

METRAC's Community Safety Audit



Named a best practice by UN-HABITAT's Safer Cities Campaign (2008-2013), METRAC's Community Safety Audit helps you pull in the real experts: those who work, live and play in your area.

"We could talk about stuff we've witnessed that makes us feel unsafe in our neighbourhoods." (Safety Audit participant)

METRAC's Community Safety Audit is an action tool to help people assess the safety of spaces they use, identify violence and safety concerns, discuss solutions and develop an action plan to prevent violence. It has been used to assess the TTC (Toronto Transit Commission) public transit system, neighbourhoods, housing units, schools, campuses, apartment buildings, parks, parking lots and garages. METRAC's audit is **based on the perspectives of those who live, work and play in an area - they are safety experts of the area.** It recognizes that women and other vulnerable groups most often feel unsafe. It allows participants to share experiences and consider how violence affects community members differently based on their identities. The audit examines:

- **overall feelings about the safety** of an area;
- **physical features:** lighting, maintenance, signs and maps, accessibility, sightlines, security, isolation, emergency protocols, entrapment sites, public transportation;
- **policies and practices** that impact safety in the area; and
- **attitudes and behaviours:** feelings of being threatened or intimidated; experiences of discrimination based on identity (e.g. race, class, age, gender, sexuality).

METRAC's Community Safety Audit was named a **Vital Idea** by the Toronto Community Foundation (2004).

"It was an awesome experience." (Safety Audit participant)

What do we mean by "safety"?



Our focus is on personal safety (how safe people feel in their living, working, playing and learning environments). Personal safety affects how people navigate through and use spaces. We recognize safety from the viewpoint of women and other marginalized groups, incorporating their unique needs into safety-enhancing plans and policies. **A person is truly safe when they are free from the threat, fear and experience of violence, oppression and discrimination.**

Why women's safety?



Statistics show that **women have unique safety concerns and violence against women in public spaces is a big problem.** Women often feel most vulnerable to violence and harassment, but their safety needs and concerns are rarely acknowledged. METRAC's Community Safety Audit is designed to help diverse participants, including women, voice their personal safety concerns. It addresses forms of violence that women are particularly at risk of experiencing in public spaces (e.g. physical and sexual assault, harassment, stalking).

90% of participants said METRAC's Community Safety Audit responded to issues in their neighbourhood. (Findings from 2010 survey of 111 participants)

Steps to carry out a Safety Audit

- **Attend a METRAC Safety Audit Training Session.** Check out our website (www.metrac.org) to find out when the next training will be held or book a session for METRAC to come in and train your community members. Everyone who attends a training will receive a copy of METRAC's Community Safety Audit Kit.
- **Organize an audit group** in your neighbourhood.
- **Choose a date, place and time** for the audit.
- **Conduct the audit in your neighbourhood after dark** to identify lighting problems.
- **Collect and submit audit results** to METRAC. We will create a Neighbourhood Safety Report Card based on the findings, which includes information on follow-up and action.
- Discuss Neighbourhood Safety Report Card results with your group and **create a plan of action** based on it.

METRAC's Community Safety Audit Kit is available in **English, Simplified Chinese, French, Punjabi, Spanish and Tamil.** Order it online by visiting www.metrac.org/resources/resources.htm. A tailored, youth-friendly training and Youth Safety Audit Kit is available for groups of young people. Contact us for details.

Contact us

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Founded in 1984, METRAC is a community-based, not-for-profit organization that prevents violence against women and youth.

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