

Crime Prevention Tips For Seniors

Seniors are enjoying longer, healthier lives. Seniors often worry about crime. The truth is, seniors are victims of crime less often than younger people, but the effect of crime on seniors is often more severe.

Three general rules to promote senior crime prevention are:

- **Stay Alert!** Be tuned-in to your surroundings; don't be taken by surprise. Be aware and prepared, even in your own neighborhood.
- **Stand Tall!** Walk confidently, don't show fear, don't look like a victim.
- **Trust you instincts!** If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave right away and get help if necessary.

At Home

- Never open the door to strangers; always insist on proper identification.
- If someone comes to your door with an emergency (for example, a traffic accident or an injury), **DON'T LET HIM OR HER IN!** Call 9-1-1 for them!
- Use deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Always keep your doors locked. Have a peephole in the door so you can see a caller without opening it.
- Don't rely on security chains; a determined assailant can easily break them.
- Protect windows and other points of entry with good locks or other security devices
- Mark and record your personal property.

- Keep your home well lit at night, inside and out, and keep your curtains closed at night.
- Install a peephole in your front door so you can see callers without opening the door.
- Do not leave notes on your door when you are gone, and do not hide your keys under the mat or in other conspicuous places.
- Never give out information over the phone indicating you are alone or that you won't be home at a certain time.
- When you are gone for more than a day, make sure your home looks and sounds occupied - use automatic timers to turn on lights and a radio or television.
- When you go out, make your home sound and appear occupied by using an automatic timer to turn on interior lights and a radio. Keep the outside premises well lit at night.
- Do not leave your key under the mat or in a flowerpot. Use outdoor lighting, shrubbery and fencing to help secure your home.
- Consider electronic surveillance systems, alarm systems and/or a dog to enhance your home security. Consult with your local Police Force for personalized home security tips.

When You Are Away From Home

- Carry your purse very close to you - don't dangle it from your arm. Also, never leave your purse in a shopping cart.
- Don't carry more cash than is necessary. Many grocery stores now accept checks and automatic teller

cards instead of cash.

- Avoid walking alone at night. Try to have a friend accompany you in high risk areas - even during the daytime.
- Have your paychecks or government checks sent directly to your bank account - many banks have senior citizens discounts.
- Never withdraw money from your bank accounts for anyone except **YOURSELF**.
- Be wary of con artists and get-rich schemes that probably are too-good-to-be-true.

In Your Car

- Know where you are going and how to get there
- Maintain your vehicle in good working order, with ample gasoline
- Plan your trip and take friends along
- When possible, travel during daylight hours
- Don't enter dark parking lots or deserted garages
- Leave only your ignition key with parking attendant
- Let someone know where you are going and your planned return time
- When driving, lock your doors and windows; lockup when you leave
- If you suspect someone is following you, drive to the nearest public place

- Never pick up hitchhikers.
- Keep your gas tank full and your engine properly maintained to avoid breakdowns.
- Lock packages and other valuables in the trunk. Do not leave them on the back seat or on the floor of the car where potential thieves can see them.
- When you return to your car, always check the front and back seat before you get in.
- If your car breaks down, pull over to the right as far as possible, raise the hood, and wait inside the car for help. Do not get out of the car or roll down the window until the police arrive.

Public Transportation

- When using a bus or subway, plan your route.
- Use busy, well-lit transportation stops
- Wait near the attendant's stand
- Keep your belongings in your lap, not on the seat next to you
- Don't carry a purse if you can avoid it; tuck money or credit cards into an inside pocket
- Sit near the driver but not next to the door

Using Automated Teller Machines (ATM)

- Go inside your bank when possible
- Go during daylight hours
- Choose a busy ATM location
- Take a friend with you
- Pre-plan your transaction
- Put your money away quickly
- Don't flash your cash
- If someone offers to let you go ahead of him or her at the ATM machine, decline and leave
- If someone approaches your car at the drive through ATM, roll up your window and leave
- If you begin to feel uncomfortable during a transaction, press CANCEL, get your card, and leave
- If possible, arrange for incoming checks to be deposited directly into your bank account.

If You Are a Victim of a Crime

- If you arrive at home and suspect a stranger may be inside,
DON'T GO IN.
Leave quietly and call 911 to report the crime.
- If you are attacked on the street, make

as much noise as possible by calling for help or blowing a whistle.

- Don't resist
- Never pursue your attacker
- Call the police. Dial 9-1-1 in case of an emergency

REPORT CRIME!

- You may have money returned and prevent further theft from yourself and others!
- Protect Your Income
- Be sure the person who handles your money can be trusted