

Crime prevention is everyone's responsibility, not just a job for law enforcement. And crime can be reduced by simple measures like remembering to lock a door, knowing about common con games and watching out for your neighborhood.

Although surveys consistently show that persons over 65 are victims of crime far less frequently than young people, many senior citizens are so worried about crime that they shut themselves up in their homes and rarely go out. But isolating yourselves behind locked doors and not getting together with your neighbors, actually makes it easier for criminals to work in the neighborhood.

Seniors are more vulnerable to certain crimes such as purse snatching, mugging and fraud. But you can reduce the opportunities for criminals to strike by being careful, alert, and a good neighbor.

WHEN YOU'RE OUT...

Don't carry a purse unless absolutely necessary. Instead, put one or two checks, your driver's license, one credit card and some cash in a **small** change purse in your side pocket.

Never carry a wallet in your back pocket. Put it in an inside jacket pocket or front pocket.

Make sure someone knows where you're going and when you expect to return.

Avoid dark, deserted routes, even if they're the shortest.

Carry change for emergency telephone and transportation use.

Whenever possible, travel with friends to stores, the bank, or the doctor. Check with local law enforcement or senior citizen centers about escort services.

When using the bus or other public transportation, sit near the driver if possible.

Don't overburden yourself with packages and groceries that obstruct your view and make it hard to react.

Have your car or house key in hand as you approach your vehicle or home.

Carry a shriek alarm. In some areas, community groups offer free alarms to seniors.

When you drive, keep doors locked and windows up. Park in well-lighted, busy areas. If you have car trouble, be wary of strangers who offer help. Stay in your car and ask them to call for assistance for you.

If a friend or taxi drives you home, ask the driver to wait until you are safely inside.

Communicate the message that you are calm, confident, and know where you are going. Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave.

WHEN YOU'RE AT HOME...

Use deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Keep your doors locked at all times, even when you're inside.

Protect windows and sliding glass doors with good locks or other security devices.

Make your home appear occupied when you go out by using a timer to turn on lights and a radio.

Never let strangers in your home without checking their identification. Call their company if you're not sure. Install a peephole in your door and use it.

If you live alone, don't advertise it. Use only your first initial in phone books, directories, and apartment lobbies.

Get to know your neighbors and keep their phone number handy for emergencies.

Work out a "buddy" system with a friend to check on each other.



Engrave your valuables with your Florida driver's license or ID card number. Keep bonds, stock certificates, seldom worn jewelry, and stamp and coin collections in a safe deposit box.

Don't hide extra house keys under a door mat or other obvious spots.

PROTECT YOUR MONEY

If you receive checks in the mail regularly, arrange for them to be sent directly to the bank.

Avoid carrying large sums of money. If you must take a large sum, have a friend accompany you.

Don't display large amounts of cash in stores or other public places.

Don't sign a check or contract until you are sure it is for a legitimate reason and know the details. Check with a friend, lawyer, or law enforcement if in doubt.

Never put your purse or wallet on a counter while you examine merchandise in a store.

WHAT IF YOU ARE ASSAULTED

If the attacker is only after your purse or other valuables, do not resist! Your life and safety are worth more than your possessions.

Make a conscious effort to get an accurate description of the attacker and call the Sheriff's Office IMMEDIATELY!

Contact your local victim assistance agency to help you deal with the trauma that all crime victims experience. They can help you learn more about counseling, victim compensation laws and how to follow your case's progress.

Start a crime prevention (Neighborhood Watch) program in your building or neighborhood. Turn your tragedy into a helping experience for others.

DON'T BE CONNED

According to the American Association of Retired Persons, older citizens are victims of fraudulent schemes far out of proportion to their population numbers. Keep informed about the latest con schemes in your community by reading the newspaper. Be skeptical about any proposal that sounds too good to be true or has to be kept secret. Don't rush into anything. Check it out with friends, lawyers, law enforcement, Better Business Bureau, and your state or county consumer affairs department.

Be especially wary of:

“Get rich quick” schemes for which you have to put up “good faith” money.

“Good deals” on expensive repair or home improvement jobs.

Investments that promise unusually large returns.

Someone claiming you owe money for an item ordered by a deceased spouse or relative.

Work-at-home schemes, door-to-door sales, supplemental medicare insurance, miracle cures, glasses and hearing aids at bargain prices.

If you are the victim of fraud, call the Sheriff's Office immediately. You may be embarrassed because you were tricked, but your information is vital in catching the con artist and preventing others from being victimized!

TAKE ACTION TODAY

Staying active in your community will help you to feel safer and help to make your neighborhood a better place to live.

Join a Neighborhood Watch or Apartment Watch group today.

Become a foster grandparent or block parent for children who may need help in an emergency.

If a friend has been a victim of crime, be supportive. Listen carefully and nonjudgementally, cook a meal, help repair damage or replace belongings. Accompany the victim to the Sheriff's Office and to court.

Ask the local crime prevention officers from your Sheriff's Office to talk to your senior citizen's group.

Crime Prevention Tips from:

**The National Crime
Prevention Council**

and

**ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

407-254-7000



**ORANGE COUNTY
T.R.I.A.D./S.A.L.T.
(SENIORS AND LAW
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**ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF**

Sheriff Jerry L. Demings



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