



SAFETY

Victoria and the UVic campus are generally very safe, but it is important to be aware of available resources and the actions you can take to stay healthy and avoid hazardous situations while studying at UVic.

Resources

Emergency Assistance

In Canada, you can report and call for help in an emergency anytime and anywhere by phoning **9-1-1**. An operator will ask you to choose police, fire, or ambulance and will ask what city you are in. Try to stay calm and speak clearly. Interpreting services are available on request. The operator will put you on hold while they transfer you. Do not hang up!

More information about emergency assistance is available on the UVic [Emergency information](#) webpage.

Non-Emergency Assistance

HealthLink BC provides non-emergency health information and advice to anyone living in or visiting BC. Access this free service anytime by phoning **8-1-1** or by visiting the [HealthLink BC website](#). Interpreting services are available on request.

For students enrolled in guard.me@uvic, a mobileDOCTOR is available for your health concerns. This service allows you to connect with a doctor from your phone or laptop anytime, anywhere, and can eliminate the need to go to a walk-in clinic or hospital. [Register for this service](#).

The following on-campus units provide resources to support your health and safety:

- [Campus Security Services](#)
- [Equity and Human Rights](#)
- [Office of Student Life](#)
- [Student Wellness Centre](#) (counselling, health, multifaith)

Actions

Emergency Planning

Do you know what to do before, during, and after an emergency? Planning ahead will help you stay safe when the time comes. Information is available at [Prepare Yourself website](#) and the [Emergency Planning website](#).

Register for [UVic Emergency Alerts](#) and update your contact information on UVic My Page.

Outdoor Activities

- **Biking:** Cyclists are required by law to wear a helmet at all times and to use both a front headlight and a rear light at night. If you plan to use a bike in BC we recommend [Bike Sense](#) to learn traffic skills and rules of the road.
- **Swimming:** Swimming in the ocean and in lakes is different than swimming and is often more challenging. In Victoria, most beaches do not have a life guard. Know your abilities. [Vikes Recreation](#) offers swimming lessons and to learn more about water safety in BC and [Lifesaving Society](#) is a fantastic resource.
- Plan carefully before going on a hike. Make sure you are physically fit enough to enjoy your hiking activity. Wear proper clothing and footwear. Carry water and food. Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return. Carry a mobile phone, but be aware that you may not get service in some areas.

Theft Prevention

Record serial or identity numbers and engrave or mark valuable items. Keep your passport and important documents at home and in a safe place. Do not leave your belongings unattended in public places. It only takes a few seconds for them to disappear. Bicycle theft is common, so invest in a solid lock.

Home Safety

Do not put your name or address on your keys. Replace locks if your keys are lost or stolen. Never let a stranger into your home. Keep your doors and windows locked. A smoke alarm is a very important piece of safety equipment for your home. It is designed to alert you to fires so you can escape. Make sure your home has a smoke alarm. Test the smoke alarm every month, replace the batteries once a year, keep it clear of dust, and do not disable it, cover it, or paint over it.

Vehicle Safety

If you intend to drive a vehicle in BC, consult the [Insurance Corporation of British Columbia \(ICBC\) website](#). Do not use a handheld device such as a mobile phone while driving. Do not accept rides from strangers or offer a ride to someone you just met. Do not drive while after consuming drugs and alcohol. It is a very serious offence in Canada and it is important to [understand the law](#). Do not leave valuables visible inside a vehicle. Store them in the trunk. When a vehicle is not in use, keep the doors, windows, sunroof, and trunk closed and locked. Always wear a seatbelt!

Alcohol and Drugs

In Canada, it is against the law to use, buy, or sell illegal drugs. The consumption of alcohol is legal, but it is against the law to carry open alcohol in public places or in a vehicle. In BC, the legal drinking age is 19. You will need government issued photo identification to enter bars and pubs. Never leave your drink unattended and do not accept drinks from strangers. In Canada, the consumption of recreational cannabis is legal. Each province and territory has its own rules for cannabis including the legal minimum age (19 years in BC), where adults can buy, where adults can use, and how much adults can possess. Keep in mind that the legalization of cannabis does not change Canada's border regulations or laws in other countries. For more information visit [Cannabis use](#). Please remember that each of us is responsible for our behaviour and for any bad decisions we make, even if we are intoxicated.

Personal Safety

Do not give personal information like your name, address, or telephone number to a stranger. When meeting someone new, ask a friend to join you or plan to meet in a public place. Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, leave immediately. When walking after dark, plan your route. Keep your head up and be aware of your surroundings. If possible, walk with someone you know and trust. Learn the location of phones on campus that direct dial to [Campus Security Services](#) and make use of their Safe Haven, Safe Walk, and Campus Alone programs.

Relationships

Cultural differences and language barriers can sometimes lead to communication challenges and misinterpreted behaviours. When you start dating someone, be clear about your limits and respect their limits. NO means NO! If you feel scared or unsafe, if you want someone to stop touching you, or if you want a relationship to end, say NO. Be direct and firm. No one has the right to contact you or touch you after you tell them to stop. We encourage all students to learn about [sexualized violence prevention and awareness](#).

Fraud Prevention

Attempted fraud is often referred to as a scam. Scams can happen over the telephone, through mail, text, email, online, or in person. Most scams ask for money or sensitive personal information, which can be used to steal your identity. Once someone has stolen your identity, they can access your accounts and take your money. Scams often appear to come from well-known and trusted businesses, financial institutions, or government agencies. Sometimes, they even appear to come from UVic. Learn more about fraud and how you can protect yourself, visit the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre website](#).