

Safety tips for everyday living

Home Safety: Preventions to be ahead of the criminal

- How safe is your home? (I.e. Locks, Doors, Lighting, Alarms, Grand kids.)
- Exterior lighting. (Where? motion? working? Used? Great deterrent!)
- Landscape. (Overgrown? Can people see windows, doors? Can you see out? Hiding places.)
- Snow removal? (Are you going away? Does it look like house is being used?)
- Exterior Doors/Locks. (Locks working? Dead bolts? Peep hole? Are Locks being used? **At all times!** Do not make it easy for criminals.)
- Windows. (Locked at night? Open when gone? Valuables in plane site? Curtains closed at night?)
- Interior lighting. (Lights left on at night, while gone, lights on timers when gone for long periods.)
- Address numbers? (Easily visible? Lighted? Reflective? On Mailbox? Great for emergency responders! Can they be seen from the road?)
- Alarms? (Smoke Alarms Working? Carbon Monoxide? House Alarms? Cancellation codes etc., what to do?)
- Strangers. (Avoid letting into house, make phone call for them while they remain outside, call police if they appear suspicious, do not open the door if you can not see the subject. Suspect's of break-ins will ask for directions, or say they are looking for a person or car for sale, or lost dog as a excuse if they get a answer at your door.)
- Neighborhood Watch programs are an excellent deterrent for crime in your area, it helps to bring back the neighboring in your

neighborhood. Neighbors look out for one another by observing and reporting suspicious activity to the police department.

General Safety Tips

- **Vehicle**
 - Car in good working order, plenty of gas? Emergency kit.
 - Make sure you know what to do in case of an accident, have important information available and know how to use it.
 - Do not leave personal Id, Credit cards in vehicle
 - Lock valuable items, packages in trunk out of site
 - Keep car locked at all times, even while driving
 - Park in well lit areas, and approach vehicle with keys in hand, make a fist with your keys, points out in case you need to use them for a weapon.
 - Be aware of your surroundings; look around, suspicious people, cars. Walk out with others.
 - If you feel you are being followed do not drive home, drive to open business, police or fire station, and call 911.
 - Do not pick up hitchhikers, if they need assistance drive ahead and make call. Do not give strangers rides, regardless of their sob story. Tell them you can call police and the police can give them a ride.
 - One of the best safety features for a vehicle is a **cell phone**, even if only used in emergencies. Program #616- 632-6100 in your phone for Kent County dispatch.
 - Let someone know where you are going and what time you will be back.

- **Personal**

- Be aware of your surroundings! (Look around, know who or what is there.) Example? Is there someone standing by your vehicle, or walking behind you, or sitting in their car next to yours.
- **Trust your instincts.** (If it doesn't look right, feel right then it's probably wrong.)
- If you feel these instincts do not ignore them, let someone know, call police and report the situation. (I.e. suspicious subject or vehicle that just doesn't fit the surroundings)
- Walk with a partner or group.
- Keep your purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put your wallet in an inside coat pocket or front pants pocket.
- While shopping keep your purse and valuables protected. (Ideally your purse should be in your possession but if you need to put it down, put it in the bottom of shopping cart with something over it, you can even wrap or tie your straps around something. Make it harder for a criminal to have access to it, keep you coupons in a separate area so you can have access to them without making your wallet and purse vulnerable.
- Criminals often do not work alone. A common practice is for someone to distract you while their partner robs you of your valuables.
- Plan ahead and make a game plan in the event something happens, you will be more likely to do the right thing if you have already thought about it.