

PROTECTION...

Crime Prevention Facts



Prepared for Senior Citizens by

**YOUR STATE
SENATOR**

Crime Prevention Facts

Experts in the area of elderly victimization tell us that older persons have varying degrees of concern about crime. Some make important changes in their lifestyle and even deprive themselves because of fear. Others worry needlessly about being victims, even when there is a statistically low probability that anything will ever happen.

Street crimes such as muggings, holdups (when a weapon is used) and purse snatches are usually of particular concern to the older person.

You should know that the street criminal is an opportunist looking for an easy mark, and everything you do to make it difficult for him to strike reduces your chances of being a victim. You don't have to change your lifestyle or live in fear, but you should be "prevention conscious." Use caution and common sense.

For Yourself

When you go out.

- Try to arrange to have a companion with you when walking.
- Plan your route in advance and be sure to use well-lit streets if you must go out at night.
- Walk on the curbside away from buildings where an assailant could conceal himself.
- Older women are often the victims of purse snatchings. Our best advice is don't carry a purse if you can avoid it.
- If you must carry a purse, hold it close to your body with a hand on the clasp. Don't dangle it.
- If you have an armful of packages, tuck your purse in between the packages and your body.
- Don't carry or display large sums of cash.
- Never leave a purse on a store counter or sitting on the floor of a restroom.
- Be on the alert for suspicious looking persons when you enter a public restroom.
- When using the bus or other public transportation, sit near the driver if there aren't many passengers.
- If a friend takes you home or you take a taxi, ask the driver to wait until you are safely inside before leaving.
- Have your keys ready so you can get in the door quickly.



What if you are attacked?

If you develop good security habits, you can reduce your chances of being victimized. But if you are held up, don't resist. Give the criminal what he wants and try to get a good description for police. Never try to fight unless you are attacked. If you are attacked by an unarmed assailant, scream, call for help, kick, bite, struggle...anything that will help you break away to safety.

For Your Home

Are you safe at home?



Residential burglary is a serious problem everywhere. But since it's mostly a crime of opportunity, you can discourage the average burglar by making your home a tough target.

Use deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Protect windows and other potential points of entry with good locks or other security devices. Keep the premises well lit at night.

When you are away, use an automatic timer to turn on lights and a radio, and ask a neighbor to keep an eye on things.

If you have taken precautions to make your home a bad bet for the burglar, you've made it tough on other types of intruders as well. Remember this: more serious crimes often occur when a burglar enters and finds an older woman alone.

Practice these habits when you're at home:

- Always keep your doors locked. Have a peephole in your door so you can see callers without opening it. Don't rely on security chains. They can be broken easily by a determined assailant.
- Never let in a stranger. Insist on proper identification. If he can't show it or you're still suspicious, call whomever he claims to represent for verification.
- If a stranger asks to use the phone, don't let him in. Instead, offer to place the call for him.
- Never give out information over the phone indicating when you will or won't be home, and don't let a caller know you're home alone.
- Make sure you have a lock on your bedroom door.

- Consider installing a phone in the bedroom. It enables you to call for help if you wake up and hear an intruder.
- Be sure your outside house number is displayed prominently so that it can be seen easily from the street by police responding to your call for assistance.

For Your Investments

Fraud...The Con Game.

According to the American Association of Retired Persons, older citizens are victims of fraudulent schemes far out of proportion to their population numbers. Con artists are slick, so you've got to keep your guard up. Be skeptical.

- Be aware of what people are saying. Don't be rushed into any deal.
- Know what you are signing. Carefully read all "receipts" or "minor contracts."
- If you are being offered something for nothing, it's usually a phony deal. Allow yourself time to check things out.
- Stay away from secret deals or plans. For example, there's a "Bank Examiner" scheme where a phony bank examiner tells you he's investigating a dishonest teller and wants you to help by withdrawing money from your account to use as a test. Don't fall for it.
- Never turn over any sizable amounts of cash to anyone, especially strangers offering to help you "get rich quick."

