

Safety Tips

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PERSONAL SAFETY

Stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings, wherever you are.

Don't be taken by surprise. Be aware and be prepared.

Stand tall and walk confidently. Don't show fear. Don't look like a victim.

Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave right away and get help if necessary.

ON FOOT

Choose busy streets and avoid going through vacant lots, alleys, or other deserted areas. At night, walk in well-lit areas whenever possible.

Try not to walk or jog alone. Take a friend or neighbor along for company.

Get to know the neighborhoods and neighbors where you live and work.

Carry your purse close to your body and keep a firm grip on it.

Avoid pickpockets by carrying your wallet in an inside coat pocket or front trouser pocket.

IN YOUR CAR

Always lock your car and take the keys, even if you'll be gone only a short time.

Keep your car in good running condition, and keep the tank at least one-quarter full;

Lock doors while driving.

If your car breaks down, raise the hood and place emergency reflectors or flares. Then stay in the locked car. When someone stops to help, don't get out. Ask him or her, through a closed or cracked window, to telephone the police to come and help.

If you're coming or going after dark, park in a well-lit area that will still be

well-lit when you return.

Be especially alert when using enclosed parking garages. Don't walk into an area if you feel uncomfortable.

Leave only your ignition key with a parking attendant. Don't leave your house key, garage door opener, or other important items in your car.

Never pick up hitchhikers.

Control your keys. Never leave an identification tag on your key ring. If your keys are lost or stolen, it could help a thief locate your car and burglarize your home.

If carrying packages or valuable items, store them in your trunk. If you do leave packages, clothing or other articles in the car; make sure they are out of sight.

Keep your car's Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and a complete description in a safe place at home. Since 1969, the federal government has required manufactures to engrave a unique number, the VIN, on all passenger cars in one visible and several hidden locations. One VIN is engraved on a metal plate on the dashboard near the windshield. VIN's of stolen cars are registered with the FBI's National Crime Information Center.

License plates frequently are stolen from cars used in other crimes. Get in the habit of checking your plates when you drive. A few drops of solder on the bolts or blurring the threads can help safeguard your plates.

Keep the following information in a safe location.

Year; Make; Model; Color; Id# or VIN; License #

Identifying Marks; Insurance Co.; and policy #

WHEN USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

When using the bus, be sure to have your fare out and ready before you leave home, office or store.

Plan your route to use the busiest, best-lit stop possible, both to get on and off a bus. If you must wait, stay near the attendant's stand or in the best-lit area available.

Keep your purse, shopping bag, backpack, packages, etc., in your lap, on your arm, or between your feet—*not by themselves on an empty seat.*

Sit near the driver, but not right next to the door.

Don't let yourself doze off on a bus. It can make you an easy target.

ATM MACHINE

Try to plan your visits to automatic teller during the day, rather than after dark.

Choose an ATM location that is in a busy public place.

Avoid making withdrawals in isolated areas.

If at all possible, take along a friend who can watch the surroundings while you are conducting your transactions.

Pre-plan your transaction carefully, and don't spend too much time at the machine.

When you make a withdrawal, quickly place the money in your purse or wallet and leave as soon as you finish your transaction.

Watch out for suspicious-looking people waiting around an ATM—they may not really be customers. If someone offers to let you go ahead of them, decline politely and leave.

When visiting a drive-through ATM, keep your doors locked and be prepared to drive away quickly. If anyone approaches your car on foot, roll up your window and drive off.

If you have not finished your transaction, and you are approached by a suspicious character, press the CANCEL button, receive your card and leave quickly.

KEEPING KIDS SAFE

A great thing about kids is their natural trust in people, especially in adults. It's sometimes hard for parents to teach children to balance this trust with caution. But kids today need to know common-sense rules that can help keep them safe—and build the self-confidence they need to handle emergencies.

MAKE SURE YOUR KIDS KNOW!

How to call 911 or "0" in emergencies, and how to use a public phone. Help them practice making emergency phone calls. Be sure emergency numbers—police, fire, poison control and emergency medical—are by all phones.

Their full name, address, and phone number (including the area code), plus your work phone number. If you have a cellular phone and/or beeper, teach your children these numbers as well.

How to walk confidently and stay alert to what's going on around them.

To walk and play with friends, not alone.

To refuse rides or gifts from anyone, unless it's someone both you and your child know and trust.

To tell a trusted adult immediately if anyone, no matter whom, touches them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

SAFEGUARD YOUR CHILDREN

Learn about warning signs that your child might be involved with drugs or gangs.

Spend time listening to your children or just being with them. Help them find positive, fun activities that they can take part in.

Always know and know about your child's activities.

Know where your child is, and when he or she will return.

Be sure you and your child are clear on your rules and expectations for activities. Make absolutely clear what is OK and what is not.

Teach your child Internet safety tips. The people they talk to online might not be who they say they are.

HOME ALONE! WHAT KIDS SHOULD KNOW...

What steps you want them to follow when they get home; such as phoning you at work or a neighbor or grandparent who is at home.

Not to let strangers, adults or children into the home for any reason.

Not to tell telephone callers that they're alone.

That door and window locks must always be used. Be sure your children know how to work them.

Not to go into the home if a door is ajar or a window is broken, but to go to a neighbor's or public phone and call the police.

Your rules about acceptable activities when you are not at home. *Be very clear.*

SAFE AT HOME

Make sure that all doors to the outside are metal or solid, 1 ¾" hardwood.

Make sure all doors to the outside have good, sturdy locks.

Use the locks you have. Always lock up your home when you go out, even if it's only for a few minutes.

Secure sliding glass doors with commercially available bars or locks, or put a wooden dowel or broomstick in the door track.

Make sure your windows, especially at ground level, have good locks *and use them*.

Make sure all porches and other possible entrances are well-lit.

Trim any bushes or trees that hide doors or windows. Keep ladders, tools, toys, and recreational equipment inside when you're not using them.

Don't hide your house keys under the doormat or in a flowerpot. It's much wiser to give an extra key to a trusted neighbor.

Keep written records of all furniture, jewelry and electronic products. If possible, keep these records in a safe deposit box, fireproof safe, or other secure place. Take pictures or a video, and keep purchase information and serial numbers if available. These help law enforcement agencies track recovered items.

Clearly display your house number, so police and other emergency vehicles can find your home quickly.

If you see a screen that has been cut, broken windows, or a door that's been left open, don't go in. Call the police from a neighbor's house or a public phone.

If you hear a noise that sounds like someone breaking in or moving around, quietly call the police and wait calmly until they arrive. If you can leave safely, do so. Otherwise, lock yourself in a room you are in, pretend to be asleep.

Think carefully before buying a firearm for protection. Guns can be stolen and sold to anyone, or captured and used on you or the police. If you do own a gun, keep it locked up, with the ammunition secured separately, and learn how to use it safely.

FOR APARTMENT DWELLERS

Make sure that entrances, parking areas, hallways, stairways, laundry rooms, and other common areas are well lit. Report burned-out bulbs or other problems to the manager.

Make sure fire stairs are locked from the stairwell side, with an emergency exit at ground level.

Laundry rooms and storage areas should always be kept locked unless a resident is actually inside.

WHEN YOU GO AWAY

Ask a trusted neighbor to collect your mail and newspaper, and offer to return the favor.

Leave word about when you're leaving, when you'll return, and how you can be reached in an emergency.

Put automatic timers on at least two lights (and possibly a radio) to help your home look and sound lived-in.

REDUCING VIOLENCE

Look for ways to settle arguments and disagreements without violence. Remember: if you resort to violence to settle disputes, a child may well follow your example. Be a good role model.

Use good manners to help ease tensions that can lead to violence. Teach kids that showing respect for themselves and for the needs of others can prevent crime.

Report crimes and suspicious activities to police; agree to testify when necessary. If you want to live in a safe community, stand up for what you believe in.

Don't support illegal activities, like buying stolen property or using illegal drugs. It's the wrong message to send to a child, and it involves you in criminal activity. It also encourages more crime that hurts you and your neighbors.

HELPING VICTIMS OF CRIMES

Don't blame the victim or tell him or her not to be upset, angry, or afraid. Be a comfort and do what you can to ease the situation.

If the victim hasn't told the police, offer to help with a report.

Offer to help the victim repair damage from a crime, replace a windowpane, install a new lock, replace important papers or help with day-to-day needs like transportation, baby-sitting, and cooking.

Be willing to just sit and listen to the victim talk about the crime. It can help some victims to talk, although others will not want to. Don't try to make a

victim talk if he or she does not want to!

Ask your local police about victims' counseling and support groups in the area, and encourage the victim to take part.

Ask what you can do to help in the future, and make it a point to get back in touch.

AVOIDING FRAUD & SCAMS

Con-artists are not always easy to spot. Smart, extremely persuasive, and aggressive, they invade your home through the telephone and the mail, advertise in reputable newspapers and magazines, and come to your door. Most people think they're too smart to fall for a scam. But con artists rob all kinds of people from investment counselors and doctors to teenagers and elderly widows of billions every year. It's up to you to say no. Use common sense and learn about old and new scams.

QUICK TIPS

Don't let greed overcome your common sense.

Be wary of ... High-pressure sales; Demands for 'cash only'; Pressure for quick decisions; Secret deals; No-Risk, high-yield investments.

Get a second opinion from someone you trust.

Remember: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

DIALING FOR YOUR DOLLARS

If a caller asks for your credit card number to verify a free vacation or other gift, hang up. Your number may be used to charge purchases by phone.

Make sure you know the charges before calling a 900 number. Most 800 numbers are free 900 numbers aren't.

Be very suspicious if you receive a collect call from someone who says he's a law-enforcement officer with emergency information about a family member, requesting your phone card number to charge the call. Other variations of this scam include a telephone company investigator checking a system failure, or an FCC official investigating a complaint.

Ask for a financial reports if a caller requests a charitable donation. Reputable charities will always send this information if you ask.

****Never make an investment with a stranger over**