



IS IT SAFE?

Virginia Beach

SOLO TRAVELER SAFETY GUIDE

Is It Safe?

Virginia Beach for Solo Travelers

Virginia Beach is one of the safer large resort cities on the East Coast for solo travel. The resort strip is heavily patrolled in season, the oceanfront infrastructure is well-maintained, and the sheer volume of tourism keeps the major visitor areas active and well-lit. That said, Virginia Beach is a large, spread-out city with distinct neighbourhoods that require different levels of awareness — and a military-heavy demographic that shapes both the culture and the nightlife dynamics in specific ways.

This guide covers the areas and situations that matter for a solo traveler in Virginia Beach, with specific attention to the concerns that affect women traveling alone.

OVERALL SAFETY RATING FOR SOLO TRAVELERS

GENERALLY SAFE

With standard urban awareness — especially at night and outside the resort corridor

AT A GLANCE

LOW RISK Resort Oceanfront (Day)

Well-patrolled, high foot traffic, good lighting. The safest daytime environment in the city.

LOW RISK ViBe District (Day & Evening)

Arts district with active café and gallery culture. Well-lit evenings, local crowd.

MODERATE — BE AWARE Resort Strip (Night)

Bar-heavy corridor with a significant military demographic. Situational awareness essential after 11pm. Stick to populated areas.

LOW RISK Shore Drive / Chic's Beach

Residential and local. Low crime, relaxed atmosphere. Few concerns for solo travelers.

MODERATE — BE AWARE Oceanfront Hotels (Late Night)

Hotel bars and adjacent nightlife attract a high-volume, sometimes rowdy weekend crowd in peak season. Know your exit routes.

USE CAUTION Isolated Beach Areas (Night)

Unlit beach access points after midnight. Avoid solo walks on unlit sections of the beach after 10pm, particularly off the main Boardwalk.

ELEVATED CAUTION Resort Strip (3am+)

Late-night bar closing hours bring a concentrated crowd onto Atlantic Avenue. Pre-arrange your transport home; don't walk alone to your hotel after bar close.

SAFETY BY SITUATION

Walking the Boardwalk Alone

Day: Zero concerns. The Boardwalk is one of the most public and monitored spaces in Virginia. Police patrol on bikes, golf carts, and on foot throughout daylight hours. Beach Patrol lifeguards operate at all active beach areas.

Night: The Boardwalk itself is well-lit and staffed through midnight in season. The beach side is dark beyond the boardwalk lighting — do not walk down to the water alone after dark. Stay on the lit promenade.

Dining and Bars Alone

Virginia Beach has a strong counter-seat and bar-seating culture — solo dining is entirely normal at most establishments. The ViBe District restaurants are particularly solo-friendly in terms of atmosphere and staff engagement.

The resort strip bar scene (Atlantic Avenue, 17th–31st Streets) gets louder and more aggressive after 10pm, especially Thursday–Saturday in peak season. Military base leave weekends (particularly around holidays) bring a concentrated, sometimes rowdy crowd. If you feel uncomfortable, request a staff escort to your transport.

Using Rideshare (Uber/Lyft)

Standard rideshare safety protocol applies. Always confirm the driver's name, car make, and license plate before entering. Share your trip with a contact. Do not accept rides from unofficial drivers approaching you at bar closing time — this is a known risk on the Boardwalk strip after midnight.

Pre-book your return transport before you go out. Getting a rideshare during bar close (1:30–2:30am on weekends) involves 20+ minute waits and surge pricing.

Beach Solo Time

Day: Virginia Beach public beaches are among the most supervised on the East Coast — Beach Patrol lifeguards, regular police presence, and high foot traffic. Safe for solo swimming and sunbathing.

Night: Avoid solo beach time after dark on any section of the beach not directly adjacent to the lit Boardwalk promenade. The beach is dark, isolated, and effectively unmonitored beyond the Boardwalk lights. Back Bay and the Cape Henry beach access are completely unlit after hours — do not visit alone at night.

Cape Henry / Military Base Access

The base access checkpoint is standard federal security — photo ID, vehicle registration, and a vehicle search may be conducted. This is routine and not concerning. The base environment itself is orderly and safe. Do not attempt to access restricted areas beyond the designated tourist zones (lighthouse, First Landing trail entry).

Hotel Room Security

The major chain hotels on the Boardwalk have standard security. Lock the deadbolt and use the door chain when in your room. The beach-facing ground-floor rooms in some older properties have direct deck access — ensure your sliding door is secured. Report any concerns to the front desk immediately.

FOR WOMEN TRAVELING SOLO

Virginia Beach is generally a safe destination for women traveling alone, with the significant caveat that the resort strip nightlife has a character shaped by its military-adjacent demographics. The following reflects honest, experience-based guidance rather than reassurance.

The resort corridor after dark

Atlantic Avenue bar culture (particularly 17th–31st Streets on Friday and Saturday nights) involves a substantial military crowd on leave. Unwanted attention is more common here than in most comparable resort cities. Trust your read of any situation — if a bar or crowd feels wrong, leave. The ViBe District and Shore Drive restaurant scenes are significantly more comfortable environments for solo women in the evening.

The Boardwalk at night

The lit Boardwalk promenade is safe until midnight and generally fine with basic awareness. The unlit beach beyond the Boardwalk lighting is a different situation — do not walk alone on the dark beach. The difference between the lit promenade and the unlit sand is stark.

Hotel and accommodation

The major oceanfront hotels have good security. Avoid ground-floor rooms with direct beach deck access if you have concerns. Make sure all room access points are secured. Report any concerning behavior from staff or other guests immediately to the front desk — hotel management takes guest security complaints seriously.

Dining and daytime

Virginia Beach is comfortable for solo women during the day across all neighbourhoods covered in this guide — Boardwalk, ViBe District, Shore Drive, First Landing. Solo dining is entirely normal. The staff at the better restaurants (Terrapin, Tautog's, Eurasia) are accustomed to and welcoming of solo guests.

Trusting your instincts

The situations where women have reported problems in Virginia Beach are concentrated in the same time and place: resort strip bar closings, late weekend nights in season. Avoid those situations or move through them with purpose and a clear plan. The rest of the city poses no particular concern beyond standard urban awareness.

NEIGHBOURHOOD BY NEIGHBOURHOOD

SAFE (DAY) / MODERATE (NIGHT)

Resort Oceanfront / Atlantic Avenue

The most public and monitored environment in Virginia Beach during the day. Heavy police presence, Beach Patrol, lifeguards. Evening brings the resort bar crowd. Safe with awareness; riskier after midnight at bar closing time.

SAFE

ViBe Creative District

Arts district with an engaged local community. Lower crime than the resort strip. Good lighting and active nightlife of a calmer character. The most comfortable solo evening environment in Virginia Beach.

SAFE

Rudee Inlet / Croatan

Working waterfront with a residential neighbourhood behind it. Quiet, well-maintained, and low-traffic. Safe for solo walks at dusk and after dark with basic awareness.

SAFE

Shore Drive / Chic's Beach

Local residential corridor. Low crime. The seafood restaurant concentration is family- and solo-friendly. The quietest and most comfortable neighbourhood for a solo evening meal in Virginia Beach.

SAFE

Town Center

The city's urban business district, 15 minutes from the Boardwalk. High-rise offices, restaurants, Sandler Center for the Performing Arts. Safe, modern, and well-managed. Useful for an upscale dinner option away from the resort strip.

USE CAUTION AFTER DARK

Back Bay / Cape Henry

Completely unlit and unmanned wilderness areas after the visitor facilities close. Do not visit alone after dark. Both are safe during daylight hours with no concerns.

STANDARD URBAN AWARENESS

Princess Anne / inland corridors

The inland commercial areas of Virginia Beach are not tourist zones and carry standard urban concerns. No specific risk for visitors, but maintain awareness and do not visit unfamiliar areas alone late at night.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS & MEDICAL

All emergencies	911
VB Police non-emergency	(757) 385-5000
Crisis hotline (24hr)	988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline)
Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital	1060 First Colonial Rd · (757) 395-8000
Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center (Norfolk)	(757) 398-2200
CVS Minute Clinic (Boardwalk area)	Multiple locations — cvs.com
VB Department of Tourism	(757) 385-4700
Uber / Lyft	App-based — pre-download before travel

HEALTH & MEDICAL

Sunburn and heat

Virginia Beach summers are intensely sunny with high humidity. SPF 50+ is mandatory, even on cloudy days. Reapply every 2 hours on the beach. Shade between 11am and 3pm during July and August significantly reduces risk. Stay hydrated — the combination of sun and humidity causes rapid fluid loss.

Ocean swimming

Rip currents are a genuine risk on the Atlantic side, particularly after storm systems. Check the Beach Patrol flags before swimming: green (safe), yellow (use caution), red (dangerous). Double red flags mean the beach is closed. Never swim at unguarded beaches alone. The Chesapeake Bay (Chic's Beach) has no rip current risk.

Jellyfish

Moon jellyfish are common in the Chesapeake Bay in summer and occasionally on the Atlantic side. Most are harmless or cause minor irritation. Portuguese Man-o-War are rare but serious — if you see one on the beach (blue/purple bubble), do not touch and report to a lifeguard.

Tick awareness

First Landing State Park has tick populations, particularly in the underbrush sections of the Cape Henry Trail. Wear long pants and light colors for trail walking; check yourself thoroughly after any forest walk. Lyme disease is present in Virginia.

Pharmacy access

CVS and Walgreens locations throughout the resort area. The CVS at 4700 Virginia Beach Blvd has a full pharmacy open 8am–9pm. The Sentara hospital ER handles non-critical urgent care; the Sentara Urgent Care at 929 First Colonial Rd is faster for minor injuries.

PRACTICAL SAFETY TIPS

Know your hotel address

Virginia Beach resort addresses on Atlantic Avenue can be confusing when describing your location to a rideshare driver or emergency responder. Save your hotel's exact address in your phone before you leave for the evening.

Pre-arrange late night transport

Book your Uber or Lyft before bar closing time (2am in Virginia). Surge pricing and wait times spike dramatically at bar close — plan ahead or accept walking the Boardwalk to your hotel, which is fine if your property is within 10 minutes.

Beach valuables

Do not leave valuables unattended on the beach, even briefly. Petty theft from beach towels is the most common tourist crime in Virginia Beach. A waterproof bag that comes in the water with you is the correct solution.

Weather monitoring

Virginia Beach lies in the Atlantic hurricane corridor (June–November). Check NOAA Weather App daily. Thunderstorms develop quickly in summer — if you see lightning on the beach, exit the water and clear the beach immediately. Beach Patrol will enforce this.

Alcohol and the resort strip

Alcohol is prohibited on the public beach in Virginia Beach. Containers on the sand will result in fines. The bar-dense Boardwalk strip means the crowd around you on the beach may not be following this rule — police enforce it selectively but consistently at problem areas.

Military leave weekends

The four major military installations in the Hampton Roads region (Oceana Naval Air Station, Little Creek Amphibious Base, Fort Eustis, and Langley Air Force Base) generate significant leave traffic to the Virginia Beach resort strip. Holiday weekends (Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day) bring the largest concentrations. The atmosphere is generally fine but the volume and energy are higher.

Scam awareness

The resort strip has the usual beach-town pressure vendors and street promoters. Ignore anyone aggressively promoting a club, restaurant, or activity on Atlantic Avenue — legitimate establishments don't use this approach. Ticket scalpers near festival events are common; use official venues only.

Go. Informed.

*Virginia Beach rewards the solo traveler who pays attention.
Know the resort strip at night. Know the rip current flags.
Know which neighbourhoods are yours at 10pm. The rest is ocean.*

QUICK REFERENCE

Emergency	911
VB Police non-emergency	(757) 385-5000
Hospital	Sentara VB General · (757) 395-8000
Crisis Line	988
Beach Patrol (rip currents)	Check flag color before swimming
Late night transport	Book Uber BEFORE bar close

GoingSolo.Life

TRAVEL ALONE. LIVE FULLY.