

Jefferson Township Police Department

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DIAL 9-1-1 FOR EMERGENCIES
www.jeffersonpolice.com

WHAT SENIOR CITIZENS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CRIME PREVENTION

CRIME IS A FRIGHTENING PROBLEM, especially for Seniors.

You may be worried about:

Burglary
Fraud
Mugging
Purse Snatchings

BUT, as a Senior Citizen, you do not have to feel helpless! You can learn how to reduce your chances of becoming a crime victim...KEEP READING TO FIND OUT HOW!

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

1. **IN GENERAL:** You can learn some basic crime prevention information. For example, it helps to know the following:
 - a. **How Criminals Operate:** They look for the easiest opportunities.
 - b. **How to Make Crime Difficult:** Look for and remove any opportunities before criminals spot them.
 - c. **You Do Not Necessarily Need:** Physical strength, agility, speed or expensive devices.
 - d. **You DO Need To Be:** Alert, Cautious, Self-Confident.



2. **AT HOME:** Consider These Tips:

- a. **Keep Doors Locked Securely.** Remember, chain locks can be forced open. Install easy-to-use deadbolt locks.
- b. **Don't attach an ID tag to your key ring.**
- c. **Change Your Locks.** Install new locks if you move to a new home or lose your key.
- d. **Lock All of Your Doors Not Just Your Main Entrance.** Keep garage, sliding glass/sun deck and basement doors locked, too.
- e. **Install and Use a Peephole:** Never open the door to strangers or let them know you are alone. Ask service people for an ID before you open the door.
- f. **Consider A Pet.** Even a small dog can provide some protection.
- g. **Lock Windows.** Draw the curtains and blinds at night. Also, put fire department approved grates on the ground floor and fire escape windows. *Note: Inadequate cooling and ventilation may pose a health hazard. When shutting doors and windows, make sure your home is adequately cooled and ventilated.*
- h. **Protect Your Valuables:**
 - 1) Keep money and securities in a bank.
 - 2) Have your Social Security or Pension check deposited directly into your account.
 - 3) Mark all valuables with an ID number (for example, your license number – if not your social security number) with your state's abbreviation.
- i. **Beware of Phone Scams.** Don't give personal or financial information out over the phone.



j. **Consult Your Local Law Enforcement Officials:**

- 1) Find out about crime in your local area.
- 2) Ask about specific problems in your neighborhood and what law enforcement officials are doing.
- 3) Ask what you can do.

k. **Organize a Buddy System.**

- 1) Have neighbors watch each others' homes or form security patrols.
- 2) Report anything you see or hear that seems suspicious to you, no matter how minute, to your local police.
- 3) Do laundry, shopping or errands in groups.

3. **WHEN YOU GO OUT.**

a. **Secure Your Home.**

b. **Leave Outside Lights On.**

c. **Leave a Radio On or a TV and Light On**

d. **Secure Your Wallet.**

- 1) **DO NOT CARRY LARGE AMOUNTS OF CASH.**
- 2) Carry Your Wallet in a safe **INSIDE** pocket or on a chain attached to your belt.

e. **Take Care With Your Purse.**

- 1) Leave Your Purse At Home, if possible.
- 2) Don't use a purse with a shoulder strap as it could cause you to be thrown to the ground and injured if your purse is snatched.

f. **Go With A Friend: You're safer if you have company.**



- g. Leashed dogs of any size will deter most muggers.
- h. Plan Your Route:
 - 1) Choose a Safe, Familiar, Well-Lit route.
 - 2) Let someone you trust know where you're going and when you should return.
- i. **If you Travel On Public Transportation:**
 - 1) ON BUSES: Sit in the front, near the driver (but, not too near the door).
 - 2) Hold onto your packages.
 - 3) Ask the driver – NOT OTHER PASSENGERS – for directions.
 - 4) ON A SUBWAY OR TRAIN: Wait near the ticket booth until ready to board.
 - 5) Pick a car with several people in it – don't enter an empty car.

4. PREVENT CRIME WHEN YOU RETURN HOME:

- a. Have Your Key Out and Ready.
- b. Have the driver watch until you're inside, if possible.
- c. Don't enter the elevator alone with a stranger.
- d. Be alert for anyone hiding nearby.

5. STAY SAFE IN YOUR CAR:

- a. **When Driving:**
 - 1) Keep the doors locked and windows up.
 - 2) Keep your purse and valuables out of sight.



- 3) If you're harassed at a stop, drive away as soon as possible.
- 4) NEVER pick up hitchhikers.

b. When Parking:

- 1) Park close to your destination.
- 2) Choose an area that will be well-lit when you return.
- 3) Lock valuables in the trunk before leaving your vehicle.
- 4) Make a note of where you parked your car, such as the row number, parking space number or parking level if you're parked in a garage.

c. When Returning To Your Car:

- 1) Be alert for anyone hiding behind nearby cars.
- 2) Look through your car windows into the back seat and floor before you get in your car.
- 3) Don't hesitate to ask a Security Guard or Safety Personnel in the building to walk with you to your car if you feel apprehensive.

d. If Your Car Breaks Down:

- 1) Raise the hood, then stay inside the car.
- 2) Keep All Doors Locked and Windows Up.
- 3) If strangers stop to help, just ask them to alert law enforcement officials or a service station for you.
- 4). REMEMBER TO SPEAK THROUGH A CLOSE WINDOW TO ANYONE WHO APPROACHES YOUR VEHICLE WHO IS NOT A POLICE OFFICER.



6. WHEN GOING ON A TRIP.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

- a. Stop Delivery of newspapers, mail, etc.
- b. Lock All Entries To Your House. Do Not Leave an extra key out.
- c. Ask Neighbors and Law Enforcement Officials to keep an eye on your home (Jefferson Township Police Department has a Vacant Home program. If you're going away, fill out our vacant home check form and we will watch your home while you are away. Several copies of the form are at the end of this booklet).
- d. Do Not Discuss Your Trip in public before you go.
- e. Give Your Home a "lived in" look by putting lights on timers, putting up the shades, turn down the ringer on your phone.
- f. NEVER put a message on your answering machine saying that you are away.
- g. Make sure your regular home maintenance services continue such as having your lawn mowed, etc.

ON THE WAY TO YOUR TRIP DESTINATION, ACT SAFELY

- a. Use Caution at Airports, Train Stations and Bus Depots: Keep Your Luggage locked, Close to You, and In Sight.
- b. Put an ID tag inside luggage, too.
- c. Carry traveler's checks or credit cards instead of cash.

BE ALERT AT YOUR HOTEL

- a. Carry Your Room key at all times.
- b. Keep the room locked with your luggage inside.



- c. Leave valuables in the hotel safe, usually located in a closet in your room.

7. AT THE DOOR, AT THE STORE OR ON THE PHONE, Protect Yourself Against These Common Types of Consumer Crimes:

a. FRAUD

- 1) Medical Fraud: Ask your health-care provider for advice before buying into "miracle cures" or special deals.
- 2) Land-In-The-Sun Deals: Never buy sight unseen. Check out the property and seller.
- 3) Sweepstakes Scams: Don't pay anything or give your credit card number in order to claim a "free prize."
- 4) Home Repairs: Avoid "free inspections." Deal only with firms/companies you trust in order to avoid unnecessary "repairs." Ask to see licenses (if required in your state).
- 5) Business Schemes: Beware of work-at-home job offers with "registration" fees.
- 6) Insurance Fraud: Carefully read offers that claim large benefits at low rates. They may be exaggerated.
- 7) Buyer Beware Before You Agree To Anything: Check out all offers with the Better Business Bureau and get advice from people you trust.

b. SALES GIMMICKS

- 1) The "Bait and Switch": Stores lure you in for a "bargain," then try to sell you a more expensive model.
- 2) Fear-Sell tactics: Beware of sales claims that play on your fears of misfortune.



- 3) "Harmless" Contracts: Fine-print clauses can cost you plenty!!
Read contracts carefully and ignore verbal promises.
- 4) Debt Consolidation: Watch out for sky-high interest rates in these plans.
- 5) Pressure Tactics: Beware of salespeople who rush your decision.
- 6) Referral Selling: You may get the "discount" only if you get friends to buy, too.
- 7) Stop Crooked Salespeople: Don't sign anything you don't understand. See a lawyer if needed.
- 8) If you aren't getting straight answers, end the conversation.

c. CON GAMES:

- 1) Bank Scams: A person claiming to be a "bank official" or "detective" and asks you to help "catch a crooked teller." He may ask you to withdraw your savings and then the "bank examiner" takes it to be "counted."
- 2) Found Money: A stranger strikes up a conversation and is joined by a friend who has just "found" an envelope full of money. They offer you a share if you put up "good faith" money. Then they agree to let you hold the envelope, but they switch envelopes and take off with your money.
- 3) Phony Bills: A surviving spouse is sent bills for phony debts or purchases. Check out unfamiliar bills before you pay them.
- 4) Help to Foil Con Artists: Ask to see proper identification and get their names.
- 5) Always check out "officials" by calling their offices and verifying they are employed there.
- 6) Before you hand anybody cash, stop and think!!



7) Call law enforcement if you're suspicious.

8. IF YOU BECOME THE VICTIM OF A CRIME:

- a. If you have been swindled, report the incident: call your local police, as well NJ Office of Consumer Protection (973-504-6200) and/or NJ Better Business Bureau (609-588-0808).
- b. Prompt action may save you money.
- c. If you're held up, or your purse is snatched, DO NOT RESIST. Give things up rather than risking injury.
- d. Hand things over quickly.
- e. Note as many details as possible about your attacker.
- f. Notify law enforcement officials immediately by dialing 9-1-1.
- g. REMEMBER: Your Life Is More Important Than Your Money.
- h. If Your Home is Burglarized While You are Out:
 - 1) DO NOT GO INSIDE IF YOU SUSPECT SOMEONE IS STILL INSIDE.
 - 2) Call law enforcement officials immediately from your cell phone or a neighbor's phone.
 - 3) DO NOT TOUCH ANYTHING.
- i. If Your Home is Burglarized While You are Home:
 - 1) DO NOT CONFRONT THE BURGLAR.
 - 2) Lock the door to the room you are in.
 - 3) If you can get to a phone, quietly call law enforcement by dialing 9-1-1.



9. **WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ATTACKED:** Remember, each situation is different, and only you can decide which course of action is appropriate. In general:
- a) **SIT DOWN** to avoid being knocked down and injured.
 - b) **BE REALISTIC** about your ability to protect yourself. Yelling, hitting or biting may give you a chance to escape, *but* it may also exacerbate the situation and lead to further harm.
 - c) **IF YOUR LIFE IS IN DANGER:** Passive resistance, like vomiting or urinating, may be your best defense.
 - d) **LET LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS HELP:** Report any crime, attempted crime or suspicious activity.
 - e) **GIVE DETAILS**, including height, weight, clothing, appearance, license plate number and information about any witnesses.
 - f) **Press charges** when the criminal is caught. This helps protect others.

SO. . .



PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST CRIME

BE ALERT

-- at home and away

BE AWARE

--of what you can do to help prevent crime

BE INVOLVED

--join community anti-crime activities

REPORT ALL CRIMES

**--and suspicious activities to law enforcement
officials.**

PREVENT CRIME

ALL THE TIME!!

www.jeffersonpolice.com

Feel Free to Contact Officer Ivan Rodriguez of our Community Services
Bureau at any time with any questions you may have:

973-208-3628 or irodriguez@jeffersonpolice.com



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