**A Girl's Guide to Safe Dating: Safety Calls**

https://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/A\_Girl\_s\_Guide\_to\_Safe\_Dating\_Safety\_Calls.html

"Have a nice time, darling! Make sure you call me when you get there and when you leave!" Sound familiar? This was from my mom when I’d go to friends’ homes. In high school, my dad always gave me some quarters before I went out on a date (back in the days when there were pay phones) and told me to call him at any hour, if things weren’t going well and he’d come get me. Of course, back then, I thought they were just being overprotective. But today, their safety reminders turn out to be good advice for everyone using Online Dating Services. We all need a safety call.

When you consider the excitement of going on a first date, it's very tempting to rush into it without planning anything more than what you're going to wear and the best shade of lipstick for the occasion. But we've all read the news and heard stories from concerned friends about someone who was hurt or killed when they met someone, in person, from an online dating service.

We all know, anyone with a computer can claim to be trustworthy. In 2007, MySpace.com revealed that they banned 29,000 known sex offenders that had profiles on their social networking site. Unfortunately in today’s dating environment, your date is, more or less, a stranger to you. You only know what he told you, and unfortunately it might all be a fabrication. Yes, even married men post fake profiles.

So how do you stay safe when you're meeting with someone new? One way is to use a safety call. A safety call is a way for you to check in with another person who knows where you are, who you're with, and when you'll check back in. If you don't check in, or if you use a pre-arranged code phrase to indicate that you are in danger, your contact person calls for help.

A good safety call is one in which your contact person has as much information as possible. Your contact should have the following information: your full name, your address, your phone number (home and cell), and details about your car (make, model, and license plate number), as well as your date's full name, home address (if you can get it), phone numbers, online ID, and any other information you have about him.

It's also very important to provide information about where you're meeting. Pre-arrange with your contact person when you’ll call and check in. You definitely need to call them if there’s a change in plans to another location. I like using text to check in. I send my first text when I arrive, another when I excuse myself to the ladies’ room at some point in the date and then a text when I’m safely inside my home after the date.

My contact person expects three texts within the evening. If she doesn’t get at least the third text by an expected time, she calls me. That’s were setting up code words or phrases with your contact person, to indicate you are in danger but cannot say so in front of your date, is important. Make these code words something common that’s easy to work into a conversation in a natural way. For instance, if you’re in danger, you could ask your contact person, "Are we still getting together for lunch on next Friday?" Anything with everyday terms is much less likely to alert your date that you are signaling your contact person to call the police.

Be respectful of your contact person and be responsible by keeping to the pre-arranged calls. You might be having the time of your life with this guy, but you don’t want to worry your friend just because you lost track of time. Having the police show up for no reason would not go well for you.

Finally, let your date know that you need to check in with a friend. If he is as trustworthy as he claims to be, he won't have any problems with it -- in fact, he should be glad that you did. On the other hand, if he objects or gets angry that you've set up a way to check in with a third party, that's a strong signal that he's probably not safe.