
Personal Security  
Power Tool Security  
Products Brochure  
Rural Crime  
Security Alarms  
Sheds and Garages  
Social Media  
Social Media for  
Parents  
Suspicious Behaviour  
Shoplifting  
Taxi Driver Safety  
Vehicle Security  
Windows and Doors



### Other Links you might find helpful

Ask the Police  
Secured by Design  
Sold Secure

Crimestoppers  
0800 555 111

Victim Care  
0300 303 3705