

Safer Online Dating Tips



Because Internet dating is initially absent of verbal and nonverbal cues typically used to assess the credibility and trustworthiness of a prospective mate, you may develop an inaccurate perception of your partner. The following safety tips, formulated by SODA's panel of safety experts, are recommended for your Internet dating safety.

Internet Dating Companies and Meeting Online

- 1.** Use an online dating company that puts its members' safety above the "privacy" of other members.
- 2.** Use an online dating company that conducts criminal background screenings. If your online dating company does not run criminal background screenings on their users, have one done on your own, especially before meeting in person.
- 3.** While your online dating company should do whatever it can to enhance member safety and security, your safety and security are your responsibility. You must be careful and think before you act.
- 4.** Set up an email account different from your personal one through a web-based email service such as Yahoo, Google or Hotmail. Use an online name free from any sexual connotation, to avoid giving the impression you are interested in anything other than a meaningful, lasting relationship.
- 5.** Do not advertise any personally identifying information -- common blunders are screen names and email addresses that contain enough information to determine your identity.
- 6.** Be careful what information you give out to reduce the possibility of being targeted by someone who might view you as naive, wealthy, inexperienced, vulnerable, etc. Never provide financial information, including your Social Security number, to anyone you meet on line.
- 7.** Do not post pictures of your children.
- 8.** Spend time getting to know someone online before talking on the phone or meeting offline. Exchange several emails and private chat sessions online first.
- 9.** Report any member safety concerns to your online dating company. Stay away from people who bully you for personal information right away or pressure you to meet instantly.

Meeting the first time

- 10.** Always let friends/family know where you are going on your date, details of who you're going to meet, and what time you plan to be home. If your date is going well and you want to extend it beyond the time specified, call the person you let know about the date and tell them what time you'll be home later.
- 11.** Meet in a well lit public place, during daylight hours, with other people around. Try a coffee shop or restaurant. Bring a friend to protect you in case the date goes badly. Only continue the date if the individual matches their online profile picture.
- 12.** Use your own transportation or public transportation.
- 13.** Wear conservative clothing; avoid suggestive language and jokes.
- 14.** Always have a fully charged and working cell phone with you and make sure the GPS tracking feature is turned on or make sure you have change for a pay phone so you can communicate with friends/family if necessary.
- 15.** Verify your date's name and description using their driver's license.
- 16.** Do not go off alone with your date. Predators are masterful at building trust and confidence quickly and can take their victims by surprise.
- 17.** Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable or insecure, immediately end the date and request someone at the location to escort you to your car or other means of transportation.

Worst Case Scenarios

- 18.** If cyber stalked, block the offender's email address from your email account and tell your online dating company to remove the offender's profile from their site. If necessary, change your email address so it's unsearchable by your stalker.
- 19.** Immediately report any stalking, sexual assault, or Internet dating crime to your local police. Some police departments have sex crimes and cyber crimes units specifically trained to solve crimes related to online dating. Courts can order online dating companies to remove an offending profile from their site. And, depending on the case, police can run a forensic computer analysis on your computer and the offender's computer. If your offender is unknown, other forensic investigative measures are available to apprehend the offender.
- 20.** If sexually assaulted by someone you met through an online dating service, get help from your local rape crisis center right away and notify your online dating company to remove the offender's profile from their site.

Safe Dating Services

Background Check Company:



www.InfoCheckUSA.net

Provides Dating Background Checks.

Safe Online Dating Service:



www.SafeDatingUSA.com

Provides a Safe Online Dating Service by Screening Members.

Safe Online Dating Info:



www.SaferOnlineDating.org

Provide Safe Dating Tips and News.
