

Most crimes against seniors are committed by opportunists. Education and awareness of some preventative techniques can help you recognize a potential crime situation. This will allow positive action to be taken to reduce or remove the risk. Some people who have been victimized are too embarrassed to report the incident to the authorities.

For your own well-being, and to help prevent others from becoming victims, if you have been victimized (or THINK you may have been) report the circumstances to the police!

SAFETY IN YOUR HOME

There are a number of precautions you can take that will reduce or even eliminate the opportunities that a burglar is looking for.

First, remember that while you are at home there are several ways you can be contacted: at the door, by telephone and on the computer.



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SAFETY TIPS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Prevent crimes against seniors through education and awareness



AT THE DOOR

If the caller is a stranger, you should immediately be on the alert. Never open your door to a stranger. You should have a one way peephole installed that allows you to see who the caller is. If a stranger is at your door for a legitimate reason, they will not object to your being cautious.

Establish the caller's identity and the reason for the visit. If they refuse to show identification and will not leave quietly, go to the phone and call the police. Being cautious helps assure your safety and well-being.

BY TELEPHONE

You control conversations and information flow on your telephone. If you do not know the caller, do not volunteer information. Make the caller identify him or herself and if you do not receive an appropriate answer, hang up! Do not allow yourself to be drawn into conversations with strange callers, census/survey takers or business promotion sales persons where you may be asked to reveal your name, address, or other personal information.

NEVER give this type of information to anyone over the phone!

ON THE COMPUTER

Delete unsolicited e-mails that ask for personal information. Never send payment information via e-mail. Information that travels over the internet through e-mail is not fully protected unless it is encrypted through a reputable merchant.

SAFETY ON THE STREET

Ask yourself, "Is it safe to walk in my neighborhood during the day or night? Have there been any crimes in the area?"

The majority of crimes are crimes of opportunity. The thief is looking for an easy target, the most common being purse snatching. There is no foolproof method that will stop a crime from occurring, however there are ways in which you can reduce the risks.

Common sense is your best guide to personal protection.

NEVER carry large sums of money for all to see. **NEVER** carry valuables in full view on your person. Use a shoulder strap purse or bag and keep it tucked between your body and your arm.

SAFETY IN YOUR VEHICLE

Rely on your judgment and assessment of any situation to tell you what you should do. Keep your vehicle locked at all times, whether moving or parked. At night try to use well-lighted streets and parking lots. Be cautious of strangers approaching your vehicle. If you think someone is following you, pull into the nearest gas station or safe place.

DO NOT DRIVE HOME as the person may follow you and find out where you live!
Do not pick up hitchhikers.



Should your vehicle break down in an isolated area, there are certain steps to follow:

- Pull your vehicle off the road
- Turn on the emergency 4-way flashers
- Raise the hood of the vehicle
- Stay in your vehicle with doors locked and windows rolled up
- Wait for help to come – a patrolling police car or another motorist

Should a passing motorist stop, stay in your vehicle and ask them to send help back to you. You must use your judgment in the situation. But remember, a concerned or helpful motorist will be only too happy to assist by contacting the right party to help you.

DEFENDING YOURSELF

Physical self-defense is not practical for older people and weapons should not be considered by anyone. If you are at home and some person persists in trying to gain entry, have a loud whistle handy. Start blowing and head for the phone to call the police. **DO NOT HESITATE!**

No criminal wants to attract unnecessary attention and only a foolish criminal will hang around. Carry the whistle on the street, as well, as it may save you from becoming a victim. The whistle does not guarantee protection, but it can frighten off a potential thief.

