



will be a victim of crime while studying at college or university. You may not want to hear this while you're studying, but criminals see students as easy targets. However, this doesn't mean that you can't keep yourself and your belongs safe. In making this survival guide we visited campuses, spoke to club doormen and the police, investigated new scams and crimes, and asked for your views on staying safe...

# Survival/kit

# You will need some or all of these things

- Contents insurance to cover your belongings (buy this
- A UV pen to mark your possessions with your uni or college's name and student ID number.
- A map of the campus (to get to know your safe
- A personal alarm.
- Contact details for a reliable taxi company and timetable for any night bus services.
- A bank or building society account (don't keep your cash lying around).
- A list of possessions (including makes, models and serial numbers) in case they go walkabout (register them for free at www.immobilise.com).
- A record of anything you'll need in emergencies: bank details, card and passport numbers and contact details (including those for reporting lost cards and phones, etc).
- A steering wheel lock/bike D-lock (those marked
- A timer switch for lights (costs as little as £2 from a
- Hard drives or memory sticks to back you your work.
- Good quality door and window locks and a door chain (if you don't lock up you are more likely to have a breakin, plus you'll need them for most insurance polices).

# **Easy target?**

Student houses are littered with easy-to-loot, expensive goods. If you live with four housemates, that means five computers, five stereos, five lots of just about everything. And, just to ad to the mix...

- Housemates come and go, making it commonplace for doors and windows to be left open.
- Students are away from their accommodation for four to five months of the year.
- Students make the most of their uni/college experience by going out a lot – your place is unattended at peak thieving hours (when you're all at the pub or library or seeing mates).

Many aspects of the student lifestyle make it attractive for burglars and thieves – but you can make it less so if you read on!

## Safety basics...

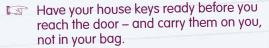
- Lock up, even if your nipping down the corridor.
- Stay together, tell friends where you are, share taxis and walk home together. Know your surroundings and choose sensible walking routes – well lit and with lots of people.
- Carry a personal alarm.
- Travel light (in terms of valuables)
- Keep your valuables out of sight and locked away when possible.



FACT: Women feel most in danger walking down the street, yet men are most likely to be victims of robbery or personal attacks. Don't make yourself an easy target...

- Keep bags closed and fastened. Be wary when wearing a backback. If someone grabs it, let it go. Bags – and their contents – can be replaced.
- Keep your wallet out of sight.
- Use cash machines in daylight or with a mate. Otherwise, choose a well-lit one or one inside a bank.
- Don't be flash with cash (keep it in your pocket) or your laptop (keep this hidden in an anonymous bag like a rucksack).
- If you take your mobile out with you, keep it hidden and keep calls brief.
- If you suspect you're being followed, cross over the road to see if they follow you. If you're still worried, don't hang about. Go to a public place and call a mate to meet you, or the police.





Walk confidently and be aware of what's going on around you.

Try to blend in and avoid wearing your 'Drunk' or 'Lost' student badge which will make you stand out to criminals.

Remember, if your chatting on the phone or listening to your MP3 player, you won't hear someone come up behind you. Your hearing is your best protection and your voice is your best defence. If you're attacked, shout and run.

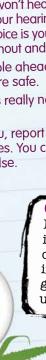
When your gut says there's trouble ahead, there probably is. Get somewhere safe.

Steer clear of a confrontation; it's really not worth it.

If something does happen to you, report it to the police and campus authorities. You could stop it happening to someone else.



Many campuses run safety schemes; check out your union for info. These can include late-night buses for students and advice on dangerous areas. Some will hook up with cab firms so, even if you don't have cash, you can take a cab and pay later if you give your student card details to the driver. Never get into an unmarked cab and don't walk home in the dark on your own.





# On the town!

# Common pitfalls of a night on the town

All graduates who spent their time at uni or college taking full advantage of the local nightlife have their tales of woe about a night out on the tiles.

The nights usually start with drinking lots in a short space of time and end in a blur with you doing something you'd rather not have done, throwing up 'til the next full moon, or in a police station reporting a lost bag or a stolen phone.

If it's easy for you to steal the flag hanging from the bar, a pint glass or an authentic-looking lampshade, then it's even easier for someone to steal your handbag, a tenner from your wallet or your phone.

On a night out, be constantly aware:

of where your belongs are; and

that the more you drink the less bothered you'll be about your stuff and what you get up to!

# Who's eyeing you up?

What you need to know about spiking

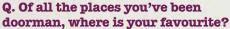
- Spiking drinks with alcohol or drugs does happen.
- People do it 'to be funny', out of spite or anger, to rob you or leave you open to
- sexual assault.
- It only takes 15 minutes for the effects of 'rape drugs' to kick in, but they can wipe out eight hours of memory.
- Most people know their spiker, and men's drinks get spiked too!
- For more information go to www.drinkaware.co.uk

# Protecting yourself

- Don't take a drink you haven't seen poured.
- Don't leave your drink unattended, especially if nipping out for a fag.
- If you suddenly feel unusually drunk, ask someone you trust to get you home.
- If a mate starts acting out of character, they might have been drugged – ask for help and get them home safely.

# The Bouncer

We met Edinburgh University student and doorman Dave Crosswell, 21, and asked him a few questions about keeping safe in clubs and bars...



A. "I've liked them all! I've bounced the door at old man's pubs, drum and bass nights through to the gay scene but now I'm at a cheesy nightclub."

# Q. What are the worst scenarios you've had to deal with?

A. "The most difficult times are when people are tanked up – they tend to think they're invincible and superior, when really they're more vulnerable than ever, and make really bad decisions. I had a lad the other night who wandered off boozed up – despite us trying to stop him – and he was beaten up and mugged by a group of locals. The thing is, some locals regard students as 'soft' and 'rich' which makes them easy targets. He was so drunk he couldn't defend himself."

Q. Would you encourage girls to ask doormen to call cabs for them?

A. "Yes – or ask the bar staff if we're busy.
We'll only use a licensed cab firm, and I'd say never let on you're on your own when booking. Girls wait with me all the time and, if they ask, I'll check the driver's details before they get in."

# Q. Have you ever been a victim of crime?

A. "Yes. I've had my drink spiked by idiots who thought it'd be funny (I left it for two minutes) and my wallet nicked (I'd left it on the table). The silly thing is, like most of these things, they were preventable."

# Q. What else have you learned about staying safe when you're out drinking?

A. "Don't take out too many valuables, and if you see something dodgy tell the door staff. Most clubs have an emergency room for people who need help, or have taken too many drugs. Most of all, relax!"

# THE GROUBLE WITH WEED



Weed is seen as a harmless drug and there are people who go through their whole lives smoking it without a problem and without getting caught - but that won't be the case for everyone. Below are some facts on cannabis so you can make informed choices...

#### Q. What is the law on cannabis?

A. Cannabis is a class B drug. For over 18s, possession of a small 'personal quantity' may lead to a 'cannabis warning' on a first occasion, rather than arrest, but the drug will be confiscated. If you are caught again you could face an on-the-spot fine or arrest.

# Q. What's so bad about a little smoke with friends?

**A.** In the eyes of the law, passing a spliff is seen as dealing.

#### Q. I've always been told I can't get hooked on cannabis - what are the health issues?

A. It's common for users to become dependant on weed and then suffer withdrawal symptoms such as insomnia, irritability, mood changes and appetite disturbance. Regular users can become demotivated and unsociable, get depressed and suffer from mental health problems. Then there's the smoking: cannabis, like tobacco, has lots of chemical components, which can cause lung disease and possibly cancer with long-term or heavy use.

#### Urban myths....

- Just a slap on the wrist? A conviction for any kind of drug crime can mean suspension or expulsion from your studies and/or halls of residence. A conviction for drugs may mean you're not allowed into some countries, such as the USA.
- Amsterdam-style coffee shops are not legal in the UK, no matter what anyone tells you.
- It is illegal to grow your own and you can be prosecuted with intent to supply if caught.

## **Case Study**

"I saw two guys doing coke in a club toilet. The nasty thing about mixing coke with drink is you feel indestructible. These two couldn't actually feel pain so it took two bouncers to get them out. One had his arm broken in the process but didn't bat an eyelid – he just picked up a CO2 gas canister with his bad arm and threw it at the bouncers, then drove off. We're talking a driving ban, a trip to the hospital and getting kicked off his course – and he won't remember any of it in the morning."

#### Steve, 2nd year student



# Illegal drugs are just that - illegal. They can also be dangerous. But if you're going to use them, at least know what you're getting into....

Some drugs will make you want to dance, acting as a stimulant to the mind and body (ecstasy (Es, MDMA), speed, crystal meth, cocaine) and some will make you go off into a world of your own (heroin, GHB, GBL, ketamine, magic mushrooms).

All these drugs are illegal to possess and carry heavy penalties with them. People are more likely to become victims of crime when on drugs, and may not make the best decisions for themselves. Drugs may be 'cut' with other drugs or substances to make them cheaper to produce and sell, which means they can be dangerous and unpredictable.

For more information on specific drugs, their risks and effects, talk to

GHB, GBL and ketamine have anaesthetic effects and, as such, can be fatal on their own even more so when taken with alcohol. When taking these drugs you won't feel pain, so if you hurt yourself you won't feel it until the effect wears off hours later. GHB and GBL are particularly dangerous and could have unpredictable side-effects.

Cocaine and heroin are extremely addictive. Cocaine can make you feel unbeatable and can make you a danger to the people around you.

Ecstasy makes you thirsty. It's not the ecstasy itself, but the loss of water caused by sweating, often brought on by dancing. If you have taken ecstasy it's important to keep sipping fluids (water or an isotonic sports drink) – about a pint an hour, little and often, no more.

#### What are the risks?

It's worth knowing the law (and the risks) about the drugs before you decide to take them as you can face heavy criminal penalties for possessing or supplying illegal drugs if caught, or face damaging your health.

Alcohol is a depressant and doesn't mix well with drugs.

- No matter what you're taking, the more times you take it, the more you'll need to take to get the same buzz.
- Your immune system gets a battering whether it's high octane nights that last four days or the toll drugs take on your organs, your body is working overtime and you'll be more susceptible to everyday colds and viruses.

### What about Mephedrone?

Some websites that offer 'legal highs' for sale, are actually selling illegal drugs, including mephedrone. Mephedrone became a class B drug in 2010. This means it is illegal to possess, give away or sell. Supplying someone else, including your friends can get you up to 14 years in prison and an unlimited fine.

Mephedrone has similar effects to both amphetamine and ecstasy. The long term risks of this substance are yet to emerge but as a stimulant it is thought to over stimulate your heart and nervous system, cause fits and feelings of anxiety and paranoia. It is also reported to cause for more cravings for more which could lead to dependence. The real dangers of the new substance are only now becoming clear.

# Don't leave home without... contents insurance!

FACT: The average burglary will cost you over £1,000. Insurance is far cheaper, starting from £18 per year



tudents often own plenty of items that are attractive to thieves – take a look around you. In a flash a thief could have picked up a laptop and an MP3 player: that's £800+.

Contents insurance polices provides the cover you need, taking into account your lifestyle and the fact that your house is empty in the holidays, and will allow you to quickly replace what's stolen.

Many colleges and universities provide free contents insurance as part of their service – just make sure that you get top-up cover for especially valuable items such as laptops.

Ask your parents if their contents insurance covers your property – sometimes it's cheaper to add it onto their policy, but always check!

Get insurance sorted before you arrive at uni or college if you can – many thefts take place within a few weeks of a new term and in the run-up to Christmas as burglars start their Christmas shopping. Even if you haven't got it yet, its never too late for insurance to be worth the cost!

Shop around for the best price. If your bank balance can't take it, think about insuring your most expensive or irreplaceable items like your laptop or bike individually.

Try to take most of your valuables home during the breaks.

Insurance is a must for any student, but remember – it's less hassle to stay safe thank to claim on your insurance.



# Property marking

Don't just think about doing it. Use a UV pen (your union might give them away for free) and write your uni name and student ID number on valuables. Ideally keep photographic records of valuables. Record the make, model and serial numbers of electrical equipment or, even better, register them for free at www.immobilise.com

## Case Study

"One minute I was having a great time with my new flatmates, the next someone broke in and took everything. I lost my decks and my flatmate had left his car keys lying about, and they nicked his car. It turns out we hadn't double locked the door".

Susie, 2nd year student

## Case Study

"I went in to the library to send an email, and hung my rucksack on the back of my chair. When I turned round, it was gone – along with my phone, diary, books, keys. I had to change the locks on my front door."

Matt, 3rd year student

## Case Study

"My mate had his stuff nicked when he went home for the holidays. It happened in the afternoon. I'd only gone to the canteen for 30 minutes, and someone stole my laptop. It was new and, stupidly, I hadn't insured it. Word got around my halls and we're all more careful now."

Joe, 1st year student

## Case Study

"I parked my car outside my boyfriend's house while we went out for the evening and it got broken into. I'd been home for the weekend and had my clothes in the boot, and they pinched a camera out of one of the bags. It cost me a fortune to replace. I don't leave anything in there now."

Claudia, 3rd year student

# Don't let them steal your degree...

If your laptop's nicked, that's how many weeks of hard work gone?

Save yourself the grief (and cost) by doing what you can to protect what's yours...



# Laptops

OK, so it's mobile, but don't carry it around if you can help it. If you do, disguise it by putting it in a rucksack so people won't know you have one.

Don't leave it on show in a car – even if you are in it.

Back up all your work regularly. Use tracking software – laptops can be retrieved from criminals by the police. Use computer security cables.



# **Bicycles**

With over 100,000 bikes stolen every year, you can't be too protective.

Use a sturdy lock like a D-lock. Chains can be cut.

Local both tyres, and remove any extras (like lights or seats if removable).

Mark your bike frame with your postcode or uni/college name and student ID number.

If you cant find a secure bike store, lock up your

bike where it can be seen – in a busy street, or near somewhere with good lightening and CCTV.

Report if it's stolen. Many unis and colleges run schemes where you can register your bike with them.

# Motor bikes & scooters

Always lock it to something immovable (some insurance companies won't pay out unless you've done this). Put a steering lock on and use a strong steel cable or D-lock

Get a combined alarm/ immobiliser fitted by a professional.

Take the same precautions about where you park as you would with a car.

Have the bike, engine and windscreen etched with the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) or your postcode or uni / college name and student ID number.





# Mobile phones

If you make a call in public, keep an eye on who's around you.

Register your phone with your network operator. This makes barring easier.

Record your IMEI number (a unique ID code located on a strip normally found behind the battery of the handset), or by calling \*#06#. These days it's as easy to cancel a mobile as it is to cancel a credit card. The moment your phone is stolen, call your network on **08701 123 123** and they will block your SIM card and phone.

Once cancelled, it cannot be used again on any network, even with a new SIM card – meaning no big bill run up in your name, and stealing it is pointless.

Contact the Mobile Industry Crime Action Forum on **020 78778 9864** for more advice on handset security.



Don't make it easy for thieves. Believe it or not, most cars are stolen because they're unlocked. Say no more.

Never leave the keys in the ignition: prime example, when paying for petrol.

Hide car documents and keys at home. Get a car alarm, steering lock or immobiliser fitted. Think about where you're parking. Use a, well lit, secure car park rather than a dark alley?

Don't leave anything – CDs, chequebooks, even an old coat – on show inside.

Secure your stereo.

Have your car registration number or the last 7 digits of your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etched onto all windows, the windscreens and headlamps.

# Are your digs asking for it?

Test out your student accommodation and ask:
"If I were a burglar, how easy would it be to break in?"



# The burglary test

For most of you, living on your own for the first time or moving into rented digs means your own 'house' rules. But just how safe are you in your room? Take the test  Do you have outside lighting?  Yes No	y y C
Do you have a burglar alarm and use it (despite the hassle)?  Yes No	1
Does your door fit properly, is the lock properly attached and does it keep the door firmly shut?  Yes No	
Does everyone in the house always lock their doors and windows, even if someone's in downstairs?	

☐ Yes ☐ No

f you have deadlocks, do you use hem (burglars hate them because you need a key to open them)?
Do you use a timer switch for lights and radios when you're out (to give the impression you're in)?
Do you have a smoke alarm?  Yes No
Do you make sure any valuable items — such as TVs, laptops or cash — are hidden away from outside view?  Yes No
Is your back garden secure and difficult for strangers to access?  Yes No

What if you live in halls? The majority of thefts in halls result from students leaving doors and windows open.
Here's a mini-test just for you...

If you live in halls, do you make sure no one follows you in through the main entrance?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you avoid leaving notes on your door announcing "I'm out!" or giving out access codes to take-away companies?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you keep your door and the main door shut, even when you have just popped down the corridor?

Yes No

Loads of Yes's: You're looking after yourself.

More No's: C'mon. Take more care.

# Before you rent

House hunting can be stressful, but thanks to the survival guide there's one less thing to worry about. It's simple to be security savvy, and you should have high expectations of your landlord. Here are some basics to keep in mind...

- Check to see that external doors have five-lever mortise locks, and internal doors and windows have locks. Your landlord should provide adequate locks and keys as well as smoke detectors. Ask your students' union or accommodation office for tips on how to keep properly safe and your rights as a tenant.
- Get netting or blinds over windows that are at street level, and timer light switches that can come on while you are out to give the impression that someone is inside.
- Crooks get in and out of houses because they can roam freely

   do you have a back gate shared by a number of houses,
   which no one locks? Is there a room extended off the back of your house that would be easy to climb onto and from which someone could access a back bedroom window?
- Over a third of all burglaries in student houses happen because tenants leave windows and doors open. Put signs up to make sure you check all doors and windows before going out.

When dealing with your landlord, do it in writing and keep a copy, in case you need proof. Most students' unions will look at your contract for you and check it's alright. Plus your contract is not legally binding until you sign it. Read the small print carefully! Check out the advice pages of **www.studentuk.com** for more info.



# International Students

Until now, you've been judged as high risk because you're new to the culture and so won't be aware of how crime works in the UK. NOT ANY MORE. All the information in this guide applies to you, and if you follow these extra safety tips you should be even safer...

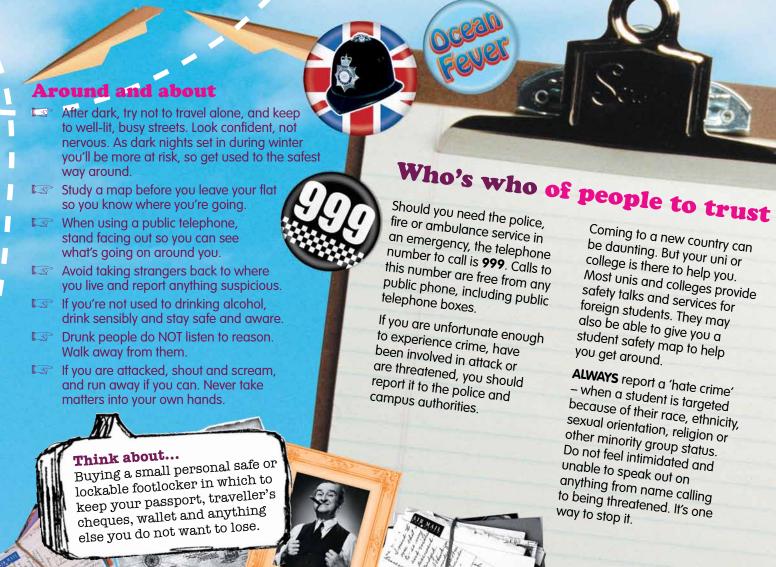
# When packing

- Make sure you've learnt as much as you can about your uni or college and the local area via the internet – and familiarise yourself with UK's customs/ manners/laws (eg you can drink from 18 years of age).
- Make sure you have travel and property insurance that covers you abroad. Check to see if you need medical insurance too.
- Always have photocopies of your travel documents and passport's data page.
  - If it's not necessary, don't bring it some valuables are safer left at home.
- Keep the telephone number of your college or uni handy, in case you need to call for help.
- Make sure you know where you will be living, your way around and how to get to and from your flat.

- Don't carry huge amounts of cash with you: bring just enough to cover your journey needs (no more than £200). Use a credit card to pay for things like hotels and train tickets.
- Carry a 'dummy' wallet containing a small amount of local currency. If you get into a situation where you have to hand it over, give that to the thief instead of your real wallet/purse (which should be hidden).
- Never leave your luggage unattended and label it with a forwarding address.
- Be aware of scams on Gumtree/online rental sites. If something looks to good to be true, it probably is.

# When you arrive

Limit the amount of cash you carry on you or stash at home/in your lodgings. Open a bank account immediately – it's the only safe option. Most banks are open from 9:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday (some are open on Saturday). You will then be able to withdraw money at any time using a cash card. Get advice from your welfare officer on services offered by local banks.



# CYBER CRIME

Having your PIN stolen and losing £££ on your credit card – the likelihood is low, but reduce the odds by keeping your details and cash safe

### Credit card fraud: Ways to protect yourself

- Treat your cards like cash never let them out of your sight (one in five stolen credit cards are taken from cars) and never, ever pass on PINs or passwords.
- Don't leave cards behind a bar. Someone could copy the details.
- Go through your bank balance carefully if you spot a withdrawal or purchase that isn't yours report it to your bank.
- Rip up or shred receipts, mini statements, loan forms and cashpoint balances so card details can't be stolen.
- If you go abroad, only take the cards you'll need and inform your bank.
- Have emergency contact numbers to hand to cancel lost or stolen cards.
- Never keep your PIN with your cash card.

If any of your cards are stolen, call immediately to cancel them – don't even wait until you get home.

## Four steps to cyber safety

#### 1. Use a secure computer

Get virus protection and a firewall installed. Avoid shopping from public computers. Don't open emails or attachments if you don't know where they came from – they could contain a virus. Log into and out of secure sessions correctly.

#### 2. Only shop at secure web sites

Always use a single credit card. Check that you are shopping with a reputable online store. If it's a secure connection, the beginning of the website should change from http to https. Also, a small padlock symbol should appear on the bottom of your browser.

#### 3. Keep your ID YOUR identity

Keep PINs, passwords and personal information safe – always be wary of unsolicited emails that claim to come from banks asking you to click on a link and disclose information. Your bank would never ask you to disclose your PIN or password in full. Make sure the internet site you're buying from has the relevant security logo. If someone asks for your card details or asks you to do

dodgy transfers over the internet, they're likely to be scamming you.

#### 4. Be up to date

Keep a record of any transactions you make online so that you can check them against your bills or statements.

## **Cashpoint security**

Be aware of 'shoulder surfers' who look over your shoulder at cash machines to steal your PIN. Look out for cash machines that have been tampered with.

# When taking money out of cash machines:

- Go in daylight and use machines inside banks if you can.
- Shield the keyboard, even if no one's around you.
- Never be distracted.
- If someone crowds or watches you, cancel the transaction and move on. If you're last in the queue, ask the person in front of you to wait until you've finished in case someone is waiting for you to be on your own.
- Put the money and card away safely before leaving.
- Do not use a machine that appears to have been tampered with in any way.

# Helplines

# Need more advice? These will help...

## **General**

www.nus.org.uk
www.nusconnect.org.uk
www.crimestoppers-uk.org
www.citizensadvice.org.uk
www.homeoffice.gov.uk
www.britishcouncil.org

Feel safe phoning the police with information on a crime on freephone. line: **0800 555111.**You will remain anonymous.

### **Personal**

www.victimsupport.org.uk
Log on or call the Victim Support
Line: 0845 3030900.

www.met.police.uk/sapphire Provides a one-stop shop for all victims of sexual assault and sexual assault.

#### www.roofie.com

A charity working in the field of drug related assault and sexual assault in the UK.

## www.suzylamplugh.org

A national charity on how to be safe at home, work, uni and out and about. Call: **020 8392 1839.** 

#### **Vehicle**

#### www.soldsecure.com

A non-profit company that produces car security equipment, backed by police and the Home Office.

## Call: **01327 264687**.

# Drugs

www.talktofrank.com You've seen the ads. Provides

all you need to know on drugs, alongside stories from recovering users.

Helpline: 0800 776600.

## Housing

www.studentaccommodation.org www.upmystreet.com

www.shelter.org

www.nus.org.uk/en/Campaigns/

The-Lock/Your-Home/Rental-

www.nus.org.uk/en/Campaigns/

The-Lock/Your-Home/Your-House

www.nus.org.uk/en/Advice/ Housing-Advice

## Mobile phones

www.immobilise.com

How it works and what you should do to block a stolen phone.

## **Cyber Crime**

### www.actionfraud.org.uk/

Advice on the simple steps you can take to protect yourself against fraud.

#### www.cardwatch.org.uk

The UK bank industry, police and retailers working together to fight card fraud.

Write in your relevant numbers and keep in case of emergency

Local taxi rank:

Campus security:

Mobile network operator (or call 08701 123123):

24-hour emergency bank number:

Insurance claim emergency number:

