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## Senior Citizen Safety

Seniors are less likely to be a victim of crime than someone in their 40's. However, the fear of crime often causes more harm than the crime itself. Senior Citizens will refuse to go out after dark, lock themselves in their homes, and shut themselves off from society.

Seniors are more prone to be victims of certain crimes because of their age. Criminals target the elderly because the senior can be confused more readily, often has extra money in the house, and is too ashamed to admit that he or she has been a victim of crime.

By taking some simple measures to protect themselves and their property, seniors can enjoy what they have worked hard for all their life.

### **When You're Away From Home**

- Never carry a purse slung across your body. Let it hang loosely from your shoulder, holding it close to your body in front of you.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Always travel with a friend. There is safety in numbers.
- When you are driving, always keep your doors locked. Park in well-lit areas.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable in an area, leave immediately.

### **When You're at Home**

- Make sure you have deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Lock your doors even when you are at home.
- Lock your screen/storm door when you are at home.
- Do not hide extra house keys outside.
- Never allow strangers into your home. Always check their identification and call their company before they come into the house.
- Know your neighbors and have their phone numbers handy.

- Avoid keeping valuables in the house. Use a safe deposit box.
- Use lights on timers to give your home a lived-in look.

## **Protecting Your Investments**

- If you receive regular checks by mail, arrange for them to be directly deposited into your account.
- Never leave your purse unattended in public, not even for a second.
- Avoid flashing large sums of money at the cash register.
- Do not carry large sums of money out in public.
- Do not sign a contract or a check unless you are sure it is for a legitimate reason. Have someone else read over the contract before you sign.

## **Be Aware of Con Artists**

Seniors often fall victim to the con artist. They are less likely to report being conned for fear that their families will not understand. Talk to your family, friends, a lawyer or the police about any business transaction that is "too good to be true", that must be kept secret, or that must be done today.

### **Be aware of the following scams:**

- "Good deals" on home repair, tree removal, house painting, roof repair, patching driveways, or rodent extermination.
- "Get rich quick" schemes where you put up your money for a quick and profitable return.
- "Grand Prize Winner" where they ask for your Social Security number or credit card number to verify that you are a winner.
- The "Bad Bank Teller Scam" where a police officer, FBI agent, or a bank examiner asks for your help and money to catch a bad teller.

These are just a few of the scams that are pulled on the innocent every day. If you do become a victim, call the police immediately. You may be embarrassed, but your information is important to the police in catching the con artist and preventing future crimes.

## **Who To Call**

If you do become a victim of crime, seek help by calling:

**Your Local Police Department Non-Emergency Line**

**Office of the Attorney General: Consumer Affairs Hot Line**

(800) 451-1525

**State Contractors Board**

(804) 367-8511

**Better Business Bureau**

(804) 648-0016

Article Source

Richmond Police Department

Source URL

<https://rva.gov/police>

Last Reviewed

Tuesday, August 6, 2019