



Safety & Self-Protection

The most important tool in crime prevention is your mind. When used effectively and coupled with a confident attitude and keen awareness, you can avoid dangerous confrontations with potential assailants. This will decrease your chances of becoming a victim. Conversely, a timid or fearful demeanor signals a would-be assailant that you are an easy target. Make it a habit to protect yourself from harm by using common sense and a few standard security devices. However these devices will not protect you if you do not use them.

Here are some tips to reduce your chances of being victimized.

- Answer doors and phones so a potential burglar will know your home is occupied. Never tell a caller you are alone; give the impression that someone is with you.
- Look through the peephole to see who is outside the door. Never open it to anyone you do not know and trust.
- Verify repairmen with their dispatchers before allowing them inside; have a friend with you or have them call you several times; make these precautions obvious. Don't leave repairmen unattended, or leave valuables in sight.
- If someone you do not know asks to make an emergency phone call, do not open the door; make the call yourself.
- Children are less cautious; be careful about letting them answer the door or phone at an early age.
- If you think that a forced entry has been made, **DO NOT GO INSIDE!** Go to a safe place and get help as soon as possible! Call the police immediately.
- Plan escape routes and keep emergency numbers posted by your phones.
- In apartment complexes, be cautious of laundry rooms, parking lots, and isolated areas; insist that they be well lighted around exterior doors, and inside. Try to use them with a friend or trusted neighbor.
- Consider installing a Caller-ID system on your telephone.
- Never give out information about yourself or where you live.
- If you are confronted and must yell for help, Yell "Fire." This phrase gets the best response from bystanders. Break glass or blow a car horn-anything to bring attention to your plight.
- There is strength in numbers. Join with neighbors to start an effective Neighborhood Watch in your community.
- Never carry large sums of money. Carry your purse firmly near your body. Avoid flashing money or expensive jewelry.
- Avoid being in isolated areas where an assailant can attack you easily without being witnessed. If confronted in an assaultive manner, remove yourself from the situation as soon as possible and notify the police.
- If you are the target of an armed robbery, give the robber what he wants and seek safety immediately. Material possessions can be replaced, your life can't.

