

## AWARENESS PAYS DIVIDENDS

Con games and swindles are crimes over which people have total control. To avoid falling prey to scams, people need to be alert to any offer involving money or property that offers incredible dividends or a quick turn-around time for getting the benefits of the deal. Maintaining awareness about the most common and latest con games is an important crime prevention technique. Also, if you believe that you have been victimized, or feel that you nearly were, contact law enforcement. Many people are embarrassed to admit that they have been deceived and lost money or property, but the sooner you report it, the better the chances that your information will assist in apprehending the criminal and prevent others from being victimized.

## What to do if you are assaulted...

- If the attacker only wants your purse, wallet or other valuables, **DO NOT RESIST!** Your life and safety are far more valuable than your possessions.
- Make a conscious effort to get an accurate description of the attacker and call **9-1-1** immediately. If you are able to do so, write down as many details about the attacker as possible.
- Contact your local victim assistance agency to help you deal with the trauma that crime victims experience. Staff there can direct you to counseling opportunities, victim compensation laws, and how to follow your case's progress.
- Contact your local Crime Prevention Unit and start a crime prevention program in your building or neighborhood.

## FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION

- Be suspicious of anyone who offers you a chance for quick and easy wealth-**even if you know him or her!**
- Do not give credit cards, checkbooks, or bank account passbooks, or pin numbers to your housekeeper or caregiver. Do not make them joint owners of your accounts or property.
- Be wary of exaggerated claims for health and medical products, such as cures for cancer or arthritis, hair restorers, pain relievers, or quick weight loss. Before buying any cure-alls, check with your doctor, pharmacist, or clinic.



- Do not give any details about your credit cards to phone solicitors, even if they offer you gifts, a free vacation, or a sweepstakes prize.



- Investigate any "work-at-home" schemes with your local or state consumer protection agency.
- Never make cash transactions in secret. Always discuss any cash transactions with your banker.
- For a free home security inspection, contact your local Crime Prevention Unit.

# Common Sense CRIME PREVENTION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS



## Be Alert and Stay Safe!



San Diego County Sheriff's Department  
Crime Prevention Unit

## PREVENTION POWER

Crime prevention involves everyone...not just law enforcement! Common-sense measures include locking doors, supporting the Neighborhood Watch Program, and going places with a friend or relative. Seniors are more vulnerable to certain crimes, such as **purse-snatching and mugging**. And fraud. You can reduce your risk by being alert and reporting suspicious activity.

### When Driving....



- △ Always lock your car doors. Never leave your keys in the ignition.
- △ When driving, keep the doors locked and windows up. Park in well-lit, busy areas.
- △ Don't leave packages or valuables in view in a locked car. Lock them in the trunk.
- △ If you have car problems, be wary of strangers who offer to help. Stay in the car and ask them to call law enforcement or a service truck.
- △ Consider subscribing to a low-cost cell phone service so that you can call in case of an emergency.

### On the Bus or Trolley...



- △ Use busy, well-lighted stops.
- △ Stay alert, and do not fall asleep!
- △ Observe who gets on or off the bus or trolley with you. If you feel uneasy, walk to where there are other people.
- △ When using public transportation, sit near the driver the driver, if possible.



## When You're at Home

- △ Use deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. **Keep your doors locked** at all times, even when you're at home.
- △ Install and use adequate exterior lighting.
- △ Protect windows and sliding glass doors with good locks or other security devices.
- △ Never let strangers into your home without checking their identification. Call their company if you have any doubts. Install a viewer in your door.
- △ Do not let anyone into your home who appears to be in a stressful situation and needs to use the phone or restroom. Offer to call for help, but don't unlock your door.
- △ Use only your first initial in phone books, directories, and apartment lobbies. Don't advertise that you live alone.
- △ Be sensible about keys. Do not attach an address tag to your key ring, or hide a key under an item on your porch.
- △ Hang up immediately if you receive an obscene or harassing phone call. If the caller persists, call law enforcement and the phone company.
- △ Keep bonds, stock certificates, seldom worn jewelry, and stamp and coin collections in a safe deposit box.
- △ Do not keep large amounts of cash at home.
- △ Use direct-deposit for social security and pension checks.

## Out and About



- △ Go with a friend whenever possible.
- △ Stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings. Don't daydream.
- △ Try to walk in a confident, relaxed manner. Make brief eye contact with approaching strangers.
- △ Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable in a situation, leave.
- △ Carry a small purse with only the money or credit cards that you need, rather than a large handbag with straps. Keep your wallet in an inside jacket or front pants pocket.
- △ Don't burden yourself with packages.
- △ Walk on well-lighted, busy streets. Avoid vacant lots, alleys, or construction sites, and dark, deserted short-cuts.
- △ Don't flash cash or jewelry.
- △ Make sure someone knows where you're going and when you expect to return.
- △ Invest in a cell phone for emergencies, even if it is a limited-use plan.
- △ If a friend or taxi takes you home, ask the driver to wait until you are safely inside.
- △ Have your car or house key in hand as you approach your vehicle or home.

