Crime Prevention for **Everyone**

Neighborhood Block Watch

Home Security and Safety

Disaster Preparedness

Terrorism Watch

Personal Safety

Fire Safety

Volunteers

9-1-1

This booklet is designed to inspire readers to improve safety in their neighborhoods, help police fight crime and prepare for disasters.

It contains solid, basic information that will get you started. It is hoped you will be inspired to look for more information, using the resources suggested throughout the book.

The inside of the covers were left blank to allow law enforcement agencies or citizen groups to attach information about local information and resources.

COPIES

For printed or PDF format versions of this booklet, contact the City of Kent Police Department at **www.kentpoliceceu.com**. Permission is granted to download and copy this booklet. Acknowledgement of the Kent Police Department in Kent, Washington is appreciated.

Funds for developing this booklet came from the United States Department of Homeland Security, through the King County Citizen Corps Council and the City of Kent, WA,

Police Department.
Published by the City of Kent, Washington
Police Department, June 2010 KPD#363.

Contents

What is Neighborhood Block Watch? 3
How Do You Start a Block Watch Group? 4
Invitations 5
At Your Meeting 6
Neighborhood Maps 7, 8, 9
Telephone Trees 10
Operation ID & Home Inventory 11
Calling 9-1-1 12
Suspicious Activity Examples 13
National Night Out 14, 15
Locks 16, 17
Home Security 18, 19
Exterior Doors 20, 21
Windows 22
Garages 23
Lighting 24
Home Security Checklist 25
Alarms 26, 27
Personal Safety for Children 28
Personal Safety for Adults 29
Fire Safety 30
Identity Theft 31
Disaster Preparedness 32, 33
VIPS Volunteers in Police Services 34
Resources 35

What is Neighborhood Block Watch?

Very simply, Neighborhood Block Watch is a system designed to encourage neighbors to look out for each other and reduce crime by reporting suspicious activity and crime.

Whether it's called Neighborhood Watch, Block Watch or Crime Watch, it helps create the very best crime prevention device invented: neighbors watching your home as well as their own.

Block Watch is the most successful anticrime program in the country. It's the most effective (and least expensive) tool to make sure we have the safe, pleasant environment we all want for our families.

Most police agencies are ready and willing to help neighbors learn how to prevent crime and how to be the "extra eyes and ears" for police, but some agencies don't have the staff to promote Neighborhood Block Watch. Neighbors can find all they need to know about it on the Internet and at the library and they can still invite police to talk at a neighborhood meeting.

This booklet is designed to help neighborhoods get started with or without the help of their local police agency.

One major city started the Block Watch program more than 20 years ago. The police department kept track of crime in the neighborhoods the first year. Where there were Block Watch groups, residential crime dropped 40 percent!

Block Watch works!

How Do You Start a Block Watch Group?

1. Ask neighbors if they are interested in fighting against crime.
2. Contact your local police agency; ask for the crime prevention department.
3. Ask if they can help with Neighborhood Block Watch.
4. Set up a meeting with neighbors, even if your police agency isn't involved.
5. Ask your police agency where to find materials to do it on your own.
6. Get invitations from your police agency or make your own.
7. Walk the neighborhood (ask for help) to hand out the invitations face to face.
8. Ask the police for tips on crime prevention techniques and for crime statistics.
9. Name a captain and co-captain(s) in separate homes.
10. Make a map of the neighborhood and give copies to all participants.
11. Make a telephone or email tree to alert everyone about crimes and other problems.
12. Engrave or mark household items (Operation ID) with driver's license number (pg. 11).
13. Get Operation ID decals and stickers from the police agency or order your own.
14. Get neighbors to do a home inventory on paper, on video and/or using photographs.
15. Develop a neighborhood disaster preparedness plan, get C.E.R.T. training (pg. 32).
16. Participate in National Night Out every August to stay up-to-date and connected.
17. Update information on maps and telephone trees at least once a year.
18. Request a Block Watch sign from the police agency or order one to install yourself.

Other things to do as a Neighborhood Block Watch

—to keep interest going after crime drops or a problem is solved:

- Help neighbors trim bushes and trees for better visibility.
- Organize a community clean up, leaf raking day, or pruning party.
- Help remove graffiti right away.
- Invite the Fire Department to talk about fire prevention and disaster preparedness.
- Get each neighbor to make their house numbers easy to see at night.
- Help each other reinforce door frames, hinges, and locks for windows.
- Have a neighborhood garage sale to encourage the sense of community.
- Start a newsletter for the neighborhood, and include a kids' column.
- Clean up a nearby park or playground.
- Ask the neighborhood children to help with some of the projects.
- Send several people to C.E.R.T or disaster preparedness training.
- Look into installing a locked mailbox unit for the whole neighborhood.

Invitations

You want to get as many neighbors together as you can. How you invite them is important. Think of it this way: what would make someone get off the couch after a long day at work to come to a meeting with a group of strangers? Most people don't even know what Block Watch is. They might think it means committees, meetings, or having to pay money.

- Make your invitation simple and clear. Mention a recent crime as incentive.
- Deliver the invitation in person if possible. Face-to-face is more effective than leaving a piece of paper on a doorstep.
- Ask if they could spare "only one hour" to talk with other neighbors about how to fight crime in the neighborhood.
- Don't put invitations in postal mail boxes—it's illegal.
- Get a couple of neighbors to walk with you to help deliver invitations.
- Plan an activity for children near the meeting, perhaps ask a teenager to watch them. Mention this on the invitation to encourage parents to attend.
- Offer other incentives: food, door prizes, or a chance to "win" money off rent or homeowners' dues.

Your police agency may have invitations to give you. Below is a suggestion to help you design your own invitation.

"You never really know what's happening in your neighborhood unless you talk to your neighbors."

We recently had (name a crime or two) in our neighborhood.

So let's get together to talk.

Please come to an informal meeting on Wednesday evening,

April 13 at 7 p.m.

at (give address, hosts' names if applicable, name of building, etc.)

The (your police agency) will be there to talk to us about ways to prevent crimes like this, and to answer questions. Please let (organizer's name) know you can be there: phone (number here) or email at (email address here)

At Your Meeting

- Meet neighbors as they enter and make them a name tag—first names in big letters. (It's easier to start a conversation when you don't have to try to remember names.)
- Have plenty of chairs, make sure they can see the speaker.
- Provide a table for handout materials. If you have a speaker, ask people to get their handouts *after* the talk.
- Find out ahead what the speaker will need (chair, table). Ask what they plan to talk about and if they are bringing handouts. Let them know how many to expect.
- Tell the speaker in advance if there is a subject the group wants to talk about.
- Start the neighborhood map and let neighbors fill in their own information. If possible, draw a big version on a huge sheet of paper to display at the meeting.
- Have neighbors introduce themselves and show where they live on the big map.
- If you want to serve food or drink, plan a "social hour" before or after the meeting for visiting and discussing Block Watch plans.
- Explain to your group (or have the speaker do it) what's involved with Neighborhood Block Watch and what is needed.

Ask for volunteers for captain and co-captain(s). They should live at separate addresses, so if one leaves the other can recruit a replacement. All these people have to do is get the Block Watch started, keep addresses and other information up to date, and add any new neighbors. They get people to plan National Night Out and to help with other activities.

Encourage everyone to add work phone numbers and out of state emergency numbers to the neighborhood map. Give examples of how these could be useful (someone is away on vacation, house catches fire, you can call emergency contact who should always know how to find that person).

Pass the hat to buy a neighborhood engraver (scout out prices before the meeting). Get someone to keep track of it and loan it out to neighbors for 3–5 days each. This encourages people to "get it done," to let other neighbors have a chance to engrave.

Talk about the telephone tree you want to set up. Give this example: a person at the south end of the neighborhood has a car stolen. People at the north end would like to know about a crime like this, but nobody's going to knock on every door to alert neighbors.

Before the meeting, think of what information you need from these neighbors. It might not be easy to get them all together again. Ask everyone present to talk to at least one neighbor who didn't make it to the meeting, and to share handouts and what they learned.

Neighborhood Maps

A neighborhood map is a powerful tool on a simple sheet of paper.

- The map should indicate N, S, E, W.
- Label all streets inside and connecting to the neighborhood.
- Draw squares for homes and list full names, address, phone and email.
- Consider adding children's names and work and out of state emergency numbers.
- If a household won't participate, list only their address on the map.
- Make note of the people who are captain and co-captain(s).
- Give a copy of the map to everyone who participates.

This is how the map works: Imagine that as you drive home you hear a loud noise (a gun?) and you see a man run out of a home in your neighborhood. He speeds away in a car.

You get home, call 9-1-1 and grab your neighborhood map. You are now able to give the exact address of that house, not fumble with "two streets over and 4 or 5 houses down from my address". People can forget their own street when flustered.

A major reason people don't call 9-1-1 is not having enough information. They feel stupid and they talk themselves out of it. "It's none of my business anyway." With the map and its good information, people are more willing to get involved.

When 9-1-1 asks where the car went, you can refer to the map and say "South on Alabama Street then West on 218th". This is incredibly helpful to police.

Make maps simple, start with N at the top, draw lines for streets and squares for houses and fill in the information. If there's not enough room, just fill in the address then list names and numbers on the back. Or simply number the homes starting with "1" then list the address, name and phone numbers on the back.

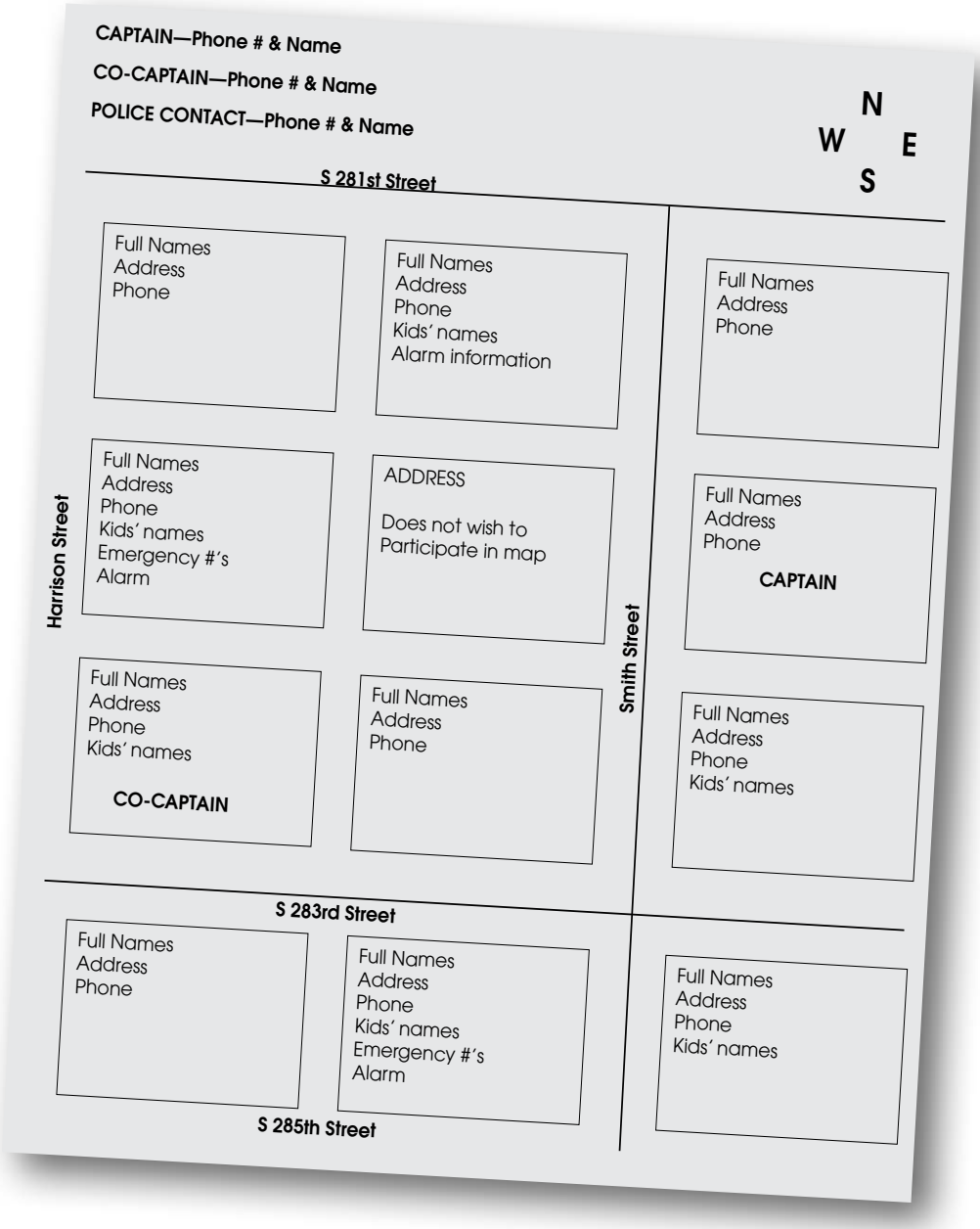
Divide neighborhoods of 50 or more homes into "areas" because if a Block Watch is too big, it can fall apart with only a few people to manage it. Each area could have a color or a name and its own area captain. This way, no one person has too much to handle. One area captain might serve as chair of all the area captains and be the one who is the contact for the police department.

In big neighborhoods, everyone should get a master map as well as one of their own area.

Neighborhood Maps

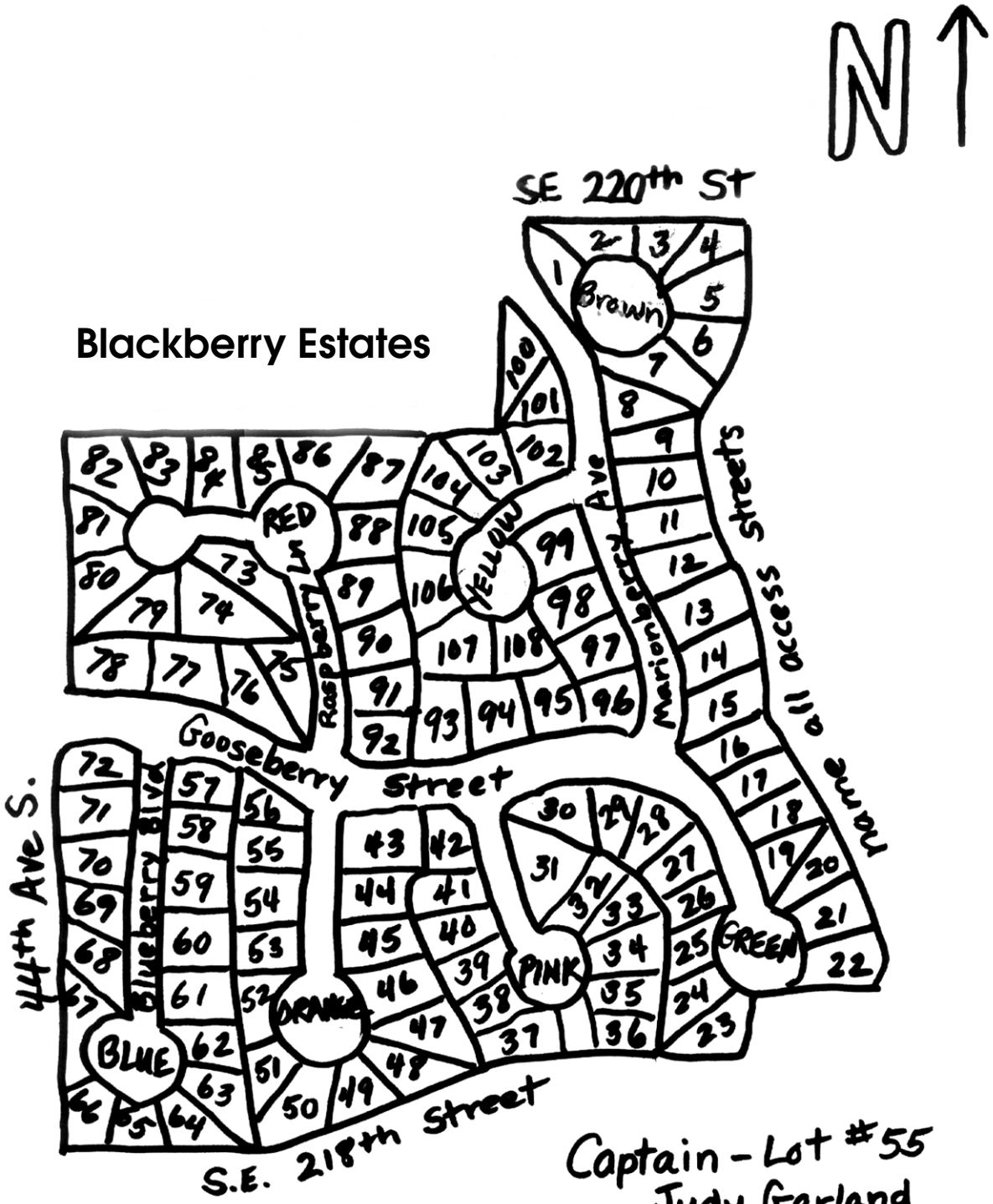
Sample Block Watch Map

- Use regular size (8 x 11) paper
- Indicate North, South, East, and West
- List all streets, within and connecting to your neighborhood
- List names, address, home phone (the minimum)
- Indicate homes of captain and co-captain
- List the police contact name and number
- Create your map in any way—by hand, computer, etc.



Neighborhood Maps

Sample Block Watch Map for a Larger Area



Captain - Lot #55
- Judy Garland
Co-Captain- Lot #77
- Mickey Rooney

See back for name, address, and phone to match lot numbers on map.

Telephone and E-mail Trees

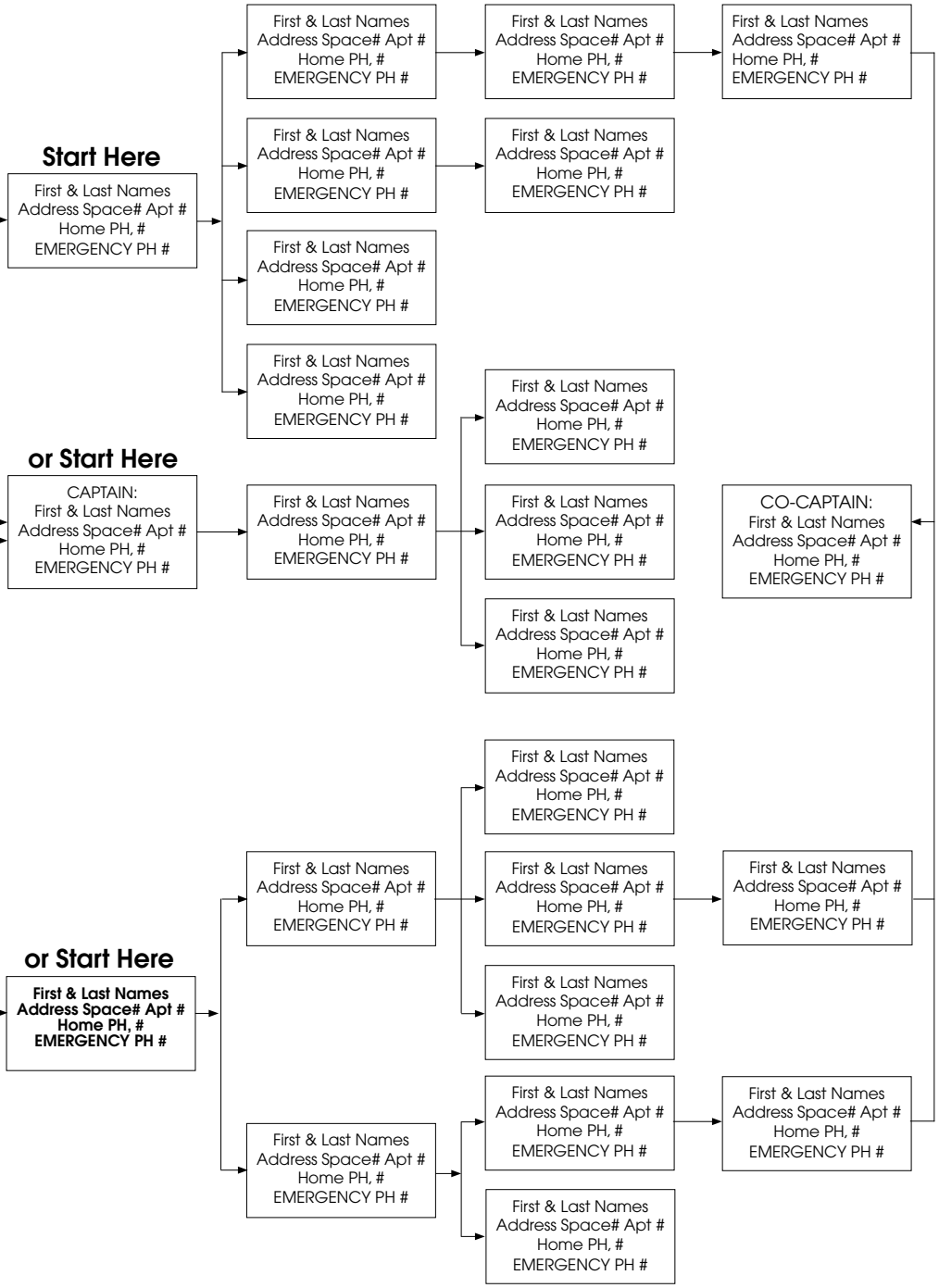
You never really know what's happening in your neighborhood unless you talk to your neighbors. A telephone tree is a great way to get information to others and build a sense of community in the neighborhood. Below is a sample telephone tree. Use this suggestion to design one that suits your neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD TELEPHONE & E-MAIL TREE

Call 9-1-1 for any suspicious activity and crimes, then call the Block Watch captain to alert the entire neighborhood via this telephone tree system.

This tree is set up so that we can keep each other informed of any crimes or suspicious activity. Call one of the "Start Here" homes if you want to send information through the tree. Always do this after you make a 9-1-1 call. When you get a message to pass on, follow the arrows by your name. If you can't reach someone, leave a message and make <u>their</u> calls so the chain doesn't stop. The captain might call the last home to be sure the message made it through the whole tree.

Also collect e-mail addresses and include them on your phone tree. Some Neighborhood Block Watch groups have a website dedicated to crime stats, trends and precaution information.



Operation Identification (Operation ID)

Operation ID is a program where property is marked or engraved with a special number. This is called an owner-applied number (OAN) and it can be used to report stolen items. Operation ID has shown dramatic results in reducing burglaries and theft. Burglars usually avoid marked items because they are hard to re-sell.

- Mark valuables with driver's license number (DL) or state identification number (ID) or—for a business—state tax number (TX).
- To make sure nobody changes the OAN, put the 2 letters of your state at the start and end it with DL, ID, or TX—whichever applies. A Washington state driver's license number used for an OAN could look like this: WA423JA1111DL.
- Never use your social security number. Don't engrave paintings, antiques, or any item you may want to sell.
- Hang Operation ID decals near your doors. This lets burglars know that property inside has been marked and won't be easy to re-sell.
- On the back of the engraved item, tape a small note or sticker that shows this item has been engraved. The engraving itself won't be obvious to a burglar in a hurry but the "eyeball" sticker will. They know what it means.
- Decals and stickers may be available from police agencies or you can purchase them via the Internet (try searching "Operation ID").

Engravers are inexpensive tools that can save you thousands of dollars. Pass the hat to buy a neighborhood engraver to share. If you sell engraved items, etch one line through your number so it's still readable. Initial it and give the buyer a bill of sale describing the item.

Home Inventory

It's nearly impossible to remember the items you have lost if your home is burglarized or catches fire. A home inventory on paper and/or video format will help you report items to the police and to your insurance company. Make sure you include everything, even kitchen items and your junk drawer. List the make, model, and serial number of all guns in the house. Keep your lists and video in a safe deposit box or someplace where they cannot be stolen or destroyed by fire.

Insurance is important for everyone. Replacement value insurance is best because your property is replaced rather than giving you the depreciated value. (If you have an older TV worth $100, you will get a replacement TV, not the $100.) Rental insurance is very reasonably priced.

Calling 9-1-1

NOTE: Some 9-1-1 centers won't accept non-emergency calls; they will give another number to call. Check your area by calling your police agency's non-emergency number. Only serious and legitimate calls should be made to 9-1-1, no matter what.

Always report suspicious activity and all crimes because police don't know there's a problem unless they are told.

Example: A thief is looking for a car to break into. He sees a patrol car coming so he acts natural, as if he's standing next to his own car. Nothing looks suspicious. A watchful neighbor would know he doesn't belong with that vehicle and should call 9-1-1.

Neighbors should stay aware and alert and call 9-1-1 when anything seems suspicious. If police can catch someone in the act of committing a crime, it saves valuable time and tax payer dollars, not to mention saving people from being victimized.

Stay calm when you call 9-1-1. Don't yell or hang up, and answer all questions carefully. In most cases, help is on the way even as the call receiver asks more questions.

- To describe vehicles: note number of doors, color, make or shape, bumper stickers, cracked windshield, dents, etc.
- To remember license plates: write it on paper, on your hand or even scratch it in the dirt! License numbers are useful only if they are correct. Never hesitate to say, "I'm not sure". With a vehicle description, even a partial license plate can be valuable.
- To describe people: clothing is important, but look for things that cannot be changed, like skin or eye color, tattoos, scars, moles, height and weight.
- To describe roadway problems: give the road name or number and your direction of travel. Look at milepost signs, exit numbers or landmarks. Do not report injuries at a crash site unless you are sure of them.

Teach children how to respect the 9-1-1 system and how to use it if they are alone. Children learn by "doing" but practice on a toy phone only. Encourage them to be good citizens; help them learn to watch for trouble and how to get help when needed.

Suspcious Activity Examples

It's important to call 9-1-1 if you see suspicious activity. Pay attention to your instincts when something "just doesn't seem right". If the police are not there to see it with you, they ***won't*** know unless you call.

Don't worry that you are "bothering" the police or 9-1-1. They handle many calls at once and they will take care of urgent calls first. Police would rather respond to calls that turn out to be nothing, rather than to a "cold" crime—where it's all done and the criminal got away. There's always the chance they can catch someone in the act of a crime if you call.

Situation:	What it might mean:
Person going door to door, looking into back yards and windows	Possible "casing" (looking for a house to burglarize), trespass or soliciting violation
Non-resident going into back or side yard	Possible burglary in progress
Continuous vehicle "repairs", especially in non-business area or neighborhood	Possible stolen property being stripped, repainted, or altered
Person waiting in front of a house or business	Possible lookout for a burglary in progress.
Slow moving vehicles, without lights or driving by several times, especially in areas of school grounds or parks	Possible "casing" for burglaries or car thefts, drug sales, prostitution, or a sex offender looking for a victim
Person trying to enter locked vehicle or removing parts or accessories	Possible burglary, theft, or vandalism
Person running, especially if carrying something of value	Possible fleeing scene of a crime
Person asking for help in a parking lot, choosing people who are alone	Possible theft, car theft, or assault
Many cars coming to residence, leaving after only a few minutes	Possible drug sales, fence operation, or sales of stolen goods
People with flashlights looking into cars or windows	Possible burglary, assault, car theft, or theft of items from car
Unusual noises: gun shots, screaming, combat noises, abnormal dog barking	Possible illegal activity or danger. Pay attention to your instincts; call 9-1-1

National Night Out

National Night Out is a program designed to get neighbors outside their homes to meet one another. The same way that holidays can be an "excuse" for families to get together, National Night Out is the occasion for neighbors to get together.

When people get together, even only once a year, it makes a huge difference. Almost without realizing it, the "guy" up the street (whose name you don't remember) becomes the "neighbor" up the street (whose name you don't remember). It makes people more willing to keep watch around the neighborhood and call 9-1-1 when they see a problem, rather than say, "It's none of my business".

The National Association of Town Watch (NATW) in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania created and organizes this yearly event, always on the 1st Tuesday evening in August. Every year it grows, with over ten thousand cities across the United States participating.

At its simplest, neighbors turn on their porch lights and come outside to visit with each other. Most neighborhoods host potlucks, ice cream socials, or BBQs—anything that will draw people together to "give drugs and crime a going-away party".

It is also a great way to start a Neighborhood Block Watch. Ask someone from your police agency to speak to your group that night about crime prevention tips (and invite them to share a bite with you).

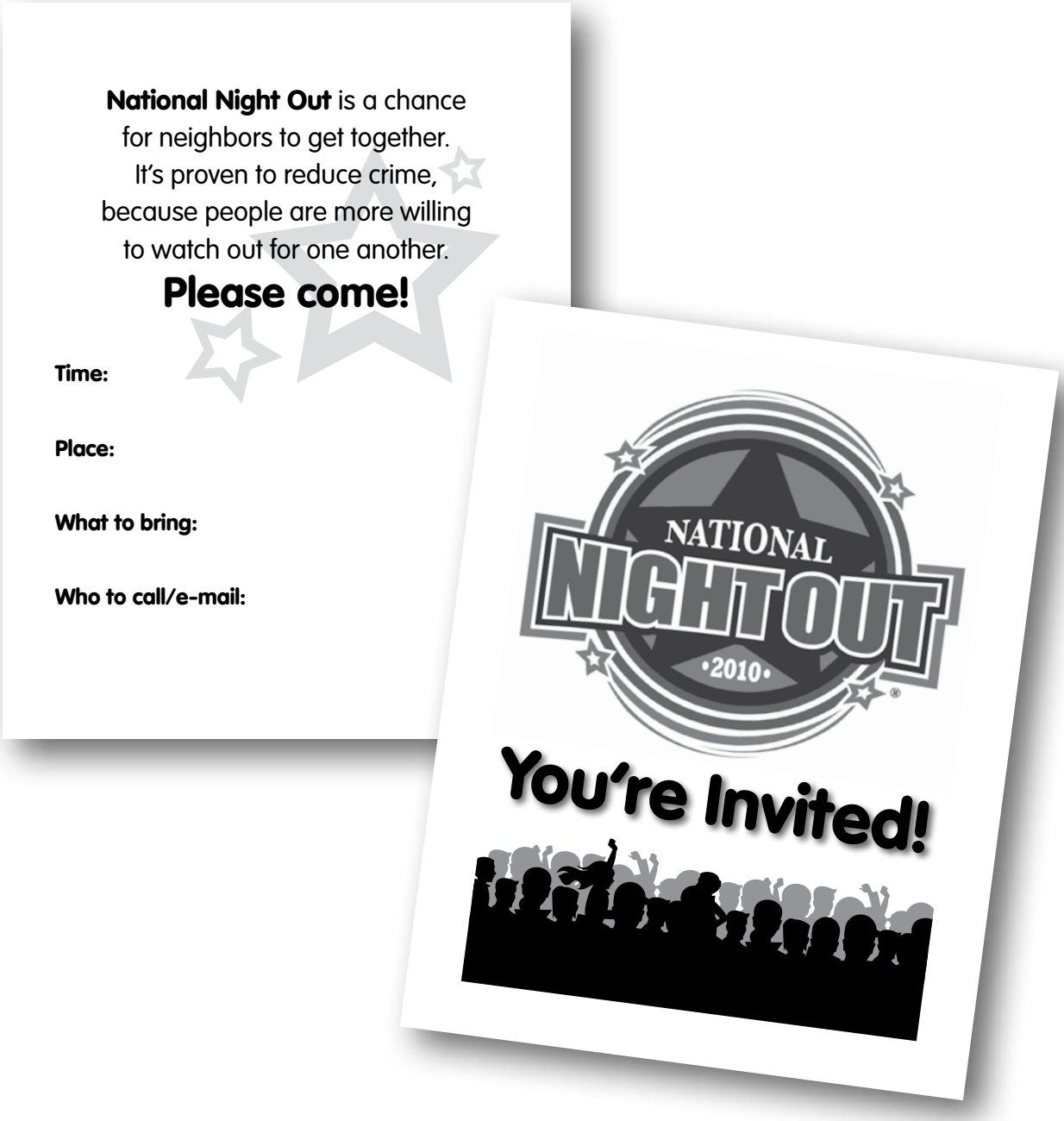
In many cities, the local police agency is very involved in National Night Out. Those involved offer invitations, flyers, and banners to help people have a successful get-together. Police agencies register the events, then send the police out to visit to say "thanks" for being partners in crime prevention. Ask your police agency what they do for National Night Out.

- Ask neighbors if they would like to have a get-together.
- Call your local police agency to see if they participate.
- If your police aren't involved, register online at www.nationalnightout.org.
- Form a group to help. List all things needed and the start and finish times.
- Get invitations from your police or make them yourself.
- Decide who will bring what, and what to list on the invitations.
- Designate a photographer, a nametag maker, and a friendly greeter.
- Send "save the date" notices or invitations early.
- Send reminders or hang banners, flyers, and notices as reminders.
- Insist on nametags for everyone, big letters with first name.
- Make it fun, and make any visitors from police feel welcome.

National Night Out

If your police agency is not involved, and you register your own event at www.nationalnightout.org, they will send clip art to make invitations and flyers. You can buy banners, hats, shirts, balloons, and stickers from them—all things to make your event more fun. Below is an example of an invitation made using clip art from NATW.

NOTE: All National Night Out graphics are the property of NATW and cannot be reproduced onto clothing or merchandise of any kind.



Locks

Good locks are the first line of defense against intruders. They are a real deterrent because burglars choose the easiest places to break into and avoid those that take longer.

Locks range from bad to excellent as far as protection goes. It's important to make sure you know which locks are best and what they do. Below, we describe key-in-the-knob locks, deadbolt locks, and keyless locks.

Key-in-the-Knob Locks

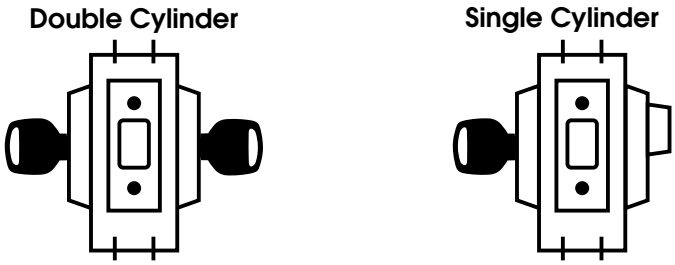
Key-in-the-knob locks—and chain locks—offer little or no security. Extra force on the knob (where the cylinder is located) can defeat the lock. They are usually not pick-resistant and keys can be easily duplicated. This lock has two kinds of latches: the spring latch and the deadlocking latch.

Spring Latch Bolt The bolt is spring operated so it can be unlocked using a piece of plastic (credit card), thin metal, or wire between the door and frame. The bolt can also be held back by tape and the hole in the striker can be stuffed with wadding.

Dead Latch Bolt This works the same as a spring latch, except when the door is shut the latch becomes "dead". The spring action is blocked by a lever (see thumb). However, very little force may be needed to move the bolt out of the striker.

Dead Bolt Locks

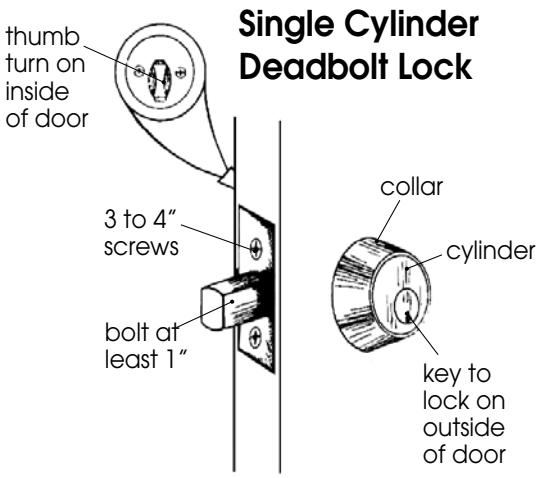
The deadbolt gets its name from the fact that it does not move (is `dead') except with a key or thumb turn. It cannot be moved with a credit card or tool because it has no spring. You can't lock a deadbolt and pull the door shut. You must turn the key to lock it after shutting the door.



Three kinds of deadbolt locks are:

- Single cylinder (key on outside, thumb turn on inside)
- Double cylinder (keys on both inside and outside)
- Double cylinder with captive cylinder (key outside, special thumb turn key inside)

Locks



Burglars can break glass in or near a door to reach inside and unlock a **single cylinder deadbolt** using the thumb turn. One solution to this is the **double cylinder deadbolt** (keys inside and out). The door can be locked from the inside and the key removed, but this can be deadly if people cannot escape quickly from a fire because they can't find the key.

The **captive cylinder deadlock** was developed for this reason. On the outside it is locked by a key. On the inside it is locked by a thumb turn that is also a removable key. The thumb turn key can only be removed, however, when the outside key is turned to a certain position. So, the thumb turn stays in place when people are in the home. When the home is empty, the thumb turn key can be removed and a burglar cannot unlock the door by reaching inside. Children cannot remove the thumb turn key as they could a normal key.

KEYLESS LOCKS

There are many variations of keyless locks available for homes, garages and businesses. They offer combination buttons, electronic or digital means of unlocking the door. Check with your local locksmith or hardware store for the latest developments.

When selecting a deadbolt lock:

1. The bolt should be no less than 1" when fully extended and some of it should still be in the lock for strength at that end.
2. The outside collar (around the cylinder where the key goes in) should be strong metal, not easily crushed or ripped open. If the collar rotates freely, it keeps the cylinder from being twisted off with vice grips or a pipe wrench.
3. A strong strike plate should be attached to the door frame to provide a strong anchor for the bolt to sit in.
4. Extended strike plates are available from locksmiths in 8" or 12" sizes and provide a stronger housing for a good deadbolt.
5. Use 3" to 4" wood screws when installing any strike plate, to go through the door frame and into the wall stud. Do not use drywall screws.

LOCKS FOR GUNS

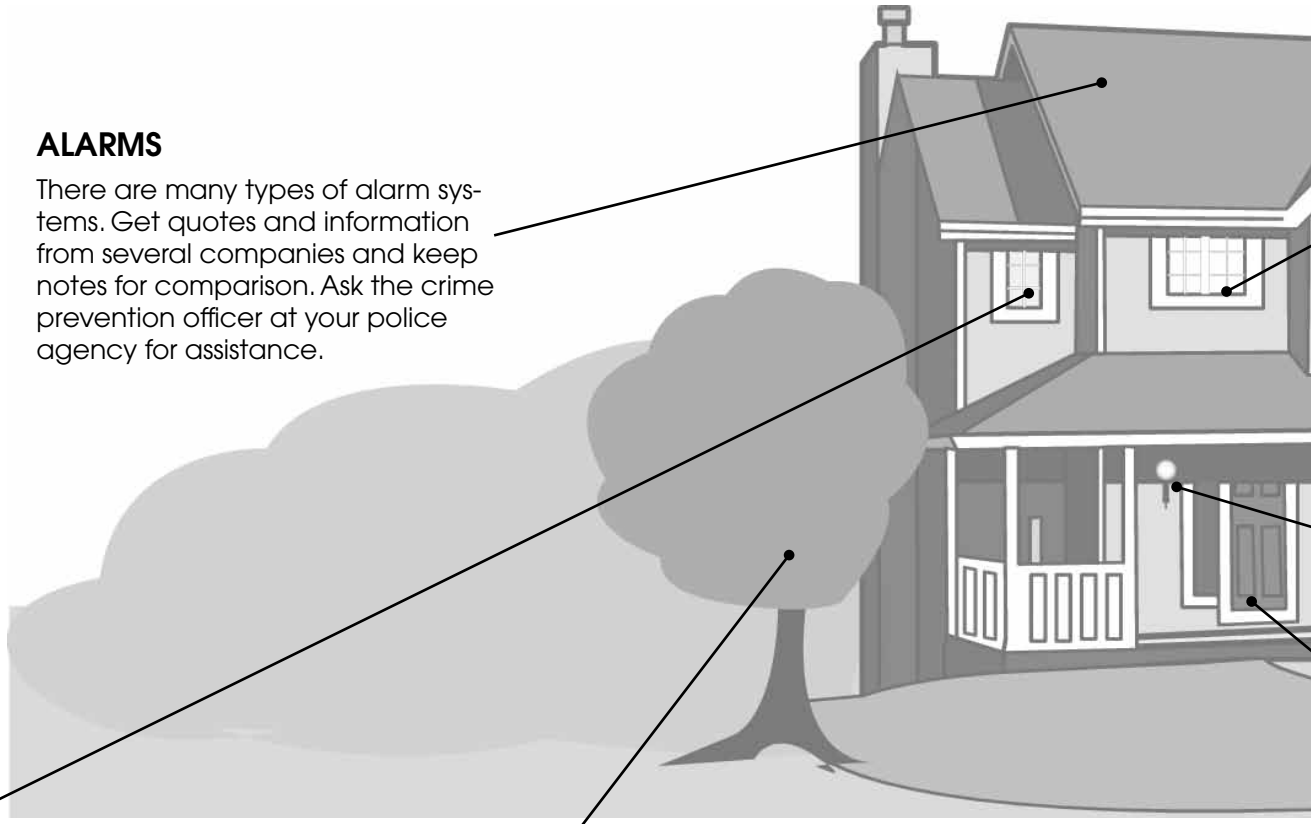
Guns stolen from homes create a great danger to communities. There are gun safes, locking gun cabinets, and locks for individual guns.

Home Security

Burglars avoid light, noise, being seen and buildings that take too much time to break into. With a little effort, you can set up ways to make them avoid your home or building and look elsewhere for easier targets.

The following pages give suggestions that you can use to improve the security of your home. Many are inexpensive and some you can do yourself. (Renters, always talk to landlords before making any changes.)

Homeowners and renters are encouraged to look for ways to improve security. Don't wait until it's too late and don't hesitate to ask your local police agency for help. Ask for their crime prevention department.



ALARMS

There are many types of alarm systems. Get quotes and information from several companies and keep notes for comparison. Ask the crime prevention officer at your police agency for assistance.

INTERIOR LIGHTING

When you are away from home, use timers to turn lights on and off. Just leaving a light on all the time can be a sign that you are away. Use a timer to have a radio playing, too.

LANDSCAPING

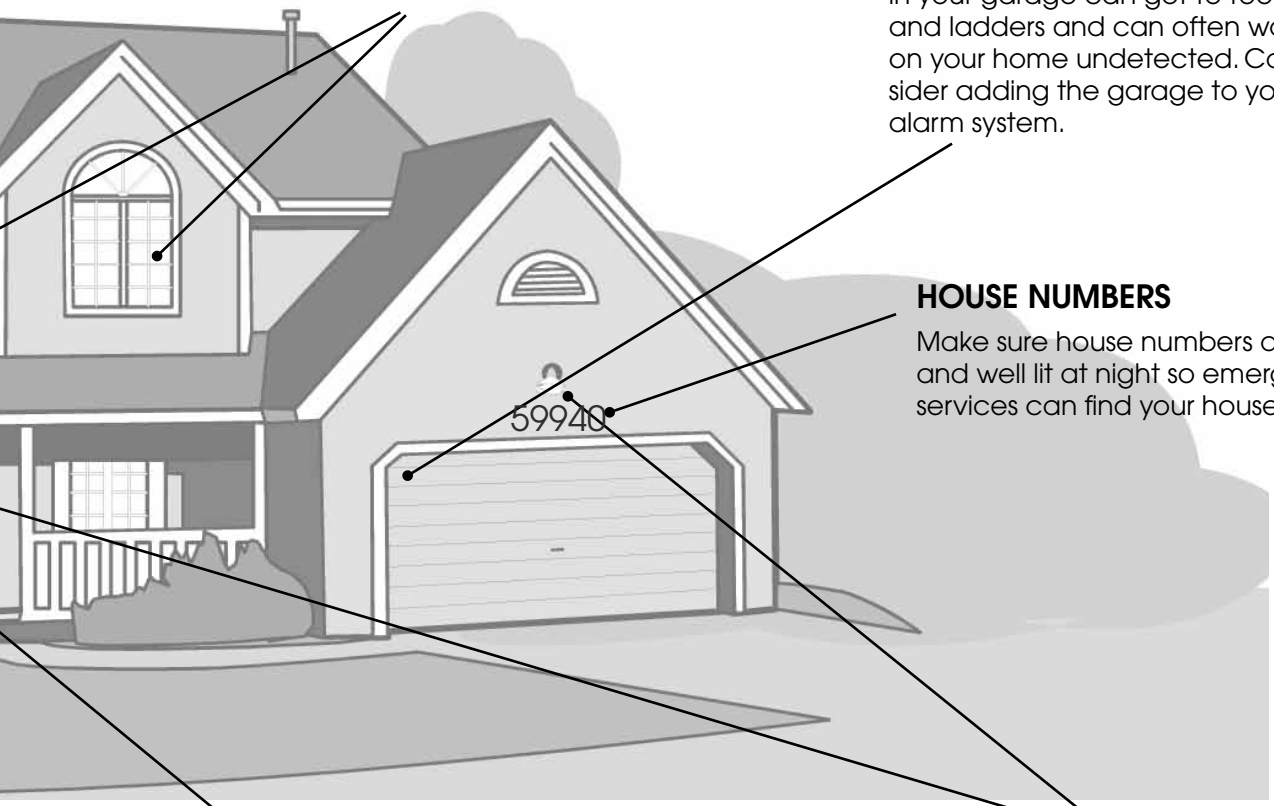
Shrubs, trees (and fences) that give you privacy also give a burglar a place to hide. Prune bushes down to two feet and cut off tree branches from the ground up to 6 feet. Use plants with thorns (such as barberry) as attractive barriers.

WINDOWS

Windows should have one or more locking devices. Keep them closed and locked at night and when you are away. Screens and storm windows should be securely fastened to the window frame, not easy to remove.

GARAGE DOORS

Always keep them closed and locked. Ask your locksmith about additional security locks. Burglars in your garage can get to tools and ladders and can often work on your home undetected. Consider adding the garage to your alarm system.



HOUSE NUMBERS

Make sure house numbers are large and well lit at night so emergency services can find your house quickly.

EXTERIOR DOORS

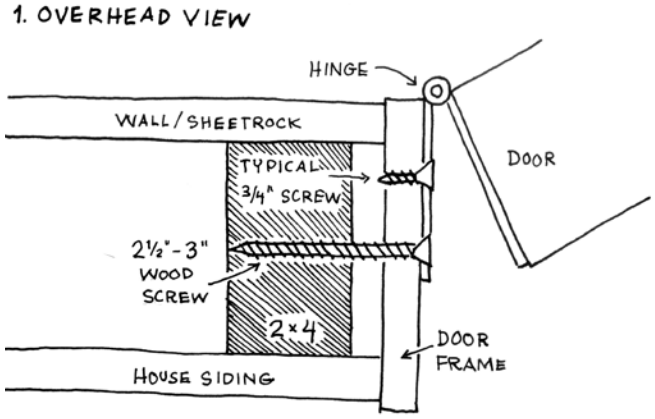
Install metal or solid core wood doors with rugged frames and extra long screws to attach the door frame all the way into the 2 x 4 wall stud. A deadbolt lock with a minimum 1" bolt provides security that the key-in-the-lock knob cannot. Install wide-angle viewers to observe visitors. If glass is part of (or near) the exterior door, add bars or window film to prevent access to the locks on the inside.

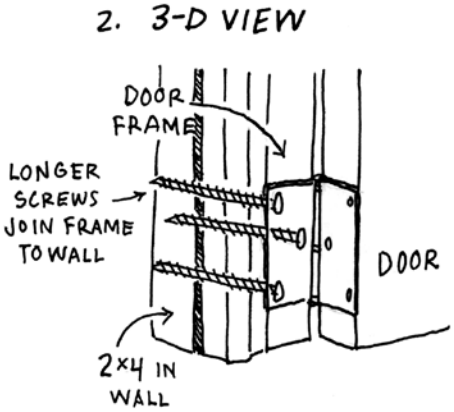
EXTERIOR LIGHTING

Lights at each entrance will help with both safety and security. Don't forget the garage and dark areas of the yard where someone could hide. Compact fluorescent lights save money and use less energy. Use timers or install motion sensor lights in places where you don't need a constant light.

Exterior Doors

- Exterior doors should be never be hollow core doors or have thin wood panels. It's too easy to punch or cut a hole in them to reach the lock inside. They should be solid core or, even better, steel which provides better security and insulation.
- You have a weaker door when hinges are attached to door frames with short screws. They should be removed and replaced with 3" to 4" wood screws. This strengthens the door frame because the screws go all the way into the 2 x 4 wall stud.

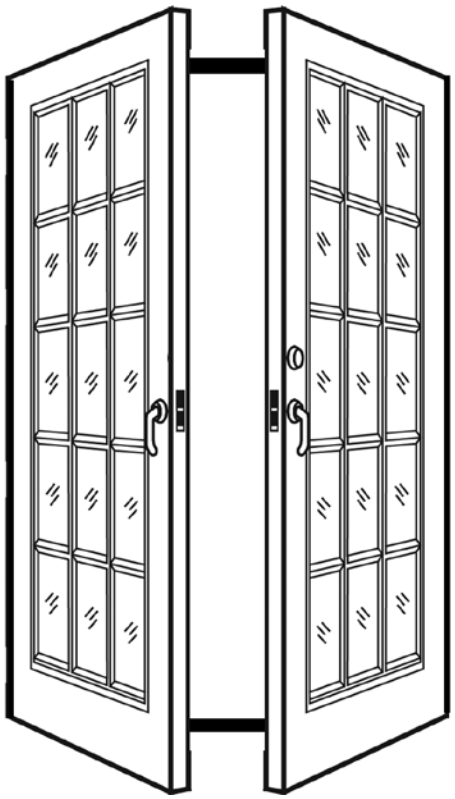




- It's also important to reinforce the door frame and doorstop strip with 3" to 4" screws that go all the way into the wall stud.
- Without this reinforcement, pry bars can push the door and frame apart or break the frame altogether. This allows the door to be forced open because the bolt of the lock will no longer hold the door to the frame.
- Glass panels in (or next to) exterior doors provide a way for a burglar to reach the lock inside. Replace these with break-resistant glass or apply security film. Bars and grillwork are best installed on the inside of the glass. For fire safety, use an inside release mechanism that is approved by your fire department so you can remove the bars or grill in an emergency.
- Exterior doors should open inward so that the hinges are on the inside. Most hinges have pins that can be removed to take the door off the hinges. If a door opens outward, you must make sure that your exposed hinges are secure. Use the non-removable, commercially-pinned type of hinges.

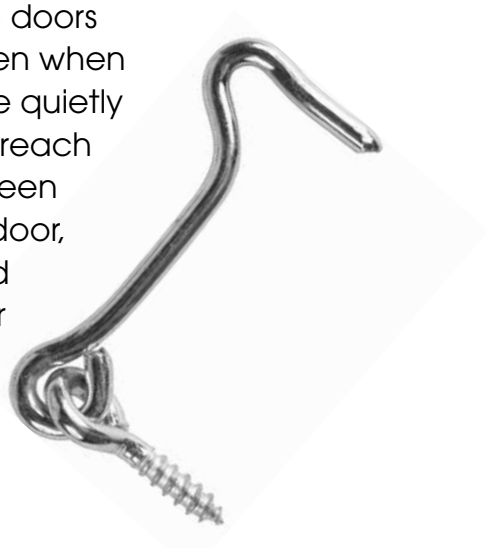
Exterior Doors

Install through-the-door viewers (at least 180°) in exterior doors to see who is standing on the other side of the door. Make sure the viewer is not too high for family members to use.



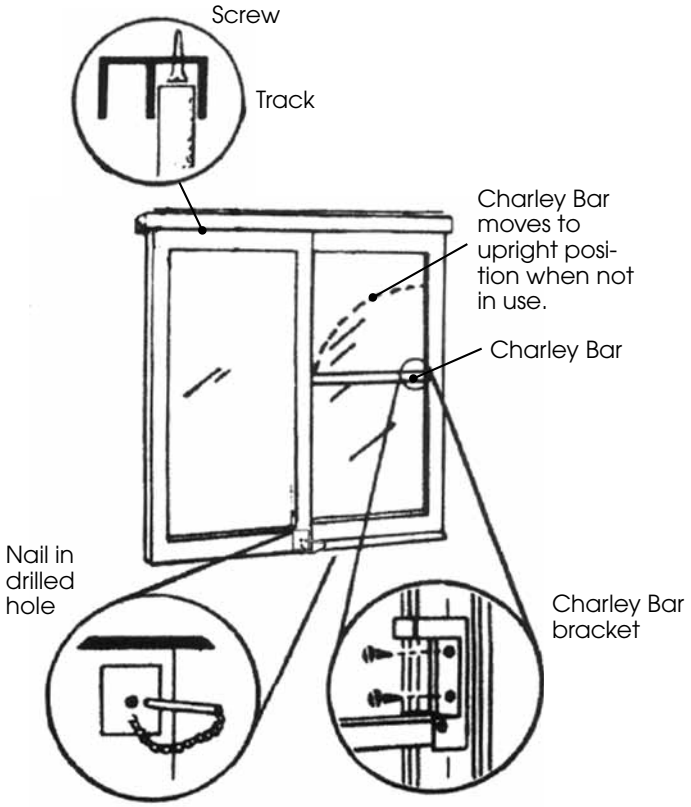
Double doors of any kind should have one door braced with a recessed cane bolt (check your hardware store). When the bolt is pushed down, it leaves only one door active. Install a deadbolt lock in the other door.

Storm doors and screen doors offer little protection even when locked. A screen can be quietly slit to allow a burglar to reach the lock inside. If the screen is at the bottom of the door, install a strong hook and eye at the upper corner of the door to keep the door from opening even when unlocked.



Basement windows are usually easy to break into. The best idea is to install bars or grillwork on the inside. Again, make sure they are easily released in case of fire.

Windows



Once your exterior doors are stronger, burglars may try to enter through a window. Window locks are often lightweight and may need additional security devices installed. Pins and special locks are just some of the choices. Check with your locksmith for ideas.

All glass sliding windows and doors should have secondary locking systems. What this means is that in addition to the lightweight latch or lock, there should be a second way to lock the window or door. Dowels, strong sticks or boards, charley bars, and other locking devices will help prevent someone from forcing them open.

If the window or door frame can be drilled (without damaging the thermal seal or the glass), a pin set into the drilled hole will prevent opening. For fire safety, never put a pin at the top of the window. Be aware that as sliding door frames wear over time, holes may not line up and pins may no longer fit.

Old windows and sliding glass doors (pre 1990) can be lifted out of the lower track at any position. Place flat headed screws in the upper track to prevent this, except when the window or door is almost fully open.

Replace thin glass with glass that resists breaking (check local window suppliers).

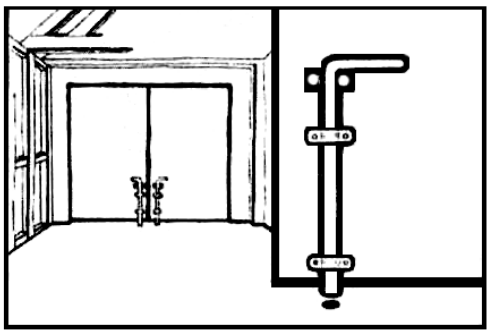
Special protective film is available to make windows stronger and harder to get through. It is thin and clear, but when applied to the inside, it will hold the glass firmly together if broken. This is especially important when glass is near an entry door. It also provides both security and safety when used on sliding glass doors. Ask window and glass dealers about the various thicknesses of security film. Look in the Yellow pages under "window tinting."

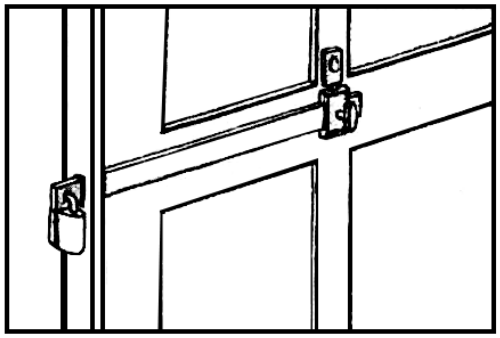
Make sure screens and storm windows are attached to the frame or to the house and cannot be easily removed.

Garages

Keep garages locked at all times. The entrance door between a garage and the house should be a metal or solid core wooden door with a deadbolt lock.

Most garage door locks should be replaced with better grade locks. Adding more locks and other devices will improve security in an important area.





Double garage doors that are side-hinged can be made more secure by installing cane bolts.

If you have an overhead garage door, you can increase security by drilling a hole in one of the tracks and placing a hook or other device in the hole to stop the door from being opened.

Consider installing an electric garage door opener. These are not only convenient, but add a degree of security for the person coming home. When properly locked, they are not easily broken into. The arms and linkage on the door act as a barrier to forced entry.

It's best to purchase a dual frequency remote garage door opener and a worm drill or locking chain mechanism. Garage door openers may open "on their own" from a stray signal. Buy a unit that filters unwanted signals, and disconnect the power to the opener when away from home for a period of time.

Burglars in your garage can get to tools and ladders and can often work on your home undetected. Consider adding the garage to your alarm system.

Lighting

Security lights are one of the most practical ways to prevent crime around your home or office. Statistics prove that criminals look for areas that are dark or have very little lighting; they don't want to be seen for obvious reasons. Lighting for security is inexpensive, but it should not be the only security device used.

Outdoor security lights should be directed downward and shielded. Medium intensity lighting is best for outdoor vision, but avoid lights with glare to be able to see objects clearly. If people can describe a burglar well, it will be a great help to police.

It is important to position your security lights out of arm's reach so that they cannot be destroyed by intruders. Remember, the best position is a downward position, so mount them as high as possible on your house to keep them safe and reliable.

Halogen or incandescent lights are good choices for motion detectors. Motion detector lighting does just that; when motion is detected, the lights come on. There's a wide range of lights and detection paths (how far the detection sensors reach), so ask a lighting expert before choosing.

Additionally, motion detector lights are safety features for people arriving home after dark.

Since burglars avoid being seen, constant lighting is always a good choice. Fluorescent and compact fluorescent lighting cost much less to use because they use less energy. This makes them ideal for constant lighting.

The best security for indoor lighting is to use timing equipment so the lights can come on and off at random times when you are away. (Timers can also make radios or TV sets provide noise in an empty home.) Leaving lights on all the time, leaving the porch light on all day and night, or leaving the house dark are all signs that nobody's home.

Remember that at night, people and things inside a bright room are easy to see from the outside. When you are in that room, it's almost impossible to see anything outside. Keep curtains and blinds closed enough so the lights show through but people cannot look in. They will know there are lights inside, but they won't be able to tell if the house is empty.

Home Security Checklist

OUTSIDE:

- ❑ Do doors have deadbolt locks?
- ❑ Are doors (especially exterior) solid core?
- ❑ Do doors fit their frames snugly?
- ❑ Do strike plates and hinges have extra long screws holding them to the wall stud?
- ❑ Are house and garage doors locked when you are in the back yard?
- ❑ Are extra keys with the neighbor instead of hidden near your doors?
- ❑ Does a neighbor watch your home and get your mail when you're on vacation?
- ❑ Do your windows lock, and do you lock them?
- ❑ Are screens and storm windows attached to the frame or building?
- ❑ Do you put tools and ladders away, so burglars cannot use them to break in?
- ❑ Are there lights around the exterior of the house, the garage and in dark areas?
- ❑ Are locks changed immediately if keys are lost or stolen?
- ❑ Do you report all suspicious activity to 9-1-1?

INSIDE:

- ❑ Are lights on a timer when you leave? Does the radio or TV play while you are gone?
- ❑ Have you engraved or marked valuables with your driver's license number?
- ❑ Is there a list of serial numbers handy, one that burglars won't find and take?
- ❑ If there is an alarm system, is it used and does everyone at home know the code?
- ❑ Are your doors locked even when you are at home?
- ❑ Do you check to see who is at the door before opening it?

VACATION:

- ❑ Do you ask a neighbor to use your driveway and change the drapes?
- ❑ Do you ask someone to stay at your house?
- ❑ Do you give a neighbor a key?
- ❑ Do you cancel deliveries or ask a neighbor to get them?
- ❑ Is there a timer for exterior and interior lights? Is it set to random times?
- ❑ Are ladders and other tools locked away?

APARTMENT:

- ❑ Do you report suspicious people and activities to the manager and the police?
- ❑ Do you send unknown persons to the manager if they are looking for someone?
- ❑ Do you let the manager know you will be on vacation and ask for apartment checks?
- ❑ Do you store valuable property away from your apartment?
- ❑ Do you have renters' insurance?

Alarms

In addition to strong doors and good locks for doors and windows, an alarm system can be another way to deter burglars. It is a known fact that burglars avoid lights, noise, and being seen. They also know that people sometimes put "property protected by alarm" signs in their yard when there is actually no alarm system at all.

Alarm systems come in a wide range of choices. The simplest form might be the inexpensive, self-contained units designed for a single door or window. They alert someone who is at home.

For whole-house alarm systems, choices include silent or audible alarms.

Silent alarms "ring" into a central monitoring station. The monitoring station calls the home or business to see if it's a false alarm or real emergency, then calls 9-1-1 if needed. There's usually a secret number you give to the alarm company to prove you are not an intruder.

An audible alarm sets off bells, horns, or sirens inside and/or outside the home. The idea is to alert neighbors that there's an intruder and to make the burglar leave so he doesn't get caught. This alarm may also "ring" at a central monitoring station. NOTE: Check local laws with police; exterior audible alarms may not be allowed.

To protect the outside border of the house, wire or tape is attached to windows and doors. With the system armed, the alarm will go off if someone enters, breaking the wire or tape.

To protect the inside of the house, motion detectors and other sensors are alerted when there is movement. Pets, curtains at open windows, and helium balloons, can cause false alarms. False alarms waste valuable time and keep police from real emergencies. Across the nation, 95% of alarms are false.

A panic button can be part of the alarm system. If pressed, the monitoring station will get the alert. They will contact 9-1-1 to respond.

Alarms

An ideal alarm system includes:

- Central station monitoring including interior audible alarms
- Sensors on outside doors and windows where someone might enter the home
- Sensors protecting the inside areas of the home
- Stationary or remote 'panic buttons'
- Fire and smoke alarms

Questions to ask an alarm company salesperson:

1. Is the firm established, with a history of performance and service?
2. Does the alarm company have insurance to cover the cost of any damage to my property caused by the company during installation of the system?
3. Are the company and the installers properly licensed and bonded? Is anything subcontracted (installation, service, or monitoring)?
4. Is the alarm company a member of a burglary and fire alarm association?
5. Will they provide a list of references—customers who are satisfied?
6. Is the system equipped with battery back-up? Is the battery rechargeable?
7. Does the company offer written contract and written guarantee? What is guaranteed and for how long? Are parts and labor covered?
8. What is the length of the contract and can I change my mind once I sign it?
9. Explain the exact procedure that happens when my alarm goes off when 1) I am at home and 2) when nobody is at home.
10. What happens during a power outage?
11. How many alternate names or numbers can I give the monitoring company to call if they cannot reach me?

Your city may have an ordinance that alarm systems have to be registered. The alarm company should know if they do and should offer the forms to you. Call your police agency to make sure. Ask if they charge fines for false alarms.

Personal Safety for Children

For the safety and well-being of children, parents have to "be the boss" even if it feels bad to be unpopular once in awhile. Make rules and decisions based on knowledge gained over the years, rather than let inexperienced children decide what to do.

- ❑ Keep children in the back seat of cars if they are 13 and under.
- ❑ Don't leave children unattended, even for a minute.
- ❑ Use car seats and then booster seats until children reach the weight limits.
- ❑ Check background and references of babysitters thoroughly.
- ❑ Talk about sexual assault so they will know it's okay to talk to you.
- ❑ Play the "what if?" game often with children, learn how they think.
- ❑ Find a safe neighbor and talk to the them (with your child present) about what it means to be a safe neighbor.
- ❑ Ask "Who will be there, will there be adults? What will you be doing?" Then check for yourself!

TEACH CHILDREN

- ❑ The rule: "Don't do *anything* without asking your grownups"
- ❑ To know the list of emergency names and numbers by the phone.
- ❑ To never open the door when grownups are not at home.
- ❑ What to say if they answer the phone at any time (alone or not).
- ❑ What to do if lost in a store, the mall, the park, or on the street.
- ❑ What to say to 9-1-1 (practice only on a toy phone).
- ❑ To tell parents even if told to keep a secret and threatened.
- ❑ Their first and last names and their parents' first and last names.
- ❑ Their 10 digit phone number (and practice it often).
- ❑ How to watch for and tell you about suspicious actions.
- ❑ That it's okay to yell and fight if someone grabs them—practice!
- ❑ To fasten helmets tightly and to obey the rule, "no helmet, no bike".
- ❑ To never run across streets or ride any wheels across streets.
- ❑ Home and fire safety, how to escape danger, who to call for help.
- ❑ How to swim, stay afloat, and not panic, and to wear life jackets.
- ❑ To always tell you if something doesn't feel right to them.

Personal Safety for Adults

The number one tool for staying safe is to BE AWARE. This applies when you are out in the public, driving a car, in your home, talking on the phone, using the internet, buying something or signing a contract.

- ❑ Pay attention to your instincts and don't hesitate to react.
- ❑ Look around and walk confidently so you don't look like a victim.
- ❑ Have keys ready as you walk to your car or house.
- ❑ Avoid going places alone, especially in dark or secluded areas.
- ❑ If you are followed on foot or in the car, get to a safe place right away where there are people around.
- ❑ If you want to carry a weapon, get training, learn the laws, and practice often.
- ❑ If you want to carry pepper spray, buy two and practice. Replace it regularly.
- ❑ Keep car doors and house doors locked at all times—even when you are inside.
- ❑ Be wary of strangers approaching you for help in parking lots.
- ❑ Make eye contact with people. It makes you less like a victim.
- ❑ Know your natural weapons: voice, teeth, fingernails, feet, and head.
- ❑ Know how to use them: yell, bite, pinch, stomp, kick, poke and dig into skin.
- ❑ Know your handy weapons: keys, ink pens, bags, backpacks, purses.
- ❑ Know vulnerable areas to attack: eyes, shins, feet, ears, hair, tender skin, and nose.
- ❑ If asked, never give personal or account information over the phone or Internet.
- ❑ Never enter a home that may have been broken into. Call 9-1-1 from a neighbor's phone.
- ❑ Walk facing traffic so you can see cars approaching.
- ❑ Never assume you are safe in a crosswalk. Walk—and look—all the way across.
- ❑ Be alert at ATM machines, demand that people stay back from you.
- ❑ Call 9-1-1 immediately for lost or stolen identification, checks, mail or credit cards.
- ❑ Check your credit record at least once a year, and correct errors right away.
- ❑ Avoid unlit parking areas and always check inside your car before opening it.
- ❑ Avoid leaving purses and backpacks unattended, even for a short time.
- ❑ Make copies of cards in your wallet, front and back, and keep stored in a safe place.
- ❑ Don't overload yourself with bags and packages leaving a store.

Fire Safety for Everyone

- ❑ Have a smoke detector on every level of the house, and in or near sleep areas.
- ❑ The life span of a smoke detector is about 10 years; mark the date of purchase.
- ❑ Change batteries twice a year, when you change clocks for daylight savings.
- ❑ Test the smoke detector once a month, vacuum the dust from it once a year.
- ❑ Do not remove batteries because it keeps going off. Move it to a different place.
- ❑ Test smoke detectors with children, let them learn the sound because many children sleep through the noise.
- ❑ Always keep bedroom doors shut at night, so test the alarm that way.
- ❑ Make sure children know to leave RIGHT AWAY when they hear that sound.
- ❑ Show them to check the door for heat and what other way to leave if the door is hot.
- ❑ Teach them to crawl if there is any smoke and to stop, drop, and roll if they catch fire.
- ❑ When you are together, draw a floor plan of the house and make an escape plan.
- ❑ Let your children help design floor plan, the escape routes and the meeting place.
- ❑ Choose a meeting place outside of the house like near a tree or a neighbor's house.
- ❑ If you don't practice, how can you be sure everyone will remember what to do?
- ❑ NEVER go back into a burning building, even if your pet is inside.
- ❑ Have at least one collapsible ladder if you have a two-story house.
- ❑ Don't burn papers or trash in the fireplace.
- ❑ Make sure ashes are cold before removing from fireplace.
- ❑ Keep space heaters at least 3 feet from anything that will burn.
- ❑ Don't burn candles in the bedroom.
- ❑ In a public building always look for the exit signs.
- ❑ When cooking, turn pot handles so that they are out of reach of children.
- ❑ Never store or use gasoline inside a house or garage.
- ❑ Have several fire extinguishers in the house and garage, check the gauges often.
- ❑ Keep an all-purpose extinguisher in the kitchen to use on grease and electrical fires.

Identity Theft

Some steps to avoid identity theft:

- Don't give your Social Security number, mother's maiden name, or account numbers to strangers who contact you by phone, Internet, or mail.
- Remember, banks and lending institutions won't ask you for account numbers or personal information; they have them already.
- Don't leave outgoing mail in your mailbox and remove mail right after it's delivered. Pick up new boxes of checks at the bank. Stop mail during vacations.
- Know when your bills arrive each month. Thieves will change the address on your mail so you can't see their charges. Call the creditor as soon as your bill is late.
- Always have virus protection on your computer and keep it up to date.
- Don't click on an email link (to go to another site). Always type it into the address bar above.
- Don't carry cards you don't need. Debit and credit cards are as risky as carrying cash now. You may not know cards are missing if you don't use them much.
- Cut or shred unwanted documents: charge receipts, copies of credit applications, physician statements, bank checks and statements, and credit offers.
- Order a copy of your credit report at least once a year from each of the three major consumer reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion). The law allows one free copy a year. If the reports are not accurate contact the bureau immediately to dispute the claim. You may request to "opt out" of pre-approved lists sold to other companies.
- If you request a free report from one bureau every 4 months, you can check your credit report 3 times a year.

What if you become a victim of identity theft?

Keep a log of every transaction and action. Get organized; it can be overwhelming and confusing. Document everything: correspondence, phone calls, names and dates.

Report identity theft to the police. This crime is a felony. Ask the police to take a report and give you the case number. You will need it to correct your credit rating.

Report identity theft to your bank and to everyone who sends you bills regularly.

Call the credit reporting agencies. Get a "fraud alert" on your file with a "victim statement" asking creditors to contact you before opening an account in your name.

Ask businesses for information about transactions made in your name. They may ask you for proof of your identity, a copy of the police report and your fingerprints.

Contact the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) identity theft hotline or visit their website. The FTC provides information and a uniform ID Theft Affidavit that is accepted by many businesses.

Disaster Preparedness

Check with your local fire department to learn all the classes and training they offer in first aid, CPR, fire suppression, and disaster preparedness.

C.E.R.T. (Community Emergency Response Team) is extensive training for citizens on disaster preparedness for the neighborhood. Some of the subjects include:

- Disaster first aid
- How to triage & set up medical areas,
- How to fight fires and turn off gas lines
- How to inspect buildings and mark them after inspecting

Trainings are usually free. People learn how to help themselves and their neighbors during a disaster, which may keep police, fire and medical help away for days or weeks.

The first step is making sure that your family is safe and you have what you need to stay safe and healthy for the duration and aftermath of a disaster.

Supplies must be ready because you usually don't get much warning or time to gather and pack supplies. If you wait, you may not find much in the stores after everyone else scrambles for food, medical supplies, batteries, and water.

Make it a family activity to get emergency supplies together. Children can rotate supplies to keep water, batteries and food fresh. You should practice fire escape plans and disaster evacuation plans a couple of times a year. That way, if the "real" thing happens, your family will be calm and levelheaded when everyone else is in a panic.

Use old suitcases to pack disaster clothing and personal items; they are easy to grab in a hurry. Ask your fire department for a list of items needed for disaster kits.

Individuals with disabilities need to plan for special needs. For example, they should have a pair of work gloves attached to the underside of their wheelchair in case they have to roll through debris, broken glass, etc.

Don't forget to plan for the supplies your pets will need.

The next page lists some of the major items that every family should have ready.

Disaster Preparedness

Water Supply:

- One gallon per person per day (2 qt. for drinking and 2 qt. for food and sanitation)
- A three-day supply for each person (plan for more water in hot climates)
- Store in plastic containers like soft drink bottles. Avoid containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles

Food Supply

- Three day supply of food that requires no water, refrigeration, or cooking
- Canned meats, fruits, vegetables and juices and high-energy food

First Aid Kit (one for the home, one for the car)

- A variety of bandages; adhesive, sterile pads, gauze, and rolled
- Germicidal hand wipes, waterless hand sanitizer, antiseptic wipes
- Antibacterial ointment, adhesive tape, cold pack, scissors and tweezers
- Non-latex gloves (several pairs), CPR breathing barrier such as a face shield

Non-Prescription Drugs

- Aspirin and non-aspirin pain relievers, laxative, anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid for stomach upset, syrup of Ipecac to induce vomiting
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by Poison Control Center)

Tools and Supplies

- Paper cups, plates, plastic utensils, can opener, utility knife, aluminum foil
- Emergency manual, fire extinguisher, shut off wrench for gas and water
- Flashlight, map of area, battery operated radio and extra batteries
- Tube tent, pliers, tape, compass, matches, and plastic storage containers
- Signal flare, paper and pencil, needles and thread, whistle, plastic sheeting

Sanitation

- Toilet paper, towelettes, soap, liquid detergent, feminine supplies
- Personal hygiene items, garbage bags and ties, plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant and household chlorine bleach

Clothing and Bedding

- Sturdy shoes or boots, rain gear
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Hats and gloves, thermal underwear

VIPS—Volunteers in Police Services

A volunteer in police service is a community member who gives hours of service to a police agency without expecting or receiving any pay. This may include chaplains, reserve officers, persons providing administrative support, interns, youth involved in a Law Enforcement Explorer Post, or persons involved in a VIPS program designed by a police agency.

Becoming a volunteer in police services differs from agency to agency. Most volunteer programs will require a background check. There may be requirements based on your age, your background, and your schedule.

You have the chance to give back to your country, state, and local community through the hours you volunteer. You can learn about the law enforcement system and how it works. You have the chance to enhance local police services through your work, your attitude and your ideas for improving programs.

Call your local police agency to see if they have a volunteer program. Also, visit the website, **www.policevolunteers.org** to find agencies in your area that may offer programs.

- You may have many skills to offer. Do you like to work in an office, work outdoors, can you teach people, do you enjoy being around people?
- Maybe you can learn a new skill or try a new situation. It can offer a change from your daily routine and help you improve certain skills.
- Make sure the volunteer hours aren't more than you can juggle with a busy schedule. It can make you frustrated and the agency may suffer if you can't do what you promised.
- You might find a volunteer activity that will help you achieve other goals for your life, like learning computers or working with children.
- There may be volunteer activities for families to do together. This helps children learn the value of volunteer work. Most adult volunteers were introduced to it as a child and/or watched their parent volunteer.

Resources

National Crime Prevention Council
www.ncpc.org

Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS) Program
www.policevolunteers.org

National Night Out—NATW
www.nationalnightout.org

National Fire Protection Association
www.nfpa.org

FEMA—Federal Emergency Management Agency
www.fema.gov

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for ID theft
www.ftc.gov

Citizen Corps
www.citizencorps.gov

Neighborhood Watch—USA on Watch
www.usaonwatch.org

C.E.R.T.—Community Emergency Response Team
www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/CERT

COPIES OF THIS BOOKLET:
For printed or PDF format versions of this booklet, contact the City of Kent Police Department at **www.kentpoliceceu.com**. Permission is granted to download and copy this booklet. Acknowledgement of the Kent Police Department in Kent, Washington is appreciated.