

General Safety tips *for you and your family*



OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE
SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA

Working together for a safer community
La sécurité de notre communauté, un travail d'équipe

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Introduction

Anyone can become a victim of a break and enter, property theft, or personal assault, but since criminals are looking for easy targets such as an open window or an unlocked car, reducing these opportunities really does prevent crime. This booklet contains simple, common sense tips on how to reduce your risk of becoming a victim of a crime.

If you are alert to your surroundings, you can often identify a potential assailant simply by paying attention to the people around you. As you increase your own awareness, and help others to become more responsible for their own safety by putting the practical information in this booklet to use, you will be working in partnership with the Ottawa Police Service to prevent crime—Partnership in Action.

Additional copies are available at all Police buildings and sites as well as on our Web site at www.ottawapolice.ca.

This booklet is meant to accompany the Community Safety Plan presentation by Ottawa Police Service Neighbourhood Officers.

The presentation is specifically designed to be delivered to community members and groups. You can contact your local Community Police Centre to make arrangements. A full list of Community Police Centres is available on our Web site and in the Red Pages of your telephone book.

Protect yourself

- Try not to walk alone at night but if you do, be alert and avoid dark or isolated areas. Instead, walk out in the open, away from walls, alleys, doorways, and pillars.
- Whether you are walking or driving, determine the safest route before you leave. Take the longest route if that is the safest.
- Tell friends or family members where you're going, and then let them know when you reach your destination.
- Have your key ready as you approach your house or vehicle.
- Don't enter environments where you feel unsafe. Trust your instincts.
- Know your physical capabilities and limitations.
- Don't carry offensive weapons such as knives. They may be used against you.

If you suspect you are being followed

- Cross the street or walk on the side of the road.
- Go immediately to the nearest well-lit or populated area.
- If others are within hearing distance, turn to the person following you and say in a loud and assertive voice: "Stop following me!"
- Contact Police immediately—go to a house or a store and call the Police or flag down a taxi and ask the driver to call the Police for you.
- If the person following you is driving a car, take out a pen and paper, look at the licence plate and write the number down, making sure that the driver sees you do this.

If you are attacked

- Try to remember the complexion, body build, height, weight, age, and type of clothing worn by the attacker. If possible, write down the information while it is still fresh in your memory.
- If an attacker is after your purse or other valuables, don't resist. If you have the opportunity, throw your purse away from you to distance the attacker from you.

Protect yourself in your vehicle

- NEVER pick up hitchhikers or stop to offer help to unknown, stranded motorists. If you see such a motorist in distress, report the location to the Police from the nearest telephone.
- If you have car trouble on the highway, raise the hood—this will bring official assistance such as the Police or towing company. If a stranger stops to assist you, use caution. If you are concerned, get back in the car. Speak through a slightly lowered window and ask the person to get assistance for you.
- Don't travel with less than half a tank of gasoline and make sure your car is in good working order to avoid being stranded in an unsafe place.
- Always lock your car when you leave it.
- Always have your keys ready as you approach your vehicle.
- Before entering your vehicle, always look inside first.
- Always try to park in a well-lit location.

Protect your children

- Never leave your child alone in a public place, whether in a stroller or a car.
- Always accompany your child to the bathroom in a public place.
- Get to know babysitters and your child's older friends before leaving them alone with your child.
- Make a list of emergency telephone numbers. Place the list where it is easily accessible to the entire family, preferably near the telephone.
- Prepare a written emergency safety plan and ensure that all family members understand it by practicing the plan from time to time. Once a month, check that safety equipment such as fire extinguishers and alarms are working.



Teach your children

- to recite their own name, age, telephone number, area code, address, city and province.
- to carry identification.
- how to phone long distance by dialing direct or with operator assistance.
- how to reach you in an emergency.
- how to reach the Police, Fire department, ambulance, family doctor, relatives, and neighbours.
- to tell you where they will be at all times.
- never to say they are alone if they answer the phone or door.
- never to invite strangers into your home.
- not to enter anyone's home without permission.
- not to accept gifts from strangers.
- NEVER to hitchhike, and never to approach or enter a stranger's car.
- that they have permission to say "NO" to an adult.
- to say loudly to a stranger, "You are not my mother or my father."
- that no one has the right to touch any part of their body that a bathing suit would cover.
- to tell you if someone has asked them to keep a secret from you.
- never to play in deserted buildings or isolated areas, or take shortcuts through empty parks or fields.
- to tell you, school authorities or a Police Officer, if anyone exposes their private parts to them.
- to view Police Officers as friends they can rely on if they are in trouble.
- that they can talk to you and that you are interested and sensitive to their fears.
- about the Block Parent Program and logo.



Protect your home

- Install good locks on doors and windows. Keep doors locked at all times, even when you are at home.
- Ensure you have a door viewer on solid doors, as well as a safety chain.
- Leave exterior lights on to deter potential intruders. While you're away from home, leave at least two interior lights on, preferably on timers.
- If you return home and suspect someone is in your home, don't enter or call out. Phone the Police immediately.
- Don't leave keys in obvious places. Criminals know more hiding spots than you do.
- Use first initials only on mail boxes, apartment directories or the phone book.
- Get to know who your neighbours are and what their vehicles look like so you'll know who belongs on your street and who could be a suspicious person.
- Ask a neighbour to look after your property when you are away for extended periods of time and offer to do the same for them.
- Become an active member of a local crime prevention or safety promotion organization such as Neighbourhood Watch or Block Parents. Check in with your senior neighbours from time to time and volunteer to accompany them on outings where they may feel unsafe.
- Be very selective about admitting any strangers into your home. Ask for identification from delivery, repair, and service people—even Police Officers.
- Before you answer the door, PLEASE consider the following questions. If any of them cannot be answered satisfactorily, advise the person that you are expecting company and ask them to leave.
- Do you recognize this individual?
- Are you expecting anyone today?
- Does this person fit the image of the company they say they represent?
- Does this person have valid identification?

- Ask for a supervisor's phone number. Can this person recite the phone number immediately?
- Is this person at your door during normal business hours?
- Does this person appear to be nervous about being seen by people passing by?

*Remember to report crimes or suspicious activities in your neighbourhood to Police.
We need your help to build a safer community.*

Make the Right Call!

Life-threatening emergency
or crime in progress: 9-1-1

Other emergencies: . . . 230-6211, TTY 232-1123

Community Police Centres
and all other enquiries: 236-1222

Stop crime in its tracks! Help Crime Stoppers gather clues that the Police need to solve major crimes. If you have knowledge or clues about a crime, call:

233-TIPS or 1-800-222-TIPS

