

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH TRAINING MANUAL



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The Neighborhood Watch Program Introduction

Something may be wrong in your neighborhood. There's too much violence, or there's an ever-present threat. Perhaps a child you know was robbed. Maybe you've seen signs of drug dealing. Maybe a string of break-ins has you wondering what's coming next. Perhaps nothing violent has happened, but you see warning signs such as; graffiti, vandalism, abandoned cars, loitering, liter, continuous traffic violators, that crime and violence may be reaching your neighborhood.

You can change things by getting together with neighbors who share your concerns. Community crime prevention is citizens joining with law enforcement to be responsible for the safety of their neighborhoods, homes and places of employment. One out of six Americans lives in a community that has an organized volunteer anti-crime program.

"Neighborhood Watch", with ten million participants, is the best known community crime prevention project. However, there is a wide array of activities that comprise crime prevention programming. Projects such as Cleveland's Neighborhood Watch Program provide the opportunity for neighborhoods to design programs to meet their own particular needs.



Every community crime prevention program needs the commitment and involvement of residents. People just like you have cleared drug dealing out of their neighborhoods, made parks safer for children and sidewalks secure for play, curbed assaults, reduced muggings, rapes and murders, wiped out graffiti and vandalism, and started programs for teens. This involvement is directly related to our ability to educate and provide information. The clearer the information is, the easier it will be to gain the support and commitment of the citizens we serve.

However the support and commitment of the police officer is vital to this equation. Concurrent to the philosophy is the active involvement of the community. Therefore, the success of Cleveland's Neighborhood Watch Program is greatly dependent upon the partnership developed between all Cleveland police officers, especially those who will have the responsibility for training, and the citizens of our community.



**TAKE A BITE OUT OF
CRIME®**

This training information is designed to assist you to become more resistant to crime. While no one can guarantee against a crime being committed, the *goals* and *philosophy* of the *Neighborhood Watch* program are:

- (1) to increase the awareness level of citizens with respect to crime through education
- (2) Motivation – citizens becoming involved
- (3) Organization – organizing residents and neighborhoods on a street by street basis
- (4) Mobilization – residents actively taking back their neighborhoods. This training guide should enhance each neighborhood's ability to accomplish those goals, thereby, making and keeping their neighborhoods safe places to live, work and play.

Overview – What Kind of Neighborhood

The neighborhood may consist of single family and duplex homes; apartment buildings; a combination of single homes and apartments; commercial buildings; and schools. Crime may be right there scaring everyone off the streets, or just looming on the horizon. Whatever your neighborhood's like, getting together to fight crime, violence and drugs can help create communities where children can be children and people once isolated by crime and fear can enjoy being a part of a thriving neighborhood.

Crime prevention and resistance is different from the philosophy of crime control. Instead of the traditional approach, which emphasizes the reaction to crime and apprehension of the criminal, crime resistance emphasizes modifying the attitude and behavior of the citizen, as well as the modification of the environment to eliminate the opportunity for crime. This provides a unique opportunity for both police and citizens to become involved in order to actively control crime in our communities.



Neighborhood Watch is citizens joining with police to take responsibility in ensuring the safety of their homes and neighborhoods, and improving the quality of life.

Polls have shown that Neighborhood Watch type programs are popular with citizens. Millions of Americans have become educated on crime prevention or taken action to protect themselves, their families and their communities against crime.

It is the objective of the Neighborhood Watch program to provide citizens with information that will allow them to better protect their families, homes, properties, and communities.

Neighborhood Watch – The Concept

Maybe crime has a strong grip in your neighborhood; street violence, muggings, drug dealing, shootings. People believe that the situation is out of hand. Some people are scared that the criminals will retaliate if they act.

There are **three ways to counter fear**. **First**, join together. There is strength in numbers. Most criminals attack victims who are alone, not in groups. Groups can rally, march, and hold vigils to demonstrate their commitment. **Second**, work with the police to set up a system that allows you to remain anonymous, and still report crimes. **Third**, you don't have to meet where the problem is, meet several blocks away at a local church or community center.

Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program that enlists the active participation of citizens in cooperation with law enforcement to reduce crime in their communities. Networks of neighbors are trained by crime prevention officers to protect themselves and their property, as well as how to serve effectively as additional eyes and ears for law enforcement agencies in their communities.

Effective operation of the Neighborhood Watch program is dependent upon the active participation of a majority of citizens. Citizen's participation is one of the most effective tools against crime because the job of stopping burglary, robbery or sexual assault is impossible for police to accomplish alone.

There are three key aspects of Neighborhood Watch:

- 1) Neighbors getting to know each other, and working together in a program of mutual assistance.
- 2) Citizens being trained to recognize and report suspicious and/or criminal activity.
- 3) Crime prevention techniques, such as Home Security Audits, Auxiliary Police, Court Watch and Community Clean-up.

Getting Started

You've already talked with some of your neighbors at the grocery store, on the sidewalk, over the fence, across the kitchen table. You know people are unhappy about the way things are, that they'd like to see something done.

The next step is to make sure that discussion is more purposeful and organized. Once a group has been identified as interested in receiving training, the Bureau of Community Policing Community Relations Officer will assist them in scheduling their first training session.

Scheduling should allow sufficient time for notification and follow-up to assure attendance. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring group or organization to encourage participation by at least 50% of the households in a particular block or neighborhood.

Where to Meet

The block club, organization or group requesting training will have the primary responsibility for locating appropriate sites. These sites should be able to accommodate large groups of individuals comfortably, have space for film presentations and have an atmosphere conducive to learning.

Citizen Notification

Notification of the individuals to be trained is the responsibility of the organization of the neighborhood. The group will also be encouraged to follow up with the individuals with a phone call a day or two before the session.

Citizen Training

Citizen training will be accomplished primarily by the officers assigned to the Bureau of Community Policing Community Relations Officers with the assistance of the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator and volunteer trainers.

What to Look For

Check your neighborhood for things that might contribute to crime, like poor street lighting, abandoned cars, vacant lots littered with debris, boarded up buildings, and high shrubbery and bushes.

An important responsibility of Neighborhood Watchers is to report anything suspicious to the police. Look for:

- Someone running from a car or home.
- Someone screaming. If you can't determine what the screams are for, call the police and report it.
- Someone going door-to-door in the neighborhood or looking into windows and parked cars.
- A person who seems to have no purpose wandering in the neighborhood.
- Any unusual or suspicious noise that you can't explain, such as breaking glass or pounding.
- Vehicles moving slowly, without lights, or with no apparent destination.
- Business transactions conducted from vehicles. This could involve the sale of drugs or stolen goods.
- Offers to sell merchandise at ridiculously low prices. It's probably stolen.
- Property carried by persons on foot at an unusual hour or place, especially if the person is running.
- Property being removed from closed businesses or residences known to be unoccupied.

- A stranger entering a neighbor's home or apartment that appears to be unoccupied.
- A child resisting the advances of an adult.

The police need to have accurate information as quickly as possible about a suspicious activity or crime in progress. When observing a suspicious person, vehicle or activity, or crime in progress, immediately call the police to report the activity and also alert your neighbors to the crime.

You should never attempt to apprehend a suspect. This is the law enforcement officer's job.

Neighborhood Watch Guidelines

- 1) Memorize the police call number (9-1-1) and keep a pen and paper near the phone.
- 2) Have your street mapped out with your neighbors' street addresses listed and the direction (N-S-E-W) from your residence indicated.
- 3) Stay alert and aware of activities in your neighborhood. Pay attention to particulars that separate your report from something that is very general (i.e. license numbers, colors, height and weight of person, age, scars, and type of clothing make your information valuable).
- 4) Know your neighbors and their cars. Neighborhood Watch works best when everyone is concerned, aware and cooperative.



What Happens When You Dial 9-1-1

- Dial 9-1-1 for emergency help.
- Your 9-1-1 call goes to a computer which identifies the telephone number from which you are calling.
- Your call is automatically relayed to the emergency agency serving the address of that telephone number.
- As your call is connected to the emergency agency, in a matter of seconds a computerized data base provides the dispatcher with name and address information from which you are calling.
- The dispatcher determines your emergency needs and verifies the address of the emergency.
- Your call is prioritized.
- The proper emergency service is sent to the scene.

Procedures for Reporting to Police

When reporting a crime, please remain calm and give police this information slowly over the phone:

- 1) Identify yourself by name, address and telephone number.
- 2) Identify the type of incident (burglary, assault, suspicious persons or vehicles, etc.).
- 3) Describe if a crime is "in progress" or "has occurred". Be sure to note time of occurrence.
- 4) Describe location. Be as specific as possible! Try to have an address for the police when you report. If an address is not available, have the street name, names of intersecting streets, and a specific description of the house or area in which you have observed a problem.
- 5) Give as complete a description as possible of a vehicle that may have been used by the culprit(s) in the commission of the crime you are reporting, including cars, motorcycles, bicycles, etc.
- 6) Give as complete a description as possible of the culprit(s) involved, including any associates also observed, and information regarding any weapons that might also be involved.
- 7) Give the direction of travel (north, south, east or west).



- 8) Finally, try to remain on the telephone and assist the dispatcher as much as possible until you are no longer needed. The more information you give the police the better.

Crimes in Progress

A crime in progress can best be explained as a crime that you feel:

1. Strong suspicion that something is about to take place. Be able to justify your suspicions. Ask yourself:
 - * Is the event or occurrence unusual?
 - * Is there potential for harm or injury?
2. Is in the process of taking place. Describe what is actually happening, is a weapon involved.
3. Has taken place within a short period of time, whether against persons or property, where you feel there is a possibility of quick apprehension with police response, or to prevent further acts of violence.

Radio Dispatch Priority List Examples

9-1-1: 24 hour emergency telephone number anywhere in the City of Cleveland:

- * Any emergency requiring a response from the Police, Fire or Emergency Ambulance (EMS).

9-1-1 operators are equipped with a caller display that can tell where a call originated from. This can be very helpful when a caller is unsure of where they are calling from, or if the caller is having trouble communicating with the operator. (Example: caller has trouble speaking English; young child calls).

If a 9-1-1 call is placed from a cellular phone in this area, the call will be routed to a county service called CECOMS. CECOMS then determines which city the call will be transferred to for assistance

Because of the nature of a cellular call, the operator does not get a display from the call's origin, so be sure to identify the city and location you are calling from for verification

When a call is placed to 9-1-1, the operator generally answers – "9-1-1, what is your emergency?" The caller then should state that they want police, fire, or ambulance. The operator then may tell them to stay on the line while they are connected to the proper agency. (Many people think that they have been disconnected or put on hold, when they are in the process of being transferred. It is important that the caller not hang up, as this can delay emergency response).

If a call is place for emergency response, the call will be prioritized by degree of emergency. A general rule to be aware of is that crimes against persons are higher priority then crimes against property. It is also important to know if the crime is in progress, suspect is in the area, or the potential for harm still exists. The information that the caller relays to the operator is crucial to determine what type of priority is given to the assignment.

The caller may be upset or frantic, and may think the operator is asking unnecessary questions, but it is important that these questions be answered as accurately as possible.

The primary point to remember when reporting a crime is that things that are happening "now" have priority over those that already happened. Reports which receive emergency dispatch are those involving injury, potential injury, vulnerable victims, crimes in progress and those with weapons involved. Reports that get delayed response include those which have no immediate or potential danger, property damage, and those in which the suspect is known, but not on scene. False reporting is a chargeable offense.

Emergency Priority Response

Priority 1 Crimes Against Persons

- * Dead body suspect on scene or in area
- * Domestic Violence suspect on scene
- * Felonious Assault suspect on scene
- * Hate/Ethnic intimidation
- * Police/Fire/EMS/Auxiliary in trouble
- * Hostage situation
- * Kidnapping/abduction
- * Attempt to lure a child
- * Robbery in progress
- * Sex offense in progress or suspect on scene
- * Suicide in progress
- * Person threatening with weapon
- * Missing child

Priority 2 Crimes Against Persons

- * Assault suspect on scene
- * Dead body suspected violence
- * Domestic Violence suspect not on scene
- * Endangered elderly/child
- * Felonious assault
- * Fight in progress
- * Missing person handicapped
- * Robbery report only
- * Sex offense report only
- * Person screaming
- * Stalking suspect on scene
- * Suicide threats
- * Persons carrying weapon

Priority 3 Calls

- * Civil dispute/neighbor trouble
- * Sex offense/indecent exposure by an adult
- * Non-violent family trouble
- * Disturbance
- * Drug activity
- * Check on the well being of a person
- * Assist with a working fire

Priority 1 Traffic Related and Accidents

- * Accident involving trains/water/air
- * Fatal accident

Priority 1 Public Safety Calls

- * Shots fired
- * Catch all for a need for Priority 1 response

Priority 1 Theft/Property Crime

- * Fire arson suspect on scene
- * Residence entered suspect on scene
- * Bank robbery in progress

Priority 2 Traffic Related and Accident

- * Damage accident that is a hazard
- * Intox driver
- * Non-fatal that is a hazard
- * Non-fatal pedestrian struck
- * Traffic hazard on freeway

Priority 2 Public Safety

- * Vicious animal
- * Abandon refrigerator
- * House alarm
- * Live wires down
- * Bomb threat
- * Violent mental person
- * Large crowd
- * Silent 911 call
- * Gun found
- * Found explosives/materials

Priority 2 Theft or Property Crimes

- * Panic or hold up alarm
- * Bank alarm
- * GTMV in progress
- * Citizen holding suspect
- * Property crime suspect on scene
- * Prowler

Priority 2 General Call

- * Dead body natural
- * Trouble unknown
- * Assist Children and Family Services

Priority 4 & 5 are assigned to calls needing a police report or receiving information only.

Suspect Physical Description Reporting Checklist

Hairstyle

Long
Medium
Short
Balding
Straight
Wavy
Afro
Braided

Facial Hair

Full Beard
Goatee
Mustache
Unshaven
Sideburns
Color

Eyes

Color
Crossed
Bulging
Squint
Blinking
Afflicted

Facial Oddities

Protruding Ears
Flat Nose
Hook Nose
Harelip
Protruding Chin
Receding Chin

Build

Heavy
Medium
Light

Handedness

Right
Left

Teeth

Missing
Protruding
Very White
Decayed
Stained
Caps
Broken
Gold
Dentures

Complexion

Light
Medium
Dark
Pock Marks
Freckles
Pimples
Scars

Speech

Profane/abusive
Soft/Polite
Apologetic
Accent
Stutter
Deep/Raspy
Effeminate/High
Lisp

Missing Body Parts

Ears
Eye
Arm
Fingers
Hand
Leg
Foot

Sex

Male
Female
Indeterminate

Race

White
Black
Asian
Hispanic
Native American

Tattoo

Face
Arm
Hand
Fingers
Body
Names
Initials
Word phrases
Picture
Design

Scars/Moles/Birthmark

Face
Forehead
Cheek
Nose
Arm
Hand

General Appearance

Neatly Dressed
Dirty/Ragged
Western
Mod/Unusual
Unusual Jewelry

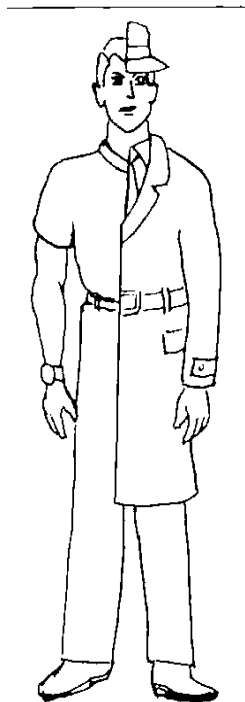
Person Wore

Ski Mask
Stocking Mask
Band-aid
Wig
Gloves
Make-up
Cap/Hat
Sun Glasses
Prescription Glasses

Suspect Description

Sex	Race	Age	Height	Weight	Type of Weapon
-----	------	-----	--------	--------	----------------

Hair/Facial Hair
Glasses(type) Jewelry
Tattoos
Complexion
Scars/Marks



Hat (color, type)
Tie
Coat
Shirt
Pants/Shoes

Facial Appearance

FACIAL APPEARANCE



ONLY those specific facial details you DEFINITELY remember.

What did the suspect say? Did the suspect have an accent?



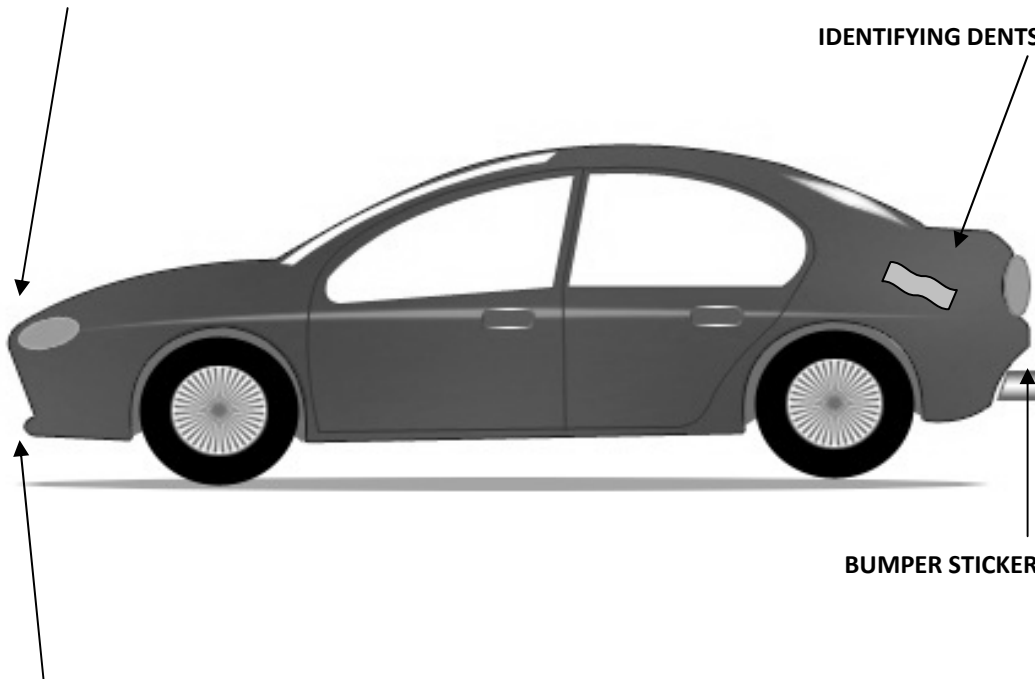
VEHICLE	Color:	Make:	Model:
Body Style:	Damage/Rust:	Bumper Sticker:	Wheel Covers:
License Number:	Direction of travel:		

Vehicle Description

Make:	Color:
Year:	Body Style: (2/4 Door, Convertible, etc.)

IDENTIFYING ACCESSORIES

Special hood ornaments, hub caps, etc.



IDENTIFYING DENTS OR SCRATCHES

BUMPER STICKERS OR DECALS.

**LICENSE NUMBER
STATE OR BACKGROUND & COLOR
HARD PLATE OR TEMP TAG**

Vehicle Description Reporting Checklist

When reporting the description of a suspicious vehicle in your neighborhood to the police, try to supply the following information:

1. License plate number – entire number
2. Color (black over white, etc.)
3. Size, make and model
4. Special Characteristics
 - * Dents or damage to car
 - * Broken windows
 - * Stickers or decals on bumpers or windows
 - * Loud muffler
 - * Decorative paint
 - * Extra antenna(s) or mirrors
 - * Special rims, tires, etc.
5. Number and description of occupants
 - Direction of travel: north, south, east or west and street names, etc.

Suspicious Activities

Protect yourself and others by keeping an eye out for the following suspicious activities:

SITUATIONS INVOLVING VEHICLES: POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE

1. Slow moving vehicles, especially without lights, following an aimless or repetitive course.
 - * *Possible casing for a place to rob or burglarize, drug pusher, sex offender, vandalism*
2. Parked vehicle occupied by one or more persons... especially significant if at an unusual hour.
 - * *Look out for burglary in progress. This is true even if occupants appear to be lovers*
3. A vehicle parked in a neighbor's drive being loaded with valuables, even if the vehicle looks legitimate...such as moving van or repair truck.
 - * *Burglary or other theft in progress*
4. Abandoned vehicle, old or new, with or without plates.
 - * *Stolen auto, or one used in a crime and abandoned*
5. Persons being forced into a vehicle.
 - * *Kidnapping, rape, robbery*

Keep Neighborhood Watch Going and Growing

Don't let your Neighborhood Watch group die. Stay alert and aware, be neighborly, and look to others to enhance community safety and well-being.

Organize meetings that focus on quality of life issues and concerns to the community, such as senior citizen issues, community development, housing issues, schools (crime and/or after school programs), child safety, court watches.

Organize neighborhood clean up efforts. Turn a vacant lot into a community garden.

Be sure to involve the youth in your neighborhood in the program. Make sure teens have something constructive to do. Have teens do household chores, paint or mow lawns. Keep an eye on your neighbors children and ask them to keep an eye on yours.

Make a resource list for Neighborhood Watch group members of numbers to call for emergencies, child abuse, victim services, street lighting problems, street repair, mediation services, youth activities, etc.

Publish a newsletter that gives local crime news, recognizes persons who have helped deter crime, and highlights positive community activities.

In Addition to Neighborhood Watch

Remember, Neighborhood Watch groups are not vigilantes and do not assume the role of police. They only ask citizens to be alert, observant and caring.

If you would like to help more in your neighborhood, consider becoming involved in the Cleveland Police Auxiliary Police Program, the Citizens Police Academy, the Law Enforcement Explorers Program, or become active in the Police/Community Relations District Committees.



Home Watch

Residential Security Survey Checklist

If you're locked out of your home, can you still get in?... Through an unlocked window in the back, or using an extra key hidden under a flowerpot or up on a ledge?

If you can break in so can a burglar!

Although this checklist will not make your home burglar proof, it will result in suggestions that may help improve your home protection.

Yes	No	Exterior of the Home
		Is your address clearly visible from the street?
		Are entry areas free of shrubbery and other items to permit visibility by your neighbors?
		Are trees and shrubs trimmed to eliminate hiding places?
		Can lights be compromised by simply unscrewing the light bulb?
		Are lights controlled by motion detection?
		Does outdoor lighting cover entire perimeter of the structure?
		Does outdoor lighting illuminate the house numbers?
		Have you removed anything with your name on it from the outside of your house?
		Are telephone and electrical lines located in a way that makes them easily accessible?
		Are outside service boxes secured (phone, electrical, etc)?
		Are detached structures (garages/sheds) properly secured/locked?
		Are there privacy fences that offer too high a degree of seclusion? If so, have you taken precautions such as an alarm system?
		Are alarm signs visible?
		Are alarm company decals on windows and points of entry?
		Does property have a well maintained appearance?
Yes	No	Windows
		Are all windows equipped with locks or pinned?
		Can windows left open for ventilation be secured?
		Are windows locked properly and firmly mounted
		Do you keep the windows locked when they are shut?
		Are there window air conditioning units?
		Are window air conditioners anchored to prevent removal from outside?
		Have screws been installed in the tracks of sliding windows to prevent them from being lifted out?
		Do you have curtains or blinds covering garage windows?
		Are there good, secure locks on garage windows?

Yes	No	Doors
		Do doors fit tightly within their frames?
		Have the locks been changed or re-keyed since the last occupant?
		Are the locks in good working condition?
		If there is an alarm, does it cover perimeter, windows and doors as well as motion?
		Are all the keys to the house accounted for?
		Are exterior doors solid core construction?
		Are there 180 degree wide-angle viewers on the exterior doors?
		Can all doors, including upper floor, be properly secured?
		Have sliding doors been tailored to keep them from being lifted out of the track?
		Can the overhead garage door be properly secured? (a padlock at the very least)
		Do you lock the garage door leading to the house?
		Are garage door openers left in cars that are parked outside the garage?
		If there are glass panes in or near doors, are they reinforced to prevent them from being shattered out?
		Do doors and windows allow an easy escape in the event of an emergency?
Yes	No	When Going Away
		Do you leave in a way so that the typical person would not be able to tell you're leaving? Pack the car out of sight.
		Do you notify someone to watch your house?
		Do you arrange for friends or a neighbor to pick up your mail, newspaper and other deliveries?
		Have you left both work and/or vacation numbers with a trusted individual so that you can be contacted in case of an emergency?
		Have you made provisions for lawn care/snow removal?
		Are timers in place for interior lighting, radios, etc...?
		Did you turn the phone ringer and answering machine down to low?
		Do you park halfway down your driveway so it looks like someone is home and makes it more difficult for thieves to load things up?
		Have valuables been placed in uncommon areas instead of the obvious spots?
Yes	No	Miscellaneous Issues
		Do you keep an inventory of valuables and is it secured in a safe place?
		Does your inventory include photographs and a record of serial numbers for valuable items?
		Do you have emergency numbers listed by or on your phone?
		Do you shred personal information instead of putting it out in the trash?
		Do you maintain a cell phone?
		Do you practice safety drills with your family?
		Are firearms unloaded and locked away safely?
		Do you vary your daily routine occasionally?
		Are insurance policies kept up to date?

If you have any questions after completing the survey, please call the Bureau of Community Policing at 216-623-5080 and an officer will gladly assist you.

Home Security

Citizens should be concerned not only with the security of their neighborhoods, but also with making their own homes as secure as possible. Good locks, simple precautions, neighborhood alertness and common sense can help prevent most property crimes.

Removing the opportunity for crime will reduce the amount of crime. More than three million residential burglaries are committed annually – one every ten seconds! However, half of all home burglaries occur during the day when alert neighbors could spot thieves and call the police.

Check the Locks

Make sure every external door has a sturdy, well installed deadbolt lock with a minimum of 1 ½ "bolt.

* Secure sliding glass doors with commercially available locks or use a broomstick or wooden dowel in the track to prevent the door from being pried open. Insert a pin in a hole drilled in the sliding door frame that goes through to the fixed frame to prevent anyone from lifting the door off its track.

* Secure double-hung windows by using key locks or by sliding a bolt or nail through a hole drilled at a downward angle in top corners of the inside sash and partway through the outside sash. Secure basement windows too. The hole should be large enough that the nail or bolt slides in and out freely, in case you have to open the window fast in an emergency.

* Don't hide keys in mailboxes, planters, or under doormats. Give an extra key to a neighbor you trust.

- If you just moved in a new house or apartment, have the locks changed.

Check the Doors

Locks aren't effective if they're on flimsy doors.

* Make sure all exterior doors are metal or solid, 1 ¾" hardwood.

* Doors should fit tightly in their frames, with hinge pins on the side.

- Install a peephole or wide-angle viewer in all entry doors, so you can see who is outside without opening the door. Door chains are not security devices – they can break easily and won't keep out an intruder.

Check the Outside

To discourage burglars from selecting your home as their target of opportunity, make sure to:

* Trim shrubbery that hides doors or windows. Cut tree limbs that could help a thief climb into windows.

* Turn on outside lights after dark to illuminate porches, entrances and yards – front and back. Consider timers that turn on outside lights, or install motion detectors.

- * Keep your yard well maintained. Store ladders and tools inside your locked garage, basement, or storage shed when you're not using them.
- * Clearly display your house number, so police and other emergency vehicles can find your home quickly.
- * Keep up the appearance of the neighborhood. Broken streetlights, abandoned cars, vacant buildings, graffiti, litter and run-down areas attract crime. Work with the local government and your neighbors to organize community clean-up days.
- * If you are planning to go on vacation, put lights and a radio on timers to create the illusion that someone is home. Leave shades, blinds, and curtains in normal positions. Arrange for a neighbor to pick up and hold your mail and newspapers, and have them check daily to remove circulars from your doorway and yard.
 - If you are going to be away for an extended period, make arrangements to have your grass cut and watered, or your snow shoveled. Have a neighbor leave trash at your curb on garbage collection day and park a car in your driveway occasionally.

What About Alarms?

If you have valuables in your home, or if you live in an isolated area or a neighborhood vulnerable to break-ins, consider an alarm system.

Before you invest in alarms:

- * Check with several companies and decide what level of security fits your needs. Sources of information include your local police department, the public library, and the Better Business Bureau.
- * Look for an established company and check its references before using them.
- * Learn how to use your system properly. If you continually set off false alarms, your neighbors will ignore the noise, and you could even be fined by local law enforcement agencies.

Burglars Can Take More Than Your Property!

Burglars generally don't want to run into their victims. But if they are surprised by someone coming home, or if they pick an occupied home, someone may get hurt.

- * If you see a screen that has been cut, a broken window, or a door that has 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, or, if the intruder enters the 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.

Road Rules

Here are a few things to keep in mind to help keep you crime free on the road.

- * Don't drink or do other drugs and drive, and don't ride with drivers who are under the influence.
- * Keep your car in good working condition and the gas tank full. If your car does break down, pull over and stay inside it with the doors locked and the windows rolled up. Wait for the police to arrive or ask a passing motorist to call the police for you.
- * Always lock a parked car, and look under and inside the entire car to see if someone has gotten into your car before you get back in your car.
- * Avoid parking in isolated areas. If you're uncomfortable about where your car is parked, ask a security guard or store staff to watch you or escort you to your car.
- * Drive to the nearest gas station, open business, or busy, well-lighted area to get help if you think you are being followed. Don't head home.
- * Use your cellular phone, if you have one, to call the police if you are being followed. Otherwise, stay off cellular phones while you are driving.
 - Don't pick up hitchhikers. Don't hitchhike.

Taking Your Anger on the Road

Road rage – uncontrolled anger or frustration because of traffic conditions or other drivers – is becoming a serious problem throughout the country. A majority of drivers get angry when someone cuts them off or tailgates them. Here are some tips on avoiding road rage:

- * Keep calm when you're driving. Instead of retaliating, count to 10 and take a few deep breaths.
- * Back off when someone cuts you off. If someone tailgates you, change lanes; don't get pulled into a game of chicken on the road. Your life and the lives of others are at stake.
- * Keep a reasonable distance between you and the car in front of you, and make sure that you aren't cutting someone off when you change lanes. Drive in the passing lane only when you are passing another car, and be sure to use your signals.
- * Use your horn sparingly – as a warning, not an outburst.
- * Don't make obscene gestures to other drivers; no matter how mad they make you – even if they make obscene gestures at you.
- * Don't fight over parking spots.
- * Stay out or move out of the way of other angry drivers.

Don't Make it Easy for a Thief to Steal Your Wheels

The Basic Prevention Policy

- * Never leave your car running or the keys in the ignition when you're away from it, even for "just a minute".
- * Always roll up the windows and lock the car, even when it is in front of your home.
- * Never leave valuables in plain view, even if your car is locked. Put them in the trunk or at least out of sight. Buy auto stereo equipment that can be removed and locked in the trunk.
- * Park in busy, well-lighted areas.
- * Carry the registration and insurance card with you. Don't leave personal I.D.'s or credit cards in your vehicle.
- * Leave only the ignition key with the attendant when you pay to park in a lot or garage. Do the same when you take the car for repairs.
- * Report your car stolen car to the police immediately.

A Little Extra Protection

- Etch the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) found on a metal plate behind the front windshield – on the windows, doors, fenders, and trunk lid. This helps discourage professional thieves who have to either remove or replace etched parts before selling the car. Copy the VIN and your license plate tag number on a card and keep it in a safe place – the police will need this information if your car is stolen.
- Investigate security systems if you live in a high theft area or drive an automobile that's attractive to thieves. You may get a discount on your auto insurance if you have a security system installed.

What About Carjacking?

Carjacking – stealing a car by force has captured headlines in the last few years. Statistically, your chances of being a carjacking victim are very slim, and preventative actions can reduce the risk even more.

- * Approach your car with the key in hand. Look around, inside and underneath the car before getting in your vehicle.
- * Keep your car doors locked at all times while you are driving.
- * Be especially alert at intersections, gas stations, ATM's, shopping malls and convenience and grocery stores – all are windows of opportunity for carjackers.
- * Park in well-lighted areas with good visibility, close to walkways, stores, and people.
- * Beware of the "bump and rob" where someone lightly hits your car from behind. When you get out to assess the damages, the carjacker's accomplice gets in your car and drives away.
- * Give up your car with no questions asked. Your life is worth more than a car.

Child Watch

Children! They bring us such joy, but too many of our kids are frightened or hurt by crime every year. All children can be taught how to spot trouble, and what to do if trouble happens to them.

Talking to children about certain dangers to their personal safety makes many adults uneasy. And some safety rules you'll teach your children may seem to contradict other values, like being polite and obeying adults.

It is very important, when teaching children personal safety and caution, that they don't become overly frightened. So, never present too much information at once; young children can't absorb a lot at one time. Children should know, of course, that the reason for learning and following safety rules is because they're loved. Rules should not be seen as arbitrary and adults should take care to be consistent with the rules they teach, and practice what they preach.

Talking With Your Kids About Strangers

Children have a right to know about potential threats to their safety, and what to do if they find themselves in trouble. Safe basic knowledge will increase their confidence and self-reliance, and you will feel better knowing that they know how to cope when you're not around. More and more kids today spend time at home and play while their parents are at work.

It is normal and natural that children will spend time playing or traveling out of the sight of trusted and caring adults. The best way to keep trouble away from kids is to teach them to avoid areas and situations where strangers might lurk. Here are some basic "play it safe" rules for children:

1. Never play in deserted areas such as the woods, a parking lot, an alley, deserted buildings, or new construction.
2. Always stick to a safe walking route when traveling to and from school or a friend's house.
3. Always try to play or walk with friends, it's safer.
4. Never play or loiter in such public areas such as washrooms or elevators.
5. Wait with a friend for public transportation. Sit or stand near the driver on the bus.
6. Never display money in public. Carry money only if necessary and keep it in a pocket until needed.
7. Never walk or play alone outside at night.
8. Always tell a family member or other adult in charge where you'll be at all times, and what time you'll be home.
9. Never hitchhike, NEVER!

Teaching Children How To Spot Trouble – Be Alert For Strangers

Friendly strangers can be dangerous strangers. Strangers who offer treats to children may be offering threats instead. Teach young children what a stranger is: ***Anyone they don't know well.*** Play "What if" games with your child. Focus on prevention strategies. *For instance:* "What if a stranger comes up to you and says, "Come look at the kittens in the trunk of my car", *what would you do?* Discuss running, yelling, kicking and reporting information which includes a description of the person.

Make sure your children learn and follow these basic rules when you're not around:

1. Never accept rides, candy, gifts, money or medicine from a stranger.
2. Never get close to a car if a stranger calls out to you for directions. It is easy for a stranger to pull you into a car.
3. Strangers can be very tricky – they can ask you to walk with them to “show” them something; they can offer to pay you for your video game, or ask you to help them find a lost dog or cat. Don't be fooled!
4. Never give your name or address to a stranger.
5. Don't think that because someone knows your name that they know you – maybe they're looking at your t-shirt.
6. Some adults can tell you what to do – such as parents, a teacher or police officer, but no adult can tell you what to do just because he or she is bigger than you. If you're ever in a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable in any way, you have the right to say “NO”, loud and clear.
7. Never open the door to your house or apartment to anyone you don't know.
8. Never tell callers that you're home alone. Say mom or dad can't come to the telephone, and you will have them call them back.
9. Never volunteer family vacation plans or other information about your home.
10. Always avoid strangers who are hanging around restrooms, playgrounds, or schools and want to play with you or your friends.

If a stranger persists....

1. If a stranger in a car bothers you, turn and run away in the opposite direction.
2. When frightened, run to the nearest person you can find (a police officer, teacher or neighbor, opened business).
3. If a stranger tries to follow you or tries to grab you, run away, scream and make a lot of noise.

Teach children that police officers are friends whose job is to protect them. If a police officer can't be located easily, a child should also know how to run or seek out a trusted teacher, a neighbor, or a friend's parent when frightened or feeling endangered. Children should know that they should report trouble right away.

Teach your children how to operate the telephone to call for emergency assistance by calling “9-1-1”.

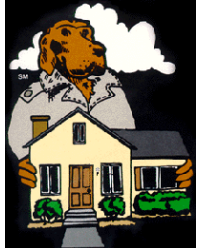


Home Alone – A Parent’s Guide

Your ten-year old comes home from school at 3:30pm, but you don’t get home from work until 5:00pm. What does he do until you arrive?

Most likely, he gets a snack, talks on the phone, or starts his homework, but since you’re not there, you worry. Just like a lot of parents who work and have to leave their children on their own after school everyday, you are anxious about your child’s safety.

By following the safeguards listed below, you can help ease some of this worry by taking measures that will protect your kids when you’re not around.



What You Can Do

- * Make sure your children are mature enough to care for themselves. Don’t forget to check on your state’s law about the age at which children can be left at home by themselves.
- * Teach your children to check in with you or a neighbor immediately after arriving home.
- * Post a list of numbers beside the phone so your children know whom to contact in case they feel scared.
- * Discuss what constitutes an emergency. Make sure your children know how to call “9-1-1”.
- * Tell your child to never accept gifts or rides from people you and they don’t know and trust.
- * Teach your children how to give directions to your home, in case of an emergency. Even young children should know their full name, address (including zip code), and phone number (including area code).
- * Teach your children how to use the door and window locks as well as the alarm system if you have one.
- * Allow your children to have their own house key to keep in a safe place (on a chain around their neck or in their school backpack). Don’t leave it under a mat or on a ledge outside the house. Give a key to a neighbor for emergency situations or in case the key gets lost.
- * Teach your children how to respond if someone telephones for you. Have them practice telling the caller that you’re busy or letting the answering machine answer the phone.
- * Establish family rules about whether (and if so, how) your children answer the door when an adult is not at home.
- * Teach your children how to escape in the event of a fire. Practice this drill once a month.
- * Teach your children not to go into your home or apartment if things don’t look right – a broken window, opened door, or ripped screen.
- * Encourage your children to tell you or another trusted adult about anything that frightens them or makes them feel uncomfortable.
- * Work on getting after-school programs started in your children’s school or community.

KEEP THESE IMPORTANT NUMBERS NEAR THE PHONE!

Mom’s or Dad’s Work: _____ Neighbor: _____

Family Friend who lives/works nearby: _____ School: _____

Police: _____ Fire Department: _____

Poison Control Center: _____ Paramedics: _____

Emergency help: 9-1-1

Neighborhood Safety – A Parents Guide

Would your children know what to do if they got lost at a shopping mall? Or if a nice looking, friendly stranger offered them a ride home after school? What if the babysitter or a neighbor wanted to play a secret game?

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

What You Can Do

- * Tell your children never to accept rides or gifts from someone they don't know.
- * Teach your children to go to a store clerk, security guard, or police officer for help if lost in a mall, store, or on the street.
- * A child who has low self-esteem cannot protect himself/herself. Listen carefully to your children's fears, and be supportive in all discussions with them, replacing fear with knowledge.
- * Encourage your children while playing with friends to avoid places that may be dangerous – vacant buildings, alleys, playgrounds, or parks with broken equipment.
- * Make sure children know their address and phone number by heart and the location of their house.
- * Know where your children are at all times. Be familiar with their friends and daily activities.
- * Teach your children that if they are being followed to keep walking to a public place, like a library or store.
- * Children need positive role models and need to know where to go for help.
- * Children at all ages can make decisions. Practice early with your children helping them with making little decisions so big decisions later are easier. Teach them to trust their own feelings, and assure them they have the right to say NO to what they sense is wrong.
- * Teach your children that no one should approach them or touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. If someone does, they should tell you immediately.
- * Teach your children what they need to know to be safe and let them know you will do your best to protect them. Don't scare the fun out of children.



Child Molestation and Abuse

Let's face it, almost all the rules and tips in this booklet about increasing children's personal safety have to do with your two big fears for children: sexual molestation and physical harm.

Including sexual abuse, an estimated one million child abuse incidents are reported every year. Other forms of child abuse include physical violence, emotional cruelty and deprivation, and physical neglect.

Child abusers are persons usually known to the child. This means most cases aren't reported to authorities, and children continue to suffer because abusers are repeat offenders. Child abuse is dangerous and against the law. Many abused children will grow up to victimize their families, and others, later in life. The children need help and treatment as soon as possible. It is your duty as a citizen to report suspected cases of child abuse by contacting a special hotline, the police or a child welfare agency immediately. In Cuyahoga County, you can call 696-KIDS to make a report.

Like rapists, most child abusers are repeat offenders. They don't stop with just one incident. It is important that parents be willing to prosecute the offender, because most abusers will not voluntarily seek help.

The Child Victim – Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse may be non-physical, physical or violent.

- *Non-physical* abuse can be indecent exposure, obscene phone calls or peeping toms.
- *Physical* abuse may involve genital or touching, fondling, or sexual imposition.
- *Violent* abuse may include rape, beatings or other physical abuse.

Incidents may occur just once or may be repeated many times. Adults who molest children frequently rely on children's passivity and obedience to adult authority. Children may give in to adults sexual advances because they fear losing their love, or fear their punishment. Children are trusting and defenseless. Therefore, they are especially vulnerable to sexual abuse by someone they know. Teaching children that secrets which hurt or frighten them need not be kept is important in preventing assault.

Children frequently have difficulty in differentiating between affectionate touching and sexual or exploitative touching. Discuss it with your child. They must learn what appropriate touching is, that it's okay to say no if they don't feel right about someone touching them, and to tell a trusted adult about any incident.

Children need to have prevention information to prepare them to recognize a potentially dangerous situation. Teaching children about prevention in order to reduce their vulnerability to assault is as important as teaching children how to cross the street safely. All children should know that anything that makes them feel uncomfortable should be reported.

Sometimes a child may be too frightened or confused to talk directly about abuse. Be alert for any changes in behavior that might hint that the child has suffered a disturbing experience.

- Is the child having trouble sleeping, wetting the bed, or waking up with nightmares?
- Does the child show a marked change in behavior toward a relative, neighbor or babysitter, or does he/she avoid certain people?

- Is the child suddenly more withdrawn than usual, refusing to go to school or afraid to be alone? Is there a sudden drop in schoolwork quality?
- Is there a sign of increased anxiety or immature behavior?

Adults should remember young children rarely lie about being victims of sexual abuse. If a child tells you about being touched or assaulted, you can help.

Do not deny there is a problem. Take it seriously. Believe the child, no matter how hard it is. Even if the child made up the incident, help may be needed. CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS.

Stay calm. Do not panic or lose control. Fear and anger are normal reactions, but they can frighten the child.

Give emotional support. Tell the child that she/he is not to blame and did the right thing by telling. Many children feel guilty, as if they had provoked the assault. Children need to be reassured that the incident was not their fault, and they are right to tell you what happened.

Get Medical Assistance. Contact a physician for prompt medical treatment; in some cases, a child may need to be taken immediately to a doctor or an emergency room.

Talking With Your Kids About Drugs

Don't put off talking to your children about alcohol and other drugs. As early as fourth grade, kids worry about pressures to try drugs. School programs alone aren't enough. Parents must become involved, but most parents aren't sure how to tell their children about drugs. Open communications is one of the most effective tools you can use in helping your child avoid drug use. Talking freely and really listening shows children that they mean a great deal to you.

What Do You Say?

- Tell them you love them and you want them to be healthy and happy.
- Say you do not find alcohol and other illegal drug use acceptable. Many parents never state this simple principle.
- Explain how this use hurts people. *Physical harm* – for example, AIDS, slowed growth, impaired coordination, accidents. *Emotional harm* – sense of not belonging, isolation, and paranoia. *Educational harm* – difficulties remembering and paying attention.
- Discuss the legal issues. A conviction for a drug offense can lead to time in prison or cost someone a job, driver's license, or college loan.
- Talk about positive, drug-free alternatives, and how you can explore them together. Some ideas include sports, reading, movies, bike rides, hikes, camping, cooking, games, and concerts. Involve your kids' friends.

How Do You Say It?

- Calmly and openly – don't exaggerate. The facts speak for themselves.
- Face to face – exchange information and try to understand each other's point of view. Be an active listener and let your child talk about fears and concerns. Don't interrupt and don't preach.
- Through "teachable moments" – in contrast to a formal lecture, use a variety of situations – television news, TV dramas, books, newspapers.
- Establish an ongoing conversation rather than giving a one-time speech.
- Remember that you set the example. Avoid contradictions between your words and your actions, and don't use illegal drugs period.
- Be creative! You and your child might act out various situations in which one person tries to pressure another to take a drug. Figure out two or three ways to handle each situation and talk about which works best.
- Exchange ideas with other parents.

How Can I Tell if a Child is Using Drugs?

Identifying illegal drug use may help prevent further abuse. Possible signs include:

- Change in moods – more irritable, secretive, withdrawn, overly sensitive, inappropriately angry, euphoric
- Less responsible – late coming home, late for school or class, dishonest.
- Changing friends or changing lifestyles – new interests, unexplained cash.
- Physical deterioration – difficulty in concentration, loss of coordination, loss of weight, unhealthy appearance.

Why Do People Use Drugs?

Young people say they turn to alcohol and other drugs for one or more of these reasons:

- To do what their friends are doing.
- To escape pain in their lives.
- To fit in.
- Boredom.
- For fun.
- Curiosity.
- To take risks.

Take A Stand!

- Educate yourself about the facts surrounding alcohol and other drug use. You will lose credibility with your child if your information is not correct.
- Establish clear family rules against drug use and enforce them consistently.
- Develop your parenting skills through seminars, networking with other parents, reading, counseling, and support groups.
- Work with other parents to set community standards – you don't raise a child alone.
- Volunteer at schools, youth centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, or other activities in your community.



Cyber Safety for Kids Online: A Parents' Guide

The Internet has opened up a world of information for anyone with a computer and a connection! Your children will learn about computers, but just as you wouldn't send children near a busy road without some safety rules, you shouldn't send them on to the information superhighway without rules of the road. Too many dangers from pedophiles to con artists can reach children (and adults) through the Internet.

Getting Started

- Explain that although a person may be alone in a room using the computer, once logged on to the internet, he or she is no longer alone. People skilled in using the internet can find out who you are. They can even tap into information in your computer.
- Set aside time to explore the internet together. If your child has some computer experience, let him or her take the lead. Visit areas of the World Wide Web that have special sites for children.

Controlling Access

- The best tool a child has for screening material found on the internet is his or her brain. Teach children about exploitation, pornography, hate literature, excessive violence, and other issues that concern you, so you know how to respond when they see this material.
- Choose a commercial online service that offers parental control features. These features can block contact that is not clearly marked as appropriate for children; chat rooms, bulletin boards, news groups, and discussion groups; or access to the internet entirely.
- Purchase blocking software and design your own safety system. Different packages can block sites by name, search for unacceptable words and block access to sites containing those words, block entire categories of material, and prevent children from giving out personal information.
- Monitor your children when they're online and monitor the time they spend online. If a child becomes uneasy or defensive when you walk into the room or when you linger, this could be a sign that he or she is up to something unusual or even forbidden.

Tell Your Children...

- To always let you know immediately if they find something scary or threatening on the internet.
- Never to give out their name, address, telephone number, password, school name, and parent's name, or any other personal information.
- Never to agree to meet face to face with someone they've met online.
- Never to respond to messages that have bad words or seem scary or just weird.
- Never to enter an area that charges for services without asking you first.
- Never send a picture of themselves to anyone without your permission.

What You Can Do In The Community

- Make sure that access to the internet at your children's school is monitored by adults.
- Know your children's friends and their parents. If your child's friend has internet access at home, talk to the parents about the rules they have established. Find out if the children are monitored while they are online.
- Make sure that your child's school has an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). This policy should include a list of acceptable and unacceptable activities or resources, information on "netiquette" (etiquette on the internet), consequences for violations, and a place for you and your children to sign. Your family can design its own AUP for the home computer.
- If your child receives threatening e-mails or pornographic material, save the offensive material and contact that user's internet service provider and your local law enforcement agency.
- If you come across sites that are inappropriate for children when you are surfing the net, send the address to online services that offer parental control features or to sites advertising protection software to add to their list to be reviewed for inclusion or exclusion. Even if you don't subscribe to the service or own the protection software, you can help protect other children.



Personal Safety

Being Streetwise and Safe

Knowing how to protect yourself can reduce the opportunity for muggers, purse snatchers, and other street criminals to strike. A good Neighborhood Watch program is an important part of reducing the opportunity for crime. Your street or block club may wish to designate some homes on the street as "Safe Houses", where neighborhood children or adults in danger know they can go for safety. It can make a big difference when it comes to feeling confident about walking in your neighborhood.

Remember many rapes occur in the victim's home, in a garage or an apartment laundry room. In some cases, the rapist may be a burglar who breaks into a house and unexpectedly finds someone home.

In other cases, an attacker purposely looks for women home alone. So, one of the best ways to prevent sexual assault is to protect your home. (See Home Watch Section for tips on how to best secure your residence).

Rapes also happen in cars and other vehicles. Most take place in the rapist's car, so be very careful about accepting rides home from strangers. A casual offer of a ride home from somebody you don't know well could mean trouble.

3 Basic Rules For Personal Safety

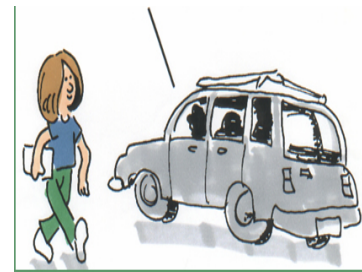
- ***Do stay alert.*** Keep your mind on your surroundings, who is in front of you and who is behind you. Don't get distracted.
- ***Do communicate the message that you're calm.*** Walk tall, purposefully, confidently and at a steady pace. Make quick eye contact with people around you.
- ***Do trust your instincts.*** If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave.



When Walking

- Plan the safest route to your destination and use it.
- Don't take short cuts through parks, tunnels, parking lots and alleys if you're alone or if they are known to be problem areas. Take the long way if it's the safest.
- Well-lighted, busy streets are best. Avoid walking in risky areas such as deserted streets, wooded areas, vacant lots, alleys, or construction sites.
- Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes and alleys where attackers can hide. Walk against traffic so you can see approaching cars.
- Know your neighborhood and be familiar with key points of safety. Find out what stores and restaurants are open late and where police and fire stations are located.
- Carry your purse close to your body and keep a firm grip on it. Do not wrap purse straps around your body. This may cause you serious injury in the event someone tries to snatch your purse. Carry a wallet in an inside coat pocket or side trouser pocket.
- Don't flaunt expensive jewelry or clothing. Never flash your cash in public, and carry only the amount of money you actually need.

- Wear clothes and shoes that give you freedom of movement. Keep your hands free. Don't overburden yourself with packages and groceries that make it hard to react.
- Be careful when people stop you for directions. Always reply from a distance, and never get too close to a car.
- Bring "emergency" change for cab fare, bus fare, or a telephone call.
- Have your car or house key in hand as you approach your vehicle or home.
- If you suspect you're being followed by someone on foot, cross the street and head for the nearest well-lighted, populated area. Walk quickly or run to a house or store to call police.
- If you are being followed by someone in a car, change direction immediately and make a visible point of writing down the license number.
- If you feel you are in danger, don't be reluctant to scream. Attract attention anyway you can – yell for help, yell "fire" or break a window in a house where you think someone is home. Consider carrying a shriek alarm, and if you're in trouble use it.
- Don't walk alone if you can help it. Most violent crimes are directed against a lone victim. Friends help friends by keeping together. Volunteer to escort a friend or neighbor who goes to work or class at night.



Accepting Rides

- Accept rides only from persons you trust. If harassed from a car, walk swiftly or run in the opposite direction to safety.
- Never hitchhike. People who pick up hitchhikers often have other ideas than wanting to help you.

In The Car

- Keep your car in good running condition to avoid breakdowns. Also make sure you have plenty of gasoline for your trip – you don't want to run out of gas in a deserted or problem area.
- Plan your route in advance, particularly on long or unfamiliar trips. Have enough gas and money to get there and back.
- Drive with all car doors locked. Keep windows rolled up whenever possible.
- Never pick up hitchhikers.
- If you see another motorist in trouble, signal that you will get help and then go to a telephone and call police.
- If your car breaks down raise the hood, use flares, post a sign that says call police, or tie a white cloth to the door handle or antenna. Stay in the locked car. When someone stops, ask them to phone for help.
- Lock your car doors and close all windows when leaving your car, even for a few minutes. Look into the car before you get in to make sure you don't have an uninvited passenger.
- Be particularly alert and careful when using underground and enclosed parking garages.
- If you are being followed while driving, drive to the nearest police or fire station, open gas station or other business, or well-lighted residence where you can safely call police. Try to get the car's license plate number and description. If no safe area is near, honk the horn repeatedly and turn on emergency flashers.

- Be aware of set up accidents. If you have reason to believe that the accident you were involved in was set up, you should:
 - A. Remain in your vehicle.
 - B. Inform other party to meet you at the nearest police station to make a report.
 - C. Make a report if he/she follows you to the police station or not.
- In the event you are stopped by a police officer, make sure it is a police officer. Remember:
 - A. All police officers must have a badge and a picture I.D.
 - B. Suggest to the officer to call a marked vehicle to assist if you are stopped by an unmarked vehicle.
 - C. If stopped in an isolated area, suggest to the officer to do business at the police station or public area.

Car Jacking

- In the event of a car jacking, *GIVE THEM THE CAR.*
- Phone 911 and immediately make a report.



Buses and Rapids

- Try to use well-lit and frequently used stops.
- Try to sit near the driver of the vehicle. Stand rather than sit next to someone who looks like trouble.
- Be careful who you talk to and what you say. Don't give away your address to strangers.
- Don't tell strangers your routes, what buses you catch, how long you have to wait or where.
- Don't fall asleep. Stay alert!
- In the subway or rapid stop, stand back from the platform edge. Avoid sitting near the exit door. An attacker can reach in and grab a purse or jewelry as the train pulls away.
- While waiting, stand with other people or near the token or information booth.
- If you are verbally or physically harassed, attract attention by talking loudly, screaming or blowing an emergency whistle.
- Be alert to who gets off the bus or rapid with you. If you feel uncomfortable, walk directly to a place where there are other people.

In Elevators

- Look in the elevator before getting in to be sure no one is hiding.
- Stand near the controls.
- Get off if someone suspicious enters. If you're worried about someone who is waiting for the elevator with you, pretend you forgot something and don't get on the elevator.
- If you are attacked, hit the alarm and as many floor buttons as possible.

Jogging, Biking and Other Outdoor Activities

- Choose routes in advance that are safe and well populated.
- Wear fluorescent or light-colored clothing which is visible in the dark so that if anything happens, people can see and react to it.

- Vary your route and schedule.
- Avoid jogging and biking at night. Know businesses that are open and locations of police and fire stations.
- Consider carrying a shriek alarm.
- Consider not wearing your headphones. It's safer to be alert.



What If It Happens To You?

- Don't fight back if the criminal is armed. Your life and safety comes first.
- If the attacker is only after your purse or other valuables, don't resist. Turn over any money or property. You don't want to escalate a property crime into a violent confrontation.
- Don't panic or show any signs of anger or confusion. Try to remain calm so you can accurately describe the criminal's appearance or vehicle.
- Make a conscious effort to get an accurate description of your attacker's age, race, complexion, body build, height, weight, type and color of clothing, and identifying marks (i.e. scars, tattoos, etc.).
- After a crime is committed, try not to disturb any evidence. The more clues you can provide to law enforcement, the better the chances the criminal will be caught.
- Call the police immediately, identifying yourself and your location.
- Contact your local victim assistance agency to help you deal with the trauma that all crime victims experience. In Cleveland, this agency is Victim/Witness Service Center, which can be reached at 443-7345. They can also help you learn about victim compensation laws and how to follow your case's progress.
- If you see a crime being committed, call the police immediately and stay with the victim until they come. Be supportive and offer to accompany the victim to the hospital or police station. How would you feel if you needed help and no one volunteered?
- If you should become a victim of a crime or witness a crime, stick with your case. Help police in their investigation. If they catch the suspect and take your case to trial it's the only way to see that justice is done. Believe it or not it pays to prosecute – 3 out of 4 cases that go to court result in a verdict of guilty.



Senior Citizen Safety

As an older citizen, you feel especially worried about crime, but the truth is older folks are victims of crime less often than younger people. However, that doesn't mean you shouldn't learn how to take care of yourself.

Many senior citizens are so worried about crime that they shut themselves up in their homes and rarely go out, but isolating ourselves behind locked doors, not getting together with our neighbors, actually makes it easier for criminals to work in the neighborhood.

You can reduce opportunities for criminals to strike by being careful, alert and a good neighbor. Sharing crime prevention makes sense. You'll be multiplying your protection. Help make your community a safer place to live and don't let fears of crime restrict your activities. Being alert to your surroundings, installing good locks on doors and windows, and taking common sense precautions while inside and outside your home can reduce opportunities for crime.

Know What Crimes Affect You

The first step in preventing crime is knowing just what the risks are.

- Check with the police to find out about specific crime problems in your area.
- The risks are higher for senior citizens living in large urban areas. This is true for the entire population – cities and suburbs have higher crime rates than rural areas.
- Seniors are more vulnerable to certain crimes – purse snatching, mugging and fraud. However, you can discourage criminals by being one step ahead.

Protect Your Money

- Protect your "life lines". Your financial lifelines, such as your Social Security or retirement checks, should be sent directly to your checking or savings account, along with any other checks you receive in the mail regularly.
- Avoid carrying large sums of money.
- Never put your purse or wallet on a counter while you examine merchandise in a store, or in a shopping cart unattended.
- Be wary of talkative strangers when the conversation turns to money. Read every newspaper report on con games and be ready to say no if someone comes to you with a scheme.

Reduce Your Risk From Fraud

Swindlers see the elderly as easy marks for many reasons. They may be looking for ways to increase their incomes through investments, home business opportunities, or retirement properties. Such business ventures may be sound, but some are ideal settings for fraud.

Hearing aid and insurance rip-offs, health quackery, and work-at-home rackets are other well known swindles aimed at senior citizens. Most con artists promise "incredible bargains" or "quick money". Swindlers are usually well-dressed, talkative and intelligent. After all they are trying to win your confidence. They'll play to your natural inclination to be helpful. *Always* check out the company with the local Consumer Affairs Office, Better Business Bureau, or your senior citizens' organization before handing over any money.

Buying By Mail

- If you order by mail, remember that the Federal Trade Commission requires most mail-order companies to fill your order in 30 days unless the order form states otherwise. You can cancel the order if not received within 30 days and the company must return your money in 7 days.
- Beware of "winning" a contest you never entered – a technique to dupe you into buying something you don't want.

Home Repairs

- If someone comes to your door who "just happened" to be walking by and noticed your home needs repairs, BEWARE!
- Be wary of door-to-door sellers of home insulation or other energy saving devices.
- Don't sign anything until you get another opinion and other estimates.

Buying on Credit

- Credit is available from many different sources, so it's wise to shop around.
- Be wary of "low monthly payments".
- Find out the total amount of interest you'll pay over the life of the loan.



Reduce Your Risks at Home

- Get to know your neighbors and keep their phone numbers handy for emergencies.
- Work out a "buddy" system with a friend to check on each other's welfare daily.
- If you live alone don't advertise it. Use only your first initial in phone books, directories, and apartment lobbies.
- Ask for photo identification from service or delivery people before letting them in. If you are the least bit worried, call the company to verify.
- Consider a home alarm system that provides emergency monitoring for burglary, fire and medical emergencies.
- Be sure your street address number is large, clear of obstruction, and well-lighted so police and other emergency personnel can find your home quickly.

If You Live In An Apartment

- Make sure entry door has a deadbolt lock and wide angle viewer.
- Sliding glass doors have a wooden rod or metal brace in the tracks so it can't be opened and pins in the overhead frame so it can't be lifted out.
- Make sure the landlord or building manager tightly controls all keys.
- If the apartment has a buzzer system to enter, ALWAYS know who you are buzzing in to the building.
- Are fire stairs locked from the stairwell side above the ground floor, so you can exit but no one can enter?
- Get to know your neighbors. Join or organize an Apartment Watch group so neighbors can look out for and help each other.

When You're Out

- Whenever you are – on the street, in an office building or shopping mall, driving, waiting for a bus – stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings.
- Stick to well-lighted, well traveled streets. Avoid shortcuts through wooded areas, parking lots, or alleys.
- Muggers look for lone victims in out-of-the way places. Pickpockets like crowded, busy locations and careless people. Purse snatchers most of whom are teenagers, like to pick on people who can't move as quickly as they can.
- Go with friends or family, not alone.
- Don't carry credit cards you don't need or large amounts of cash.
- If someone or something makes you uneasy, trust your instincts and leave.

If You're Disabled



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 the 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 locations of police and fire stations, public telephones, hospitals, restaurants, or stores that are open and accessible.
- Avoid establishing a predictable activity pattern. Most of us have daily routines, but never varying them may increase your vulnerability to crime.
- Travel with someone you know whenever possible.

Gang Watch

Once found only in large cities, gangs have invaded communities of all sizes across the United States. Gangs bring fear and violence to neighborhoods through drug trafficking, destruction of property, threatening or hurting peaceful residents. Ultimately, gangs can drive out businesses and draw young people away from school and home, and into a life of violence.

Many communities – maybe the one you live in – have serious problems with gangs. Parents and other concerned adults can do a lot to prevent gang problems or to reduce gang problems already in place. As a parent, your primary concern is to keep your own children from joining a gang.

Did You Know?

- Young people as young as eight or nine join gangs for various reasons. They may be attracted to a gang for any or all of the following reasons: to belong to a group; to experience excitement; to secure protection for themselves; or to earn money.
- Gangs signal their existence and solidarity through clothing and head coverings, a special vocabulary, tattoos, hand signs, and “tagging” their area with graffiti.
- Most gang members are male and range in age from 8 to 22. However, females may be involved through their gang member boyfriends or through the growing number of female gangs.
- Gangs can be organized around race or ethnic group, money-making activities, or territory.
- “Gangsta” rap paints a realistic picture of daily gang activity. The lyrics glorify violent behavior, the abuse of women, and disrespecting authority figures. The music’s popularity cuts across class, economic, racial, and geographic lines.

How to Identify Gang Members

- Gang members generally have a nickname that highlights their real or imagined physical, personal or psychological trait.
- Gang members normally project an arrogant and defiant attitude in an attempt to intimidate others (especially in the presence of other gang members).
- Gangs use graffiti to identify themselves and their territory and to communicate messages.
- Gang graffiti may indicate the gang’s name, the member’s nickname, a declaration of loyalty, a memorial to a slain gang member, threats, challenges, and warnings to rival gangs.
- The color and style of clothing sometimes serve to identify each gang.

Signs That Your Child Might Be in a Gang

- Changes in type of friends
- Changes in dress habits
- Gang symbols on books or clothing
- Secretiveness about activities
- Extra cash from unknown sources
- Carrying a weapon
- Declining interest in school and family.
- Purchasing or listening to “gangsta rap”
- Growing hostility toward you or others



What You Can Do With Your Child

- If you notice gang-related patterns, get help. Contact a school counselor or the gang crimes unit of your local police department.
- Show your children love with lots of hugs and reassurance.
- Know what your children are doing.
- Know about your children’s friends and their families.
- Talk with and listen to your children. Discuss values and why you think gangs are dangerous. Point out the consequences of gang involvement – the violence, drug dealing, hatred of other groups for no reason, and the likelihood of being arrested and imprisoned. Don’t forget to actively listen as well, letting your child have full opportunity to share concern.
- Praise your children for doing well and encourage them to do their very best.
- Supervise your children’s activities. Get them involved in non-gang related activities that interest them.
- Help your children identify positive role models – especially people in your community.

What You Can Do In Your Neighborhood

- Get organized against gangs. Use your neighborhood association. Get help from a variety of sources right in your community. Try police, clergy, counselors, coaches and community centers.
- Work with police and other agencies. Report suspicious activity, set up a Neighborhood Watch, let police know about gang graffiti, and find out what local services – nonprofit as well as government – will help organize communities against gangs.
- Talk with other parents at school forums, social events, networks, parenting classes, and support groups.
- Develop positive alternatives. Make sure there are after-school and weekend activities for kids to enjoy. See if the school will offer its facilities. Get parents to organize clubs and sports. Have older kids tutor younger ones. Let kids themselves help with ideas.



Business Watch

Business Security Survey Checklist

The following categories are guidelines to use to insure a safe business environment. Go through the checklist and ask yourself whether your place of business is in compliance with these measures.

Yes	No	Exterior Perimeter of Business
		Are all gates on fences around perimeter locked with a quality outdoor lock?
		If you have outdoor business equipment, is it secure in a fenced in area?
		Are bushes and shrubs trimmed to provide visibility to all windows and to prevent people from hiding near doors and windows?
		Are branches from trees cut back that might provide access to second floor windows?
		Are all entrance points of perimeter guarded or secured?
		Are gates/and or other perimeter entrances which are not used frequently inspected by personnel?
		Does outdoor lighting cover entire perimeter of the structure?
		Are lights controlled by motion detection?
		Can lights be compromised by simply unscrewing the light bulb?

Yes	No	Doors/Locks
		Do all of your exterior doors have good quality deadbolt locks with no less than a 1" throw?
		Do you change locks every time a disgruntled employee is dismissed or quits?
		Do all exterior doors have 190 degree wide angle viewers?
		If master keys are used, are they devoid of markings identifying them as such?
		Do doors fit tightly within there frames?
		Are all locks in good working condition?
		If there is an alarm, does it cover perimeter windows and doors as well as motion?
		If there are glass panes in or near doors, are they reinforced to prevent them from being shattered out?
		Can all doors, including upper floor be properly secured?
		If there is a garage can the overhead garage door be properly secured? (a padlock at the very least).

Yes	No	Windows
		Are all windows equipped with locks or pins?
		Do you keep windows locked when they are shut?
		Are windows locked properly and firmly mounted?
		If you use a window air conditioner is it anchored to prevent removal from outside?
		Have screws been installed in the tracks of sliding windows to prevent them from being lifted out?

Yes	No	Smoke/Burglar Alarms
		Do you have at least one smoke alarm on every floor?
		Do you replace the batteries in each of your smoke alarms on a regular basis?
		Do you test each of your smoke detectors on a regular basis?
		Do you have a quality burglar alarm system with a reputable company?
		Do you have your burglar alarm inspected to ensure proper operation?
		Do you test your alarm system on a regular basis?

Yes	No	Business Equipment
		Have you photographed all equipment including computers, furniture, and fixtures maintained on the premises?
		Have you recorded the make, model and serial numbers of these items?
		Have you permanently marked all equipment that does not have a serial number?
		Have you made a duplicate copy of your inventory of equipment and do you maintain a copy off premises in the event of burglary or fire?
		Do you keep valuables, such as money, checks, and business records locked in a fireproof safe?



Business Travel Safety Tips

Business travel can be stressful. Why make it more so by setting yourself up as a target for crooks? Here's what you can do at the airport, on the road and at your hotel or motel to improve the chances you'll return home safely.

At The Airport

- Stay especially alert and watch your bags and computer carefully at all times. Don't let anyone but uniformed airline personnel handle or watch your bags.
- Watch out for staged mishaps, like someone bumping into you or spilling a drink. Often it's a ploy to divert your attention.
- Carry your purse close to your body, or your wallet in an inside front pocket. Better yet, wear a money pouch under your clothes.
- Keep a separate record of the contents of checked luggage, and keep anything of value in a carry-on that stays with you.
- Avoid displaying expensive cameras, jewelry, and luggage that might draw attention. Your aim should be to blend in with the crowd.



On The Road

- Become familiar with your travel route before you start. Get a map and study it.
- Make sure your rental car is in good operating condition. Learn how to operate all windows, door locks and other equipment before you leave the lot.
- Keep your maps and rental agreement concealed, not lying on the seat or the dashboard.
- Keep car doors locked while you are driving. Store luggage in the trunk.
- Park in well-lighted areas only, close to building entrances and walkways.
- Have car keys ready when approaching your car. Check the back seat and floors before you get in the vehicle.
- If you are bumped by another car, think before you get out. If you are in doubt or uncomfortable, signal the other driver to follow you to a nearby police station or busy, well-lighted area where it's safe to get out.



At The Hotel

- Never leave luggage unattended.
- Keep all hotel doors and windows locked, and use all door locks.
- Insist that hotel personnel give your assigned room number so others can't hear it.
- Learn the locations of fire exits, elevators, and public phones in case of emergency.
- Make sure your room has an indoor viewer and dead bolt lock.
- Keep valuables jewelry; cash etc. in the hotel safe. Better still leave them home.
- Ask hotel staff about the safety of the neighborhood and what areas to avoid.
- Before taking a cab, ask the staff about directions and estimated costs.
- Always verify who's at your door. Don't open the door to someone you don't know. If an unexpected visitor claims to be a hotel employee, call the front desk to make sure.
- Don't display room keys in public or leave them on restaurant tables, at the swimming pool, or in other places where they can easily be stolen.

Internet Safety

Cyberspace is a gigantic community of millions, where people research information for school, learn about movies, shop, listen to music, watch video clips, even develop sites of their own. As in any community, there are people and places you should avoid to reduce your crime risk.

Rules of the Road on the Internet

The best tool you have for screening material found on the Internet is your brain. If you come across sites that are pornographic, full of hate literature, or excessively violent, move on.

Here are a few reminders for safe browsing on the World Wide Web:

- Never give out your name, address, telephone number, password, school name, parent's name, pictures of yourself, credit cards, or any other personal information to others online.
- Never agree to meet face to face with someone you've met online without discussing it with your parents. Only if your parents decide that it's okay to meet your "cyber-friend", arrange to meet in a familiar public place, and take an adult with you.
- Never respond to messages from unfamiliar persons.
- Never enter an area that charges for services without getting your parents permission first.
- If you receive pornographic material or threatening e-mail, save the offensive material, tell your parents, and contact that users Internet service provider and your local law enforcement agency.

Assessing a Web Site

Aside from the fun ways to keep in touch with people, the Web can be a powerful research tool. But you need to be able to evaluate the pages you visit to know whether the information is accurate. As you visit new sites keep these pointers in mind.

- Look for Web pages that have a proper title, additional resources, and a contact person with his or her e-mail address. An announcement of the last time the page was updated and current links.
- Know who are the authors or sponsors of the site. What gives them the authority to discuss the issue at hand?
- Know the code. Check the URL (Web site address) to see what the domain name includes; a .com (commercial). A gov. (government), an org. (organization), net. (network), an edu. (educational organization), or a two letter country code (country of origin). This will provide an idea of the author or sponsor of the site. Not all commercial sites want to sell you something and not all educational sites will educate you. Be an educated consumer as you sort through the information.
- Know what's happening. Is the main purpose of this site to sell, inform, or persuade you?
- Check with the author first, if you find information that you want to use for your research, about copyright privileges and permission.

Chat Rooms

When someone is posting a message in a chat room, other users have no way of knowing who that person really is. Though the anonymity of a chat room can be liberating it's cool to create a different identity some use it as a way to meet people they want to harm. Never say anything in a chat room that you wouldn't say in public. Many chat rooms have monitors or speakers who maintain order. These monitors can kick people out of the room for inappropriate behavior.

If you meet someone online and strike up a good relationship with them, they may want to go to a private chat room. Most of these rooms are unmonitored. There will be no filter for inappropriate conduct.

Harassment

Not everyone online minds their manners. When you are in chat rooms or bulletin boards there is a chance that you'll get messages that are harassing, demeaning, or just plain mean. Just ignore them. Some messages however, may constitute harassment, which is a crime under federal law. If someone sends you a message or images that are obscene, lewd, filthy, or indecent, with the intent to harass or threaten you, report it to your Internet service provider. One trick to avoid harassment is to choose a gender-neutral name to use in a chat room and other public places on the Internet.

Identity Theft

In the course of the day you may write a check at the drugstore, charge tickets to a concert, rent a car, call home on your cell phone, or apply for a credit card. Chances are you don't give these routine transactions a second thought, but others may.

Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America, affecting half a million new victims each year.

Identity theft is the taking of a victim's identity to obtain credit and credit cards from banks and retailers, steal money from victim's existing accounts, apply for loans, establish accounts with utility companies, rent an apartment, file for bankruptcy, or obtain a job using the victim's name. Thousands of dollars can be stolen without the victim knowing about it for months or even years.

How Identity Theft Occurs

All an identity thief needs is any combination of your Social Security number, birth date, address and phone number. This makes it possible to create a fake driver's license and then pose as you in order to apply for credit. The identity thief might put in a change of address with a credit card company so you will not know that someone else is running up charges. Once an identity thief opens one account, opening a second and a third is easier.

Identity thieves can get information about you from doctors, lawyers, schools, health insurance carriers, and other places. They may pick up your discarded personal information, such as utility bills, credit card slips, and bank statements. They may hack into your computer and steal your Social Security or account numbers and credit card information. They may send you an email message asking you to "update" your account information and link you to a bogus website so they can steal your personal information.

How To Prevent Identity Theft

- *Do not give out personal information* over the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you have initiated the contact or know with whom you're dealing.
- *Shred all documents*, including preapproved credit applications, insurance forms, bank checks and statements you are discarding, and other financial information.
- *Protect your computer from Internet intruders*, use firewalls. Also use anti-virus software and keep it up to date.
- *Create hard-to-guess passwords* that cannot be found in any dictionary. Select passwords with at least eight characters and that include a mix of numbers and both uppercase and lowercase letters.
- *Minimize the identification information* and the number of cards you carry. Take only what you'll actually need.
- *Do not put your Social Security number* on your checks or your credit receipts. If a business requests your Social Security number, give an alternative number.
- *Be careful when using ATM machines and long-distance phone cards*. Someone may look over your shoulder and get your PIN numbers.
- *Make a list* of all your credit card account numbers and bank account numbers with customer service phone numbers, and keep it in a safe place.
- *If you request a new credit card* and it doesn't arrive in an appropriate period of time, call to make sure someone has not filed a change of address for you.
- *Never submit your credit card number* to a website unless it is encrypted on a secured site. Look at the bottom of the screen for a padlock symbol. Do not select to save your information on the site for future transactions.
- *Pay attention to your billing cycles*. Follow up with creditors if bills don't arrive on time. A missing credit card bill could mean an identity thief has taken over your credit account and changed your address.
- *Cancel all credit cards* you have not used in the last six months.
- *Order your credit report* at least twice a year from the three major credit bureaus: Equifax (www.equifax.com), Experian (www.experian.com), and Trans Union (www.transunion.com). The Fair Credit Reporting Act allows you to get one free credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus once per year. Visit www.annualcreditreport.com
- *Correct all mistakes on your credit report in writing*. Send a letter to the credit reporting agency identifying the problems item by item, include a copy of the credit report, and send the letter return receipt requested.

What To Do If You're a Victim

If you're a victim of identity theft, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recommends that you do the following:

- *Contact the fraud department* of the three major credit bureaus to place a fraud alert on your credit file. The fraud alert requests creditors to contact you before opening any new accounts or making any changes to your existing accounts.
- *Close the accounts* that you know or believe have been tampered with or opened fraudulently. Use the ID Theft Affidavit (available on the FTC website and accepted by the three major credit bureaus) when disputing new unauthorized accounts.
- *File a police report*: Get a copy of the report to submit to your creditors and others who may require proof of the crime.
- *File your complaint with the FTC* at www.consumer.gov/idtheft The FTC maintains a database of identity theft cases used by law enforcement agencies for investigations. Filing a complaint also helps the agency learn more about identity theft and the problems victims are having so that it can better assist you.

