



Apartment and Condominium Security

Many areas in an apartment or condominium complex call for special caution and awareness not always required in single family dwellings. Many contributing factors to crime and safety are beyond the apartment dweller's immediate control.

Most landlords/managers are sensitive and responsive to the needs of their tenants. When you, the apartment dweller, are confronted by an unsafe situation beyond your control, notify the landlord/manager immediately. Managers have a responsibility to provide a safe, crime-free environment for their tenants if it is within their means to do so. More and more, the courts are upholding this responsibility on behalf of tenants when managers have failed to take all reasonable precautions in providing a safe, crime-free environment for their tenants.

APARTMENT BUILDING SAFETY

- Always make sure that your apartment has been re-keyed prior to moving in.
- Know your neighbors. Learn to recognize and report suspicious circumstances to your local law enforcement agency.
- All exterior hinged doors should be of solid core construction and fitted with deadbolt locks and peephole viewers. It is extremely important that door locks are kept in good working order. Notify the manager immediately if the locks malfunction.
- Use auxiliary locking devices on sliding glass doors and windows. Information as to the best techniques and locking devices can be obtained from the Crime Prevention Unit at your local Sheriff's Station. The Crime Prevention unit will send a Crime Prevention Specialist to your apartment at no charge to explain which methods of home security and protection are best for you.
- Never open your door to a stranger. If a stranger wants to use your phone for an emergency, offer to make the call for them while they remain outside the locked door.
- Both interior and exterior lighting is extremely important to building security. All walkways, doorways, hallways and parking areas must have sufficient illumination to facilitate recognition at a safe distance.
- Be cautious in and around elevators. If you are at all suspicious of another passenger, wait for the next elevator. When you do get in, stand near the elevator controls.
- If you suspect someone is trying to break into your apartment, call 9-1-1 immediately. Have your exact address and apartment number written on or near your phone.

WHEN YOU GO OUT

- Lock all doors and windows. Never leave notes on your door.
- Connect lamps and radios to timers in different rooms of your apartment to give the impression that someone is at home.
- Never leave a hidden key outside your apartment. Burglars are wise to this and know all the "secret hiding places" for hidden keys.
- Don't leave expensive or tempting articles visible through your window.
- If you arrive home and suspect a stranger is inside, don't go in! Go to a neighbor's (or the manager's) apartment and call the Sheriff's Department at 9-1-1.

LAUNDRY ROOMS

Laundry rooms offer significant problems in the area of theft and personal safety because they are often located in dark isolated areas and residents are often alone inside. A safe laundry room will incorporate the following features:

- Good lighting is essential to increase visibility and decrease a criminal's chance of concealment.
- Whenever possible use the buddy system when going to the laundry room.
- Routes to the laundry room should clearly visible to other residents, especially during the hours of darkness. Shrubbery and bushes must be kept trimmed to ensure that clear visibility is maintained.
- Hours of use for laundry rooms can help in avoiding abuse of the facility (transient use and theft of clothing.)
- Rules should be established and adhered to regarding proper use of the facility.
- The laundry room must be kept clean and well maintained.
- The door of the laundry room should be of solid construction and capable of being locked from the inside and must include authorized panic hardware. Any glass within 40 inches of the locking mechanism should be covered with an expandable metal type mesh or grill work to prevent breaking the glass and unlocking the door.
- A large convex mirror can be placed in such a manner as to allow a person about to enter the laundry room an unobstructed view of the interior to see in some is lurking inside.

VEHICLE PARKING AREAS

Many apartment dwellers are not afforded the luxury of being provided single unit garages in which to park their vehicles. This situation is made even worse by not being able to park their vehicles near their individual apartment units. These and other factors contribute to apartment dwellers becoming more vulnerable to the crimes of auto theft, vehicle burglary and assault.

- Vehicle parking areas must be well lighted at night and located so as to provide maximum visibility from the apartment units.
- Do not number individual parking spaces with the same number as the apartments. Burglars note when tenants leave a parking space and then target the apartment numbered on the space.
- Never leave valuables in plain sight in your vehicles.
- Use car alarms, auxiliary locking devices, and fuel/ignition cut-off switches to prevent auto thefts and auto burglaries.
- When using multi-level parking garages, avoid dark, isolated areas. Report any persons who appear to have no purpose or reason for being in the parking area to the manager immediately.
- Always lock your vehicle no matter where you park and take your keys with you.

POOL, RECREATION, AND OTHER COMMON AREAS

- Avoid these areas if not well lighted during the hours of darkness.
- Leave purses, billfolds and other valuables in your locked apartment when using these common areas.
- Do not enter when strange or suspicious people are loitering about. Tell your manager immediately.
- Restrict access to these areas to tenants and invited guests only.