FEELING SAFE-
TOP TEN TIPS FOR FARM AND FIELD VISITS

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Experience

- Experience from UW:
  - UW- Madison graduate
  - Master’s in Criminal Justice from UW- Platteville
  - UWPD officer since 2001

- Experience on the job:
  - Badger Watch (crime prevention program of the UWPD)
  - Presenter in Hate Crimes, Stalking, and Violence
  - Presenter in Safety in the Workplace (aka Work Place Violence)
  - Coordinator of UWPD Citizens Academy
Agenda:

- Why are we here?
- General safety tips/personal safety
- Planning ahead
- On site visit
  - Odd behavior
- Follow-up afterwards
- Protocol/policy
- Last reminders- Top 10 tips
Why are we here?

□ Why is it so important to talk to people?

Because people need three things:

1. To be heard
2. To be understood
3. To be taken seriously
Why are we here?

- Hazards
  - Inappropriate comments
  - Verbal threats
  - Physical threats
  - Property damage
- Concerned for your safety
- Take into account society and economic factors
- Security training and devices cost time and money
- About 85-90% of violence is preventable
Personal Safety

Awareness is the key to personal safety

- Always remain aware and alert
- Make brief eye contact with people
- Walk with confidence
- Do not let yourself become distracted
- Have a plan
- You need to know your options/escape routes
- **Fight** or **Flight** or **Freeze**, BUT... Know your limitations!
Follow your gut instincts!!!
First Rules of Safety - YOU!

- Arriving at your destination (day or night)
- What are you wearing today? (tennis shoes, skirt, high heels)
- Where is your belongings (wallet, purse, briefcase, laptop, iPod)?
- Are you carrying cash, meds, cell phone?
- Other unexpected situations (dog)
Planning Ahead

- Postcard week before announcing visit
- Professional attire
  - Polo with UW logo
  - Nametag
  - Magnet on vehicle with Extension logo
- Cell phone fully charged
- Use bathroom before arrival
- Other
On site

- How you park your vehicle
- Firm handshake
- Eye contact
- Be organized
- Know your purpose
- Possibly go over meeting timeline/expectations
  1. Check the crop
  2. Check the soil
  3. Check the equipment
Be Aware of Body Language

- Eye contact
- Posture/Gestures
- Facial expressions
- Volume of voice
- Respiration
- Clenching
- Dry mouth

***Don’t be afraid to leave if you are uncomfortable.***
Signs of a person in crisis

**Not in order and not all inclusive**

- Frequent interpersonal conflicts
- Verbal, non-verbal, written threats
- Intimidation, explicit or subtle
- Displays of unwarranted behavior
- Expression of plan to hurt self/others
- Expression of extreme desperation over personal problems
- Violence toward inanimate objects/animals
- Fascination with weapons or violent acts
- Prior police contacts where violence was committed (murder, reckless endangerment, sexual assault, battery, arson, etc.)
- Feelings of persecution or distrust of others
- Chronic depression or mood swings
- Perception of injustice
- Low self-esteem, excuses, blaming
- Strained relationships
- Reduce motivation
- Changes in health or hygiene
- Substance abuse
- Frequent allusions to violence
Odd behavior, the what ifs...

- Agitated
- “Creeped out”
- Intuition
- Gut feeling
- Uncomfortable
- Sexual harassment
- Physical contact
- Inappropriate comments
What can you do when you experience odd behavior?

- Remain calm
- Actively listen
- Communicate understanding
- Be respectful and patient
- Set clear boundaries
- Never make promises you can’t keep
- Always know the location of all EXITS!
- Code word
De-escalating behavior

- Position yourself at an angle to the person rather than directly in front.
- Are they any weapons in the area?
- Acknowledge the person’s feelings and use their name.
- Don’t say “I know how you feel”.
- Use simple commands, such as asking the person to move to different area.
De-escalation continued…

- Use delaying tactics to give the person time to calm down, give choices, and present consequences.

- Avoid sudden movements, don’t show fear, and maintain 3-6 foot distance.

- Don’t say anything that you can’t back up.

- Call the police and your supervisor as soon as possible.
Comments and Responses

- “You are much prettier than the lady that used to come for a farm visit.”
  - Thank you, but we need to stick to business here.
  - Thank you, but I don’t appreciate comments of that nature.

- “You would be a great fit for my son.”
  - Thank you, but I am married.
  - Let’s stick to the reason for my visit.
Follow-up afterwards

- Don’t ignore the signs of problems
- Tell a trusted colleague
- Document your observations
- Ask for guidance
- Get help!!
Policy and Best Practice

Some key points in any effective policy should include:

- All employees are responsible for maintaining a safe workplace.
- Management will respond appropriately to all reports of workplace aggression or violence.
- Management will intervene in any inappropriate behavior.
- Management will support employees, in their efforts to prevent hostile acts while on the job.
“Just hop in. We’ll take you to where we are going.”

Good response:

“It is our policy that we drive ourselves. I will follow you in my car.”
Group Activity
Suspect Identification

- Sex/Race?
- Clothing description?
- Height and weight?
- Age?
- Hair color and style?
- Facial hair or glasses?
- Scars, marks, or tattoos?
- What was said?
- How was it said?
- Any smells?
- Odor of intoxicants?
- Any WEAPONS displayed?
- Last direction of travel?
- Any noticeable jewelry worn?
Top 10 Tips

- Use good common sense
- Use your resources
- When in doubt, call the local police
- Be aware of signs of crisis
- Tell the right people
- Know your surroundings
- Have a plan of action
- Always be prepared to call 911!
- Check CCAP (WI Circuit Court Access)
- After an incident, make sure you talk to someone if you need to
- Be sure to take care of yourself!
Any questions?