

Crime Prevention Tips

It is estimated that \$65 million is lost each year in the United States in home invasions, muggings, and in other violent crimes. It is estimated that \$600 billion is lost per year due to fraud. Work place violence caused an estimated \$30 billion to American businesses last year.

It is important to be aware a crime can occur, anticipating the location, time, and taking action to reduce the chance of it happening. Crime prevention is key to stopping the ability and opportunity for a criminal. The use of instinct, knowledge, common sense, and awareness can make you a tough target.

Three Basic Rules

- Stay alert.
- Keep your mind on your surroundings, who's in front of you and who's behind you. Don't get distracted.
- Walk purposefully, stand tall, and make eye contact with people around you.
- TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS. If you feel uncomfortable in a situation, leave.

Personal Protection

- Make yourself a "tough target."
- Don't think that it can't happen to you.
- Should you resist? Everyone and every situation is different.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- If being followed or stalked, call 911 or drive directly to a police station.

If You're Attacked

- Keep your head. Stay as calm as possible and evaluate your options and resources.
- It may be more advisable to submit than to resist and risk severe injury or death. You will have to make this decision based on the circumstances. But, don't resist if the attacker has a weapon.
- Keep assessing the situation as it is happening. If one strategy doesn't work, try another. Possible options include negotiating, stalling for time, distracting the assailant and fleeing to a safe place, verbal assertiveness, screaming, and physical resistance.
- You may be able to turn the attacker off with unusual behavior such as throwing up, acting crazy, or stating you have a sexually transmitted disease.

After a Sexual Assault

- Go to a safe place and call the police.
- The sooner you report the crime, the greater the chances your attacker will be caught.
- DO NOT shower, bathe, douche, or destroy any clothing you were wearing. Do not disturb any physical evidence.
- Go to a hospital emergency room for medical care.
- Call someone to be with you. You should not be alone. Contact a rape treatment or crisis center to help you deal with the consequences of the assault.

While Driving

- Keep your car in good condition with the gas tank at least half full.
- Park in well-lighted areas and lock your doors, no matter how long you'll be gone.
- Put valuables out of sight or in the trunk.
- Check front and rear seats, and floorboards before entering your car.
- Drive with all doors locked and windows rolled up.
- Never pick up hitchhikers. If your car breaks down, put the hood up, lock the doors, turn on the flashers, and move to the passenger seat. Do not leave your car. If someone stops to help, roll down the window slightly and ask them to call the police or a tow truck.
- Avoid underground and enclosed parking garages if possible.
- When parking or returning to your vehicle, carry your keys and be aware of your surroundings.
- Consider investing in a cellular telephone.

Public Transportation

- Try to use well-lighted and frequently used stops.
- Try to sit near the driver or conductor.
- Avoid sitting near exits. An attacker can reach in and grab a purse or jewelry as the bus or subway pulls away.
- Be alert to who gets off the bus or subway 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.
- 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.
- If you're attacked, hit the alarm and as many floor buttons as possible.

Home and Neighborhood

- Good locks, simple precautions, neighborhood awareness, and common sense can help prevent most property crimes.

Locks, Doors, and Windows

- Install and use good deadbolt locks in your doors (about half of all burglars enter through unlocked doors and windows).
- Secure sliding glass doors with locks or a rigid wooden dowel wedged in the track.
- Lock double-hung windows by sliding a bolt or nail into a hole drilled at a downward angle through the top of each sash and into the frame.

Outside

- Trim back shrubbery hiding doors or windows. Cut back tree limbs that could help a thief climb to second story windows.
- Make sure all porches, entrances, and yards are well lighted.
- Maintain the neighborhood. Dark alleys, litter, and rundown areas attract criminals.

Key Sense

- Do not hide house keys in mail boxes, planters, or under doormats.
- Do not put personal identification on key rings.
- Leave only your ignition key with mechanics or parking attendants.
- If you lose the keys to your home or move into a new home, change the locks immediately.

Answering the Door

- Install a peephole or viewer in all entry doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door.
- Do not trust door chains. They can be easily broken.
- Don't open the door to anyone you don't know. Insist service personnel verify their identity before allowing them in.

Answering the Telephone

- Don't give any information to "wrong number" callers.
- Check references of any person calling about a survey or credit check before offering information.
- Hang up immediately on threatening or harassing calls.

Going Away

- Make your home appear occupied when you go out.
- Leave lights on and the radio playing.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked.
- Use timing devices to turn inside lights on and off.
- If you will be gone several days, arrange to have the mail and papers stopped or picked up. Half of all home burglaries occur during the day when alert neighbors could spot and report the thieves.

Ten Things You and Your Neighbors Can Do

- Work with public agencies and other neighborhood-based or community-wide organizations, on solving common problems. Don't be shy about letting them know what your community needs.
- Make sure that all the youth in the neighborhood have positive ways to spend their spare time, through organized recreation, tutoring programs, part-time work, and volunteer opportunities.
- Set up a Neighborhood Watch or a community patrol working with police. Make sure your streets and homes are

well lighted.

- Build a partnership with police, focused on solving problems instead of reacting to crises. Make it possible for neighbors to report suspicious activity or crimes without fear of retaliation.
- Take advantage of "safety in numbers" to hold rallies, marches, and other group activities to show you're determined to drive out crime and drugs.
- Clean up the neighborhood! Involve everyone; teens, children, senior citizens. Graffiti, litter, abandoned cars, and run-down buildings tell criminals that you don't care about where you live or each other. Call the city public works department and ask for help in cleaning up.
- Ask local officials to use new ways to get criminals out of your building or neighborhood. These include enforcing anti-noise laws, housing codes, health and fire codes, anti-nuisance laws, and drug-free clauses in rental leases.
- Form a Court Watch to help support victims and witnesses and to see that criminals get fairly punished.
- Work with schools to establish drug-free, gun-free zones; work with recreation officials to do the same for parks.
- Develop and share a phone list of local organizations that can provide counseling, job training, guidance, and other services that neighbors might need.

GUN SAFETY

Gun Safety is the responsibility of every adult, whether or not you own a firearm.

If you own a firearm and obtain a concealed weapons permit, you are required by Michigan law to know that there are "Pistol Free" zones in Michigan. It is illegal to carry a pistol on school property, into public or private day care centers, sports arenas, churches, hospitals, casinos, a dormitory, or classroom of a college or university, an entertainment facility that seats 2,500 people or more, and a dining room, lounge, or bar area of a premises licensed under the Liquor Control Commission (MCL 28.425.01).

As an adult, you are responsible for properly securing your firearm. If another person is injured as a result of your negligence in properly securing a gun, you can be charged with a crime or be held civilly liable. If convicted, you could be fined or sentenced to time in prison.

What your children need to know

Children should know that guns are not toys, that guns are dangerous and can hurt people.

If they see or find a gun (even if they think the gun looks like a toy), they should follow these three steps to safety:

1. They should not touch or handle the gun.
2. They should get away from the gun quickly, leave the area.
3. They should immediately tell a trusted adult (parent, guardian, teacher or police officer) about the gun.

It is illegal to bring weapons to school, onto school property, or into vehicles used by a school to transport students to and from school property (Michigan's "Weapon Free School Zone" MCL 750.237A). Michigan law requires schools to expel students who bring weapons onto school grounds or to school events (MCL 380.1311).