

*Crime Prevention  
Tips for  
Seniors*

**Panorama  
Police  
Department**

Non-Emergency  
936-856-7777

Emergency  
Dial 9-1-1

## ***Crime Prevention Tips for Seniors***

Crime and the fear of crime create special problems for the elderly. Crime prevention is everyone's responsibility, not just a job for law enforcement. Seniors can learn how to protect themselves from crime by following these simple, common sense suggestions. Share these tips with your neighbors and friends to make it tough for criminals to work in your neighborhood.

### ***When at Home***

- Never open your door automatically. Install and use a peephole.
- Lock your doors and windows.
- Vary your daily routine.
- Use "Neighborhood Watch" to keep an eye on your neighborhood.
- Don't leave notes on the door when going out.
- Leave lights on when you are away for an extended period.
- Notify neighbors and the police when going away on a trip.
- When you are away, cancel all deliveries and arrange for your yard to be mowed.

- Arrange for your mail to be held by the Post Office, or ask a neighbor to collect it for you.
- Be wary of unsolicited offers to make repairs to your home.
- Deal only with reputable businesses.
- Keep an inventory with serial numbers and photographs of resalable appliances, antiques and furniture. Leave copies in a safe place.
- Don't hesitate to report crime or suspicious activities.
- Install deadbolt locks on all your doors.
- Keep your home well lit at night, inside and out; keep curtains closed.
- Ask for proper identification from delivery people.
- If a stranger asks to use your telephone, offer to place the call for him or her yourself.
- Never let a stranger into your home.
- Do not hide your keys under a mat or in other conspicuous places.
- Never give out information over the phone indicating you are alone or that you won't be home at a certain time.
- If you arrive at home and suspect a stranger may be inside, **DON'T GO IN!** Leave quietly and call 911 to report the crime as soon as possible.

## ***Walking***

- If you are attacked on the street, make as much noise as possible by calling for help or blowing a whistle.
- Do not pursue your attacker. Call 911 and report the crime as soon as possible.
- Avoid walking alone at night. Try to have a friend accompany you in high risk areas...even during the daytime.
- Avoid carrying weapons...they may be used against you.
- Always plan your route and stay alert to your surroundings.
- Walk confidently.
- Stay away from buildings and doorways; walk in well-lighted areas.
- Have your key ready when approaching your door.
- Don't dangle your purse away from your body. (Twelve percent of all crimes against the elderly are purse snatchings and street robberies.)
- Don't carry large, bulky shoulder bags; carry only what you need. If you don't have a purse, no one will try to snatch it.

## ***Shopping***

- Carry your purse very close to you... don't dangle it from your arm.
- Never leave your purse in a shopping cart or unattended.
- Don't carry any more cash than is necessary. Many grocery stores now accept checks and automatic teller cards instead of cash.
- Don't display large sums of cash.

## ***In Your Car***

- Always keep your car doors locked, whether you are in or out of your car.
- Keep your gas tank full and your engine properly maintained to avoid breakdowns.
- If your car breaks down, pull over to the right as far as possible, raise the hood, and wait **INSIDE** the car for help. Avoid getting out of the car and making yourself a target before police arrive.
- At stop signs and traffic lights, keep the car in gear.
- Travel well-lit and busy streets. Plan your route.
- Don't leave your purse on the seat beside you; put it on the floor where it is more difficult for someone to see it or grab it.
- Lock bundles or bags in the trunk. If interesting packages are out of sight, a thief will be less tempted to break in and steal them.

- When returning to your car, check the front and back seat before entering.
- Never pick up hitchhikers.

## ***Banking***

- Many criminals know exactly when government checks arrive each month, and may pick that day to attack. Avoid this by using Direct Deposit, which sends your money directly from the government to the bank of your choice. Free checking accounts are available for senior citizens at many banks. Check with your bank for more information.
- Never withdraw your money from your bank accounts for anyone except yourself.
- Be wary of con artists and get-rich-quick schemes that are too good to be true.
- You should store valuables in a Safe Deposit Box.
- Never give your money to someone who calls on you identifying himself as a bank official. A bank will never ask you to remove your money.
- If you have been swindled or conned, report the crime to your local police or District Attorney's Office immediately.
- Never give out banking information to anyone who calls you on the phone. Call the bank yourself to resolve banking issues or ask if there are problems.