

SAFE CITIZEN'S HANDBOOK

This **SAFE CITIZEN'S HANDBOOK** gives you some simple ways to greatly reduce your chance of becoming a victim.

HOW TO REPORT A CRIME

1. Identify yourself - name, address, and telephone number -even if you are using 911
2. Tell the dispatcher the type of crime you are reporting.
3. Let us know if the crime is "in progress" or "has already occurred".
4. Where is / did the crime take place? Be as specific as possible.
5. Give descriptions of the suspect(s)
 - How many are there?
 - Are there any guns, knives, sticks, etc.?
 - What direction did they go?
 - Are they in a car or on foot?
 - Is anyone chasing the suspect(s)?
6. Describe the vehicle.
 - Is it a car - pickup - van?
 - What color is it?
 - What is the tag number?
 - What state issued the tag?
 - Are there any dents in the body?
 - Is there anything else that makes it unique?
 - What direction did it go?
7. Stay on the line until you are told to hang up.
8. After calling the police, call a neighbor so they can help watch for the suspect and assist you in giving a more complete description.

Emergency Phone Fire - Police – Ambulance 9-1-1

Non-Emergency Phone

BURGLARY PREVENTION CHECK LIST

Doors and Entry Areas

Are your doors solid core construction?

Do your entry doors have a wide-angle viewer?

Are the locks secure from being opened if a burglar breaks a glass or a panel of wood?

Do your exterior doors have deadbolt locks with at least a one-inch throw and beveled cylinder guards?

Can all your doors be securely locked?

Do the lock strike plates have screws at least 3 inches long going into the house framing?

Do all your outswinging doors have the hinges pinned or have non-removable pins?

Are all entry areas unobstructed by shrubbery and other decor to permit maximum visibility?

Do sliding doors have an auxiliary lock that locks both the door panels together?

Do your sliding glass doors lift out of the track?

Is your garage door secured with a lock, hasp, or similar lock other than just the door opener?

Do you lock your car and remove the keys even while it is parked in the garage?

Windows

Are all windows equipped with auxiliary key locks or are they pinned?

Have you replaced or secured louvered windows?

Are your window locks properly and securely mounted?

Do you keep your windows locked when shut?

Do you use locks that will allow you to lock a window when it is partially open?

In high crime areas do you use bars or ornamental grilles to block your windows?

Do you have good secure locks on garage windows?

Are you as careful to secure your second floor windows as you are to secure those on the first floor?

Safe Practices

Do you keep a list, pictures, or a video of all your valuable property?

Do you have the serial numbers to all your valuables and bicycles?

Do you avoid unnecessary display of your valuables?

Do you "hide" a key somewhere outside your home?

Do you have lighting installed and in use around the outside of your home?

Have you secured your ladder?

Do you have a list of emergency numbers by every phone?

Have you discussed with your family what to do if you find a burglar in your house?

Do you have a smoke detector installed in your home?

VACATION SECURITY CHECK LIST

Thieves look for what police term "targets of opportunity." There are many things you can do to avoid becoming one of the victims, especially when you are going to be away from your home for an extended period of time.

- Arrange for the Police Department to check your house periodically.
- Double check second floor, garage and basement windows--areas that are often forgotten.
- Arrange to have mail and deliveries picked up by your neighbor.
- Leave a car in the driveway. Have outside lights turned on and off with a timer.
- Arrange to have the yard cut and bushes trimmed.
- Have several timers attached to lights in various locations throughout the house.
- Ask neighbors to check your house regularly. Leave a number with them where you can be located. Ask them to use your garbage cans.
- Don't tell everyone about your vacation plans.
- Don't leave notes on your door for deliveries, friends, etc..
- If you return home and find a break-in, do not enter the house. Call police at once using a neighbor's phone.
- Make an inventory of your property. Mark your valuables with an engraver. Use your driver's license number (and State) as identification on your property.
- Make sure your doors and windows are locked with the deadbolt lock and auxiliary locks.

ROBBERY AND ATM SAFETY

Most muggers are young—between the ages of 14 and 29. These young criminals can instantly turn violent during the commission of their crime. Robberies often occur in isolated places or places not readily visible to the public. They also occur at or near parking lots, alleys, parks, and retail establishments. Here are some tips that might keep you from being a victim.

- When entering any bank, market, or store, take a split second to see what is going on inside. Don't go in if something seems suspicious.
- Avoid exposing your money in public. If possible pay by credit card. If you do pay with cash, avoid flashing large bills or counting the money in front of others.
- Avoid wearing expensive looking jewelry. It often draws attention to you as a profitable mark for a robber.
- Be aware of trouble locations and always be alert to your surroundings. If your intuition says "something is wrong" something probably is.
- Avoid carrying packages that advertise expensive contents. Have the purchase placed in plain or natural packages or bags.
- Take out a \$20.00 life insurance policy. Keeping twenty dollars readily available for a would-be robber may satisfy his need for drug money. If you have no money he or she may get angry enough to hurt you.
- Never count or visually expose how much money you are going to deposit or have received when you are at the Automatic Teller Machine (ATM).
- As you approach the ATM take a good look for any suspicious persons or circumstances.
- Have your ATM access card ready and in your hand when you approach the ATM. Secretly punch in your personal identification number (PIN) by using your body to block the view of others.
- Always keep a safe distance between you and others.
- Should you be confronted by a robber — Remain calm — Do not resist — Give up your money, jewelry, etc. — Cooperate with the robber — give him time to get away — call the police and report the incident.

CHILD SAFETY SKILLS

Though most kids pass through childhood without ever experiencing physical harm, some are frightened or hurt by crime. Adults can make a difference in a child's life by listening to what they are saying about other people or places. Adults must also teach children how to protect themselves in threatening situations. Here are some things you can do to protect your children

- Rehearse their name, address and phone number (including the area code).
- Teach them how to make an emergency call from a home phone and pay phone.
- Help them become aware of dangers around them such as vacant houses, wooded areas, bad lighting, busy streets with no sidewalks, etc.
- Show them safe places in the neighborhood where they could go for help in an emergency.
- Make sure they know to go to a store clerk or security guard - but never outside- if they get lost in a store.
- Tell them that no one should ask to touch them anywhere their bathing suit covers, and that they should not be asked to touch anyone else in those areas.
- Remind them that nobody should ask them to keep special secrets from you.
- Have them walk confidently and stay alert to what is going on in the area around her.
- Ask them to watch out for the smaller children and to report anyone how lurks around parks, bathrooms, schools and etc.
- Teach them how to write down a tag number.
- Make sure they can reach you by phone if they must be home alone.
- Post the numbers to emergency services, your work, a trusted neighbor, and a family member, near the telephone.
- Have them check in with you when they get home and before they go to a friend's house.
- Agree on rules for having friends over when no adult is present.
- Remind them to never open the door to anyone including a repairman, a salesman, or an unexpected guest.
- Teach them to never tell anyone they are home alone either through the door or on the phone. Kids should always say the their parents are busy.

STAY AWAY FROM "STRANGERS"

"Stay away from strangers" is a popular warning to children to prevent abduction or exploitation. The term stranger suggests a concept that children do not understand and is one that ignores what we do know about the people who commit crimes against children. It misleads children into believing they should be aware only of individuals who have an unusual or sloppy appearance. While occasionally a "stranger" will abduct or exploit a child, many children are harmed by people who have some type of familiarity with them.

It is more appropriate to teach our children to be on the lookout for certain kinds of SITUATIONS or ACTIONS rather than certain kinds of individuals.

DON'T BE CONNED

Many of us are not used to making decisions about home repairs, insurance policies or investments. We are bombarded by calls from people claiming to be for a good cause or someone using high-pressure tactics to sell a bargain item. If we are not careful we may reveal facts about ourselves which allow con artists to clean out our bank accounts and use our credit card numbers.

Con artists are experts in human psychology and behavior. They are self-assured and are smooth talkers. Their games are often hard to detect, but you can protect yourself:

- Don't do business with someone who has to go door-to-door to solicit business. Reputable companies have enough to do without having to solicit customers. Remember to get recommendations from friends, family and others you trust about reputable contractors you can use. Get several estimates, and then compare the prices and terms of the estimates. When you hire a contractor, obtain a written guarantee. Never pay for a job in advance! Make arrangements to pay in installments and then only for the amount of work completed.
- Be suspicious of high-pressure sales tactics.
- Never buy property sight unseen.
- Never trust anyone who tells you "buy now or the deal is off."
- Be cautious of anyone who wants you to invest in a promising company. Often the company quietly closes and you lose.
- Make sure any donation you make is well spent. Pick a favorite charity or two then check them out completely. Don't be pressured or shamed into donating to groups you don't know about. Many swindlers come up with false charities with names similar to legitimate groups.
- Beware of someone who befriends you then asks you to put up "good faith" money in order to share in unexpectedly found money or valuables.
- Never give out social security or credit card numbers over the phone.
- Look out for someone claiming to be a FBI agent, bank examiner, police officer or bank employee, wanting you to withdraw money to assist in an investigation. You are being swindled!

If you believe you are being, or have been conned, contact the police immediately. Do not be embarrassed. If you report your misfortune, you may prevent others from meeting the same fate.

AUTO THEFT AND BREAK-INS

Stolen cars, vans, trucks and motorcycles cost victims time and money—and increase everyone's insurance premiums. They're also often used to commit other crimes. Don't become a victim of this serious crime.

- Never leave your car running or the keys in the ignition when you're away from it, even for just a minute.
- Always roll up the windows and lock the car, even if it's in front of your home.
- Never leave valuables in plain view, even if your car is locked. Put them in the trunk or at least out of sight. Purses, packages, electronics, etc. should be left at home if they are not needed.
- Always park your car in a well-lighted area or where it will be in plain view of others. If the criminal feels someone will witness his crime, he will likely go elsewhere.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

- You can do something about crime in your neighborhood by participating in "Neighborhood Watch".
- Neighborhood watch programs belong to—and are run by—the people in the neighborhood, not the police.
- They have been proven to reduce neighborhood crime by as much as 60%, but are equally effective in neighborhoods with no or low crime rates.
- The police department helps train members in home security and reporting skills, and gives information about crime patterns in the neighborhood.
- The "Watch" group usually has a Coordinator and Block Captains who are responsible for organizing meetings and relaying information to members.
- Everyone is a Block Watcher who keeps an eye out for suspicious activity and calls police if need be.
- Effective Watches build a sense of community by having regular meetings which give neighbors a chance to know each other. Some even publish a newsletter with crime prevention and neighborhood highlights.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY CHECKLIST

Did you know that 9 out of every 10 arrests are made because of a neighborhood tip? The following list of suspicious activities highlights only a few of the many suspicious acts criminals do every day. You will not be in trouble if you call the police about something suspicious. At the very least make your neighbors aware of the situation so they can watch too.

- Anyone looking in a car or home.
- Anyone forcibly entering a car or home.
- Someone running from a home or business.
- Someone carrying a weapon.
- Someone screaming.
- An unknown adult talking to children, offering them candy or gifts or asking them for help.
- Someone who does not belong in the area.
- A person walking in the neighborhood with items which could be stolen.
- Anyone ringing your doorbell or knocking on your door without a reasonable explanation.
- Persons loitering around a schoolyard or park.
- Strange vehicles parked in your area for several hours.
- A clean automobile with dirty or damaged tags.
- Groups of people loitering or walking through your neighborhood.

PREVENTING ASSAULTS

Assaults can happen to anyone at any time and any place. There are several things you can do to reduce your chances of being attacked.

AT HOME

- Keep your home securely locked and well lighted.
- Install a peephole in the door and use it.
- Beware of unexpected service calls or sales calls.
- Check identification before letting someone you don't know in your house.
- Offer to make a phone call for a stranger who wants in to use your phone.
- If you come home and see signs of forced entry, go to a neighbor's house and call the police to make sure nobody remains inside your home.

WHILE WALKING

- Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you.
- Stay in well lighted areas as much as possible.
- Walk confidently and at a steady pace.
- Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes and alleys.
- Try not to walk alone especially at night, and always avoid areas where there are few people. The more people who see you walking, the less likely the assailant will want to make you his victim.
- Be careful when people stop you for directions. Always reply from a distance and never get too close to the car.
- If you are in trouble, attract help any way you can. Scream for help or yell "fire" to attract attention.

WHILE DRIVING

- Keep your car in good working order and the gas tank at least half full.
- Park in well-lighted areas and lock the doors, even if you'll only be gone a short time.
- Have your key ready before you reach your car but check the front and rear seats before you get in.
- Drive with your doors locked no matter what area you are in.
- Keep valuables such as purses and packages, out of sight.
- If you think you are being followed don't drive home. Drive to an open gas station or business where you can call the police. If you can do so safely, get a tag number and description of the car.
- If an unmarked police car attempts to stop you, signal to the officer that you see him and proceed to the nearest open business where there will be other people to watch. An assailant will usually go on when you involve witnesses.

IF YOU ARE ATTACKED

- Keep your head. Stay as calm as possible, think rationally and evaluate your resources and options.
- Keep assessing your situation as it is happening. If one strategy does not work, try another. Possible options are negotiating, stalling for time, distracting the assailant, and fleeing to a safe place.

DO YOU NEED A WEAPON?

- Beware of the false security mace, pepper spray, electronic stun guns or handguns may give you. Weapons that are intended to hurt an assailant are often taken away and used against you.
- Carry a personal body alarm that makes a piercing noise and draws attention to your situation.

CRIME RELATED TERMINOLOGY

When reporting a crime to the police there are certain terms used to tell what has happened. There is a big difference in the legal meaning of these terms and the manner in which the police will respond to the crime. The following definitions are in general terms and are not "law book" definitions so some exceptions will apply.

BURGLARY - Entering into a home or business undetected with the intent of taking valuables or committing a serious crime.

BREAKING OR ENTERING - Entering into a car, outbuilding, coin operated machine with the intent of taking items or committing a serious crime.

ROBBERY - Using force or at least threatening to use force against someone with the purpose of getting valuables.

THEFT - Taking the property of another with the intent of denying the owner the use of the property.

CRIMINAL TRESPASS - Remaining unlawfully in or on a car or the property of another person.

ASSAULT - Threatening by word or act to do violence to someone.

AGGRAVATED ASSAULT - Purposely doing something which creates a substantial danger of death or serious injury to someone else.

BATTERY - Intentionally causing an injury to someone.
