

Crime Prevention Tips for People with Physical Disabilities

A physical disability - impaired vision, hearing, or mobility - doesn't prevent you from being a victim of crime.

Common sense actions can reduce your risk.

Stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings, whether on the street, in an office building or shopping mall, driving, or waiting for bus or subway.

Send a message that you're calm, confident and know where you're going.

Be realistic about your limitations.

Avoid places or situations that put you at risk.

Know the neighborhood where you live and work.

Check out the locations of police and fire stations, public telephones, hospitals, restaurants, or stores that are open and accessible.

Avoid establishing predictable activity patterns. Most of us have daily routines, but never varying them may increase your

vulnerability to crime.

At Home

- Put good locks on all your doors.
- Police recommend double-cylinder, deadbolt locks, but make sure you can easily use the locks you install.
- Install peepholes on front and back doors at your eye level. **This is especially important if you use a wheelchair.**
- Get to know your neighbors.
- Watchful neighbors who look out for you as well as themselves are a front line defense against crime.

- If you have difficulty speaking, have friend record a message (giving your name, address, and type of disability) to use in emergencies.
- Keep the tape in a recorder next to your phone.
- Ask your police department to conduct a free home security survey and to help identify your

individual needs.

Out and About

- If possible, go with a friend.
- Stick to well-lighted, well traveled streets.
- Avoid shortcuts through vacant lots, wooded areas, parking lots, or alleys.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps.
- Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket.

- If you use a wheelchair, keep your purse or wallet tucked snugly between you and the inside of the chair.
- If you use a knapsack, make sure it is securely shut.
- Always carry your medical information, in case of an emergency.

- Consider installing a cellular phone or CB radio in your vehicle.

On Public Transportation

- Use well-lighted, busy stops.
- Stay near other passengers.
- Stay alert. Don't doze or daydream!
- If someone harasses you, make a loud noise or say "Leave me alone." If that doesn't work, hit the emergency signal on the bus or train.

Don't Let a Con Artist Rip You Off

Many con artists prey on people's desires to find miracle cures for chronic conditions and fatal diseases. To outsmart these con artists, remember these tips:

- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Don't let greed or desperation

overcome common sense.

- Get a second opinion.
- Be wary of high-pressure tactics, need for quick decisions, demands for cash only, or high yield low-risk investments.

Take a Stand!

- Join, or help organize, a Neighborhood Watch group.
- Make sure their meetings are accessible to people with disabilities.
- For example, do they need a sign language interpreter?
- Can individuals who use walkers, crutches, or wheelchairs enter the meeting place?
- Work with local law enforcement to improve responses to all victims or witnesses of crime.
- Role-play how people with disabilities can handle

threatening situations.

- Work with a rehabilitation center or advocacy groups to offer a presentation to schools and other community organizations on the needs and concerns of individuals with disabilities.