

WORKING TOGETHER FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES



Safe Communities Kit

**BE SAFE**



## Welcome to the Safe Communities Kit

The *Be Safe* guide forms part of a series of booklets published for inclusion in British Columbia's Safe Communities Kit. The Safe Communities Kit was developed to assist communities and individuals in preventing crime and enhancing safety across British Columbia.

Other Safe Communities Kit booklets include:

- ***An Overview of Crime Prevention and Community Safety Planning***
- ***Identifying Your Community's Crime Problem: A Guide to Needs Assessment***
- ***Getting Your Crime Prevention Strategies Underway: Project Planning Guide***
- ***Splash and Ripple: Using Outcomes to Design and Guide Community Justice Work***
- ***Working with the Media***

All of these booklets are available on the Safe Communities Kit CD-ROM and can be downloaded from the Communities Programs Division website at [www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/community\\_programs](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/community_programs).

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## Working Together For SAFE COMMUNITIES

**B.C.’s Provincial Safe Communities Working Group provided the expertise and advice needed to prepare this kit. The working group includes representatives from:**

- B.C. Block Parent Society
- B.C. Block Watch
- B.C. Coalition for Safer Communities
- B.C. Crime Prevention Association
- B.C. Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police
- B.C. Youth Police Network
- Children of the Street Society
- Community Programs Division, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- B.C. Crime Stoppers
- B.C. Safe Schools and Communities Centre
- National Crime Prevention Centre
- RCMP “E” Division
- Union of B.C. Municipalities

# 1. PERSONAL SAFETY

**When** out, stay alert, stand tall and act confident; most would-be criminals will decide you're the wrong person to approach. If you feel uneasy walking alone, walk with someone or carry a whistle or other personal safety alarm. At night, use well-lit busy streets, and keep to the middle of the sidewalk.

**If** you carry a purse, hold it close to your body with one hand over the opening. Better yet, use a waist/fanny pack. Your wallet is safer in a front or inside pocket than in a back pocket. Keep your house keys in your pocket, not in a backpack or purse.

**Avoid** carrying large amounts of cash. If you must carry cash, be discreet when you make purchases.

**Always** watch for public phones or places where you can get help on your route. Free emergency assistance is always available by dialing "0". Have your key ready when approaching your home or car.

**Vary** your daily routine to avoid establishing predictable patterns that could place you at risk.

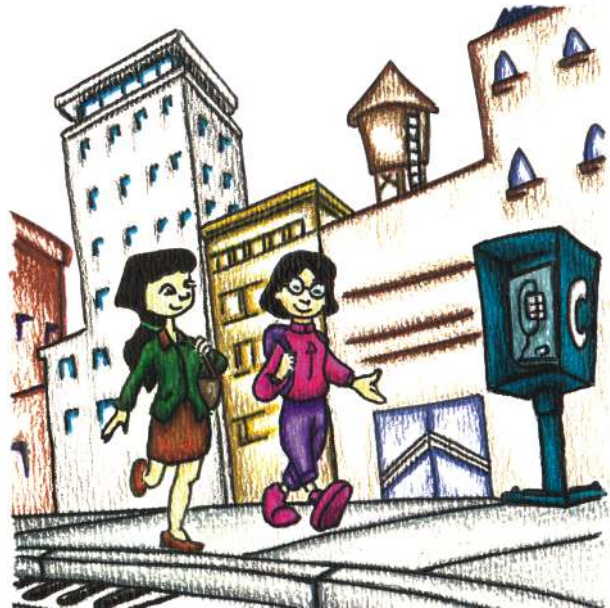
## Running, Walking, Rollerblading

**Personal** stereos with headphones make it harder to hear an approaching person or vehicle. Make sure you are facing the flow of traffic so you can see oncoming cars.

## Travelling By Car

**Park** in open, well-lit areas. Visually check your car's interior before getting in.

**Make** sure your children are in the right type of child restraint and that all vehicle occupants are



wearing their seat belts.

**Lock** all doors whether you are inside or outside your vehicle. Don't pick up hitchhikers.

**Make** sure your car is in good repair, have enough gas to reach your destination and know your route. Store a flashlight or flare in your car. If you are stopped by mechanical problems and someone offers to help, have them call for assistance. Stay in your car, and don't accept a ride.



## Using Public Transit

**Plan** your route and know the transit schedule before you leave home. Choose busy, well-lit bus stops after dark.

**When** travelling by bus late at night, ask to be let off closer to your street or door.

**At** night, sit near the driver on empty buses. On SkyTrain, scan the train interior before boarding to ensure you feel comfortable and that there are other passengers on board. Choose a seat near the middle of the train. If someone bothers you or you feel threatened, move to another seat and notify someone as soon as possible.



**If** you are travelling alone, ask for a room beside the manager's unit or on the second floor or higher. Keep your hotel door and windows locked at all times. Ask the hotel not to give out your name or room number.

## Travelling By Taxi

**Make** sure the taxi that arrives is the one you ordered. If you have any doubts about your safety, don't get in. If you feel uneasy once you are under way, ask to be let out in a well-lit, public place.



**Look** through the peephole before answering the door. If you're the least bit suspicious, keep the door closed and check with the front desk.

**Don't** leave valuables, especially cash, passports, traveller's cheques, airline tickets, or credit cards, in your hotel room. Keep them in the hotel or room safe-deposit box, or take them with you.

**When** walking in unfamiliar areas, ask hotel staff to recommend the safest route. Carry as little cash as possible. Use traveller's cheques and credit cards and keep a record of their numbers in a separate and safe place.

**Use** a business or friend's address on your luggage tags so you don't alert potential thieves that you are away.

## Travelling Out Of Town

**Make** reservations so you know you'll have a place to stay.

## While You're Away

**Use** lights and sound to make it appear as though someone is home. Place light timers in the living room and at least one bedroom. Set them to come on after



dark, and to turn off around the time you would normally go to bed. Use a timer to turn on the TV or radio. This works especially well during the day, when most “break and enters” occur.

**Double-check** all windows and doors to make sure they’re locked. Suspend newspaper and mail deliveries, or have someone reliable collect your mail each day. Arrange to have your yard maintained if you’re planning an extended trip.

**Give** a neighbour, relative or friend your house key, itinerary, and phone numbers where you can be reached. If they can, ask them to check your home periodically.

## If You Find Yourself At Risk

**Trust** your instincts. If you think you are being followed, either on foot or in your vehicle, or if you feel at risk in any way, go to the nearest safe or public place for help.

**If** verbally harassed, don’t respond, just keep moving. The best way to draw attention is to scream. If someone demands your money or valuables, let them have them.

**If** someone has broken into your home, do not go inside. Call police from a safe location. If you are at home and suspect a thief is in your house, get out if you

can and call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number. If you cannot get out, phone for help as soon as you can do so safely.

## Helping Others

**Make** sure your behaviour is non-threatening to others. If you’re walking in the same direction as a person on their own, don’t walk behind them. Cross the road and walk on the other side. When using public transit, don’t sit too close to someone who’s alone.

## Safe At Home

**Get** into the habit of keeping doors and windows locked, even when you’re at home. When moving into a new home, install new locks or rekey the old ones.

**Use** only your first initials with your surname in the phone book, on your mailbox, or on your apartment directory.

**Keep** a list of emergency numbers near the phone. You’ll find a handy place to list them on page 25.

**Get** to know your neighbours. They can help make your community a safe, friendly place. We’ve included a Neighbourhood Tree on pages 26-27 to help you get started.





## Answering The Door

**Before** opening your door, use a peephole or intercom to verify who is there. If you're in a wheelchair, install peepholes at an accessible level. Don't trust a security chain to protect you if you open the door.

**Be** suspicious of unexpected visits from salespeople or repair companies. It could be a burglar assessing your possessions and security arrangements. Ask for identification. Once you have seen it, ask for secondary identification such as a telephone number that you can call to verify the person's status.

**If** a stranger needs to use your phone, you can help out without letting them into your home. Make the call for them while they remain outside. Make it clear you're not alone, even if you are. Call out to "someone" in another room.

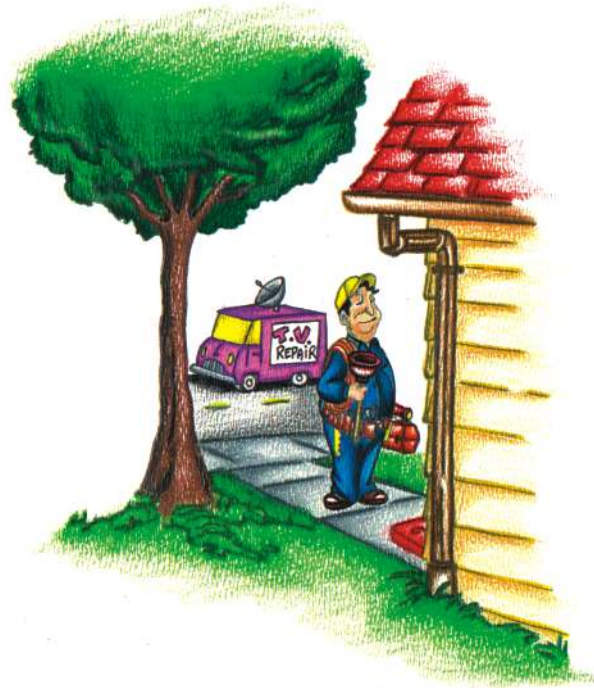
**Trust** your instincts. If you don't feel right about opening the door for any reason, don't!

## If You Live In An Apartment

**Don't** let people into the building or "buzz-them-up" unless you know who they are. If someone wants to enter the building, refer them to the manager. If you have food or products delivered, pick them up at the building's front door if possible. Check with your building manager before changing the locks on your apartment door.

## Answering The Phone

**Information** is a powerful tool for criminals, and the telephone can be an easy, anonymous way for them to gather it.



**Never** give out personal or family information over the phone. Make sure children know how to answer the phone without providing information. Practise with them.

**Don't** answer questions about your belongings, credit card numbers, bank accounts, or Social Insurance Number. You are never required to participate in phone surveys or answer questions over the phone.

**Give** as little information as possible when recording a message on your answering machine. Don't reveal your name, when you plan to return home, and don't say you're not at home. Don't broadcast the fact that you live alone – leave an answering machine message that says "we" can't take your call.

## Abusive Or Obscene Phone Calls

**The** best way to deal with an abusive or obscene phone call is simply to hang up. If the calls continue, here are simple and effective ways to deal with them:

**Record** the date and time of the call, and then have the call traced by dialing \* 57 (a service provided by BC TEL in most areas of the province) immediately after you hang up. The caller's number, your number and the time of the call are recorded by the phone company. After tracing three calls, contact the local police. Telephone call information will only be released to the police.

**Ask** your phone company about services like call name and number display and \*69 call return, which can also help you identify the caller.

## Safety In Personal Relationships

**Abuse** can be physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or verbal. Any type of abuse is harmful



but some, like assault, are crimes; even when committed by a family member or someone you know.

**If** you are assaulted, get help immediately. Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number or go directly to the police or hospital.

**If** you are concerned about your safety or if you have been a victim of an assault or any other crime, you can call the Victim Information Line at 1-800-563-0808 for information about help available in your community.

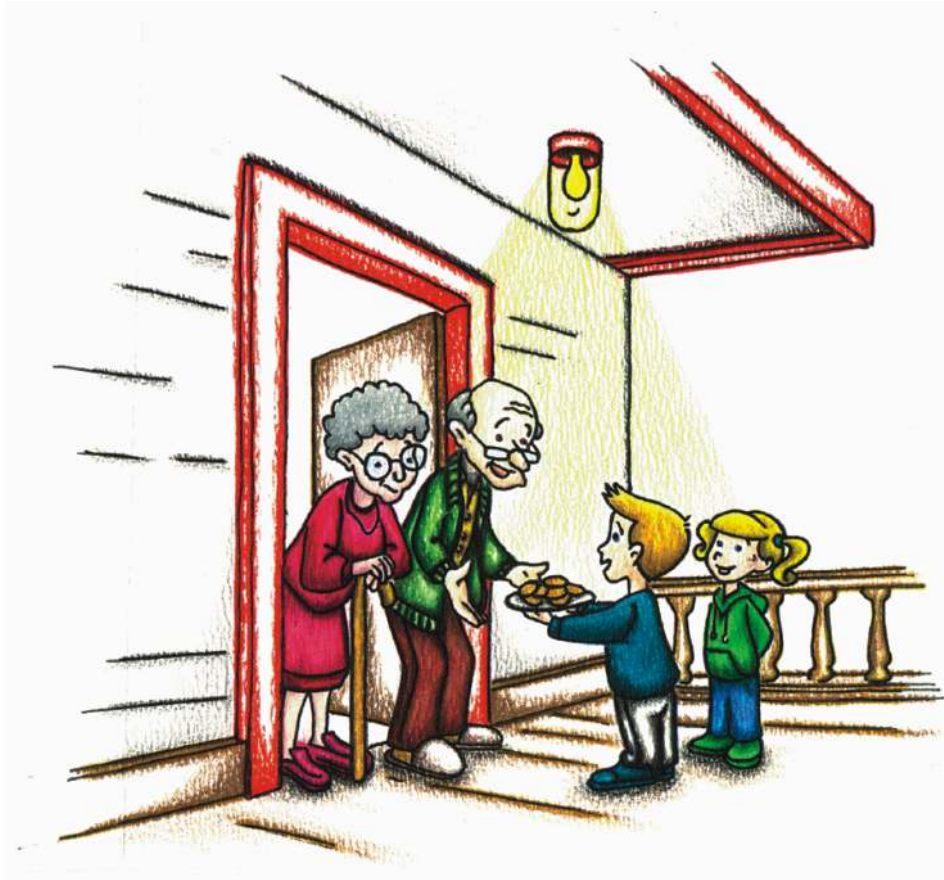
## Violence Against Women

**Violence** against women in relationships is not a private, family matter.

**Assault** and stalking are crimes. If you are being assaulted or harassed call the Police.

**To** keep you and your children safe, have a safety plan whether you've decided to leave or stay in your relationship.





**Memorize** the telephone number of a transition house or safe home for women, and plan where you can or will go if you decide to leave.

## Seniors' Safety

**Seniors** can sometimes feel vulnerable, especially since con artists often target them. If you have elderly neighbours, get to know them and keep an eye out for them. If you see anything that worries you, call the police.

**Never** keep large amounts of money on your person or in your home. It is safer in a bank. Only withdraw enough money to meet your immediate needs. Pay bills with cheques, credit cards or debit cards, or use Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) or telephone banking.

**Lock** up; even if you're at home or just stepping out for a moment. Keep valuables in a safety deposit box.

**Be** particularly wary of anyone offering bargains or prizes over the phone. Many con artists use the phone to reach seniors. If you belong to a senior activity centre or social club, ask them to get the police or other experts to speak to you on crime prevention.



## 2. FAMILY SAFETY

**Help** your children identify threats to their safety. The best protection a child carries is knowledge. Teach children about personal safety. It's their right to feel safe. Make sure they know that:

**They** can tell you anything. Explain that you always want to know what happens to them, especially if someone says it's a secret and that secret makes the child feel unhappy or upset. You will believe them, and you will not be angry.

**Their** body belongs to them. No one, not even a friend or a relative, is allowed to touch their body in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

**It's** OK to say no, even to an adult, about anything they feel threatens their Safety.

**They** must never talk to strangers who approach them. They must ignore a stranger's offer of candy, a gift or a ride. They must not help a stranger look for a lost animal.

**If** they are scared, they should run and get help.

### Child Protection

**It** takes a community to provide a safe place for children to grow. If you suspect a child has been or is being harmed, you are legally obligated to call the Helpline for Children by dialing **310-1234**, from anywhere in the province. Abuse can include physical punishment, deprivation of food, shelter, medical attention or supervision. Children may also be emotionally neglected if they are deprived of attention or affection. You can also get more information through the Victim Information Line **1-800-563-0808**.



### Other Practical Steps:

**Make** sure organizations offering activities to your children thoroughly check staff and volunteers. Show your children the safest route to school, and encourage them to walk with siblings or friends.

**Tell** your children how important it is to stay close to you when you're in public places. Tell them what they should do if you become separated.

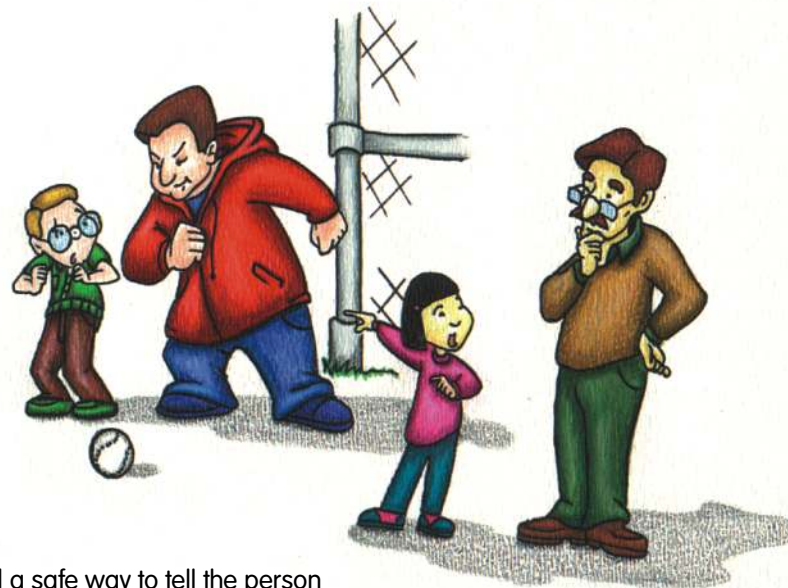
**Teach** them important telephone numbers. Give them opportunities to practise with the phone at home and with pay phones. Give them a code word to use in emergencies.

**Listen** carefully to them. They may be trying to tell you something that is bothering them, or you may see changes in their behaviour.

### Bullies

**Children** who bully are seeking a sense of power, and use intimidation and aggressive behaviour to achieve it. To help your children avoid becoming victims:

**Encourage** them to deal with bullying situations. If



they can, they should find a safe way to tell the person who is bullying them how they feel. If they can't, they should find someone to help them approach and talk to the person.

**Explain** that they should never risk being hurt. If someone wants their money, jacket or bag, they should give it to them. Have them tell someone they trust afterwards, like a teacher or parent.

**Encourage** them to help others who are being bullied by finding a teacher, parent or youth worker and letting them know about the situation. If your child is being bullied, alert their school to the problem.

safety by choosing the right babysitter. Ask your neighbours to recommend someone they've used. Get to know the babysitter in advance. Make sure the babysitter gets along with your children.

**Make** a list of instructions for your babysitter to follow. Leave a list of contact and emergency phone numbers with the babysitter. Discourage visits from the babysitter's friends. Check-in with your babysitter.

**Ask** for and listen to your child's comments about the babysitter.

## Choosing A Babysitter

**When** you're away, you can ensure your children's



## Tips For Babysitters

**Consider** taking a babysitter's course, available through school or community groups.

**Let** your family know where you're babysitting, the phone number, and what time you expect to be home. Lock the doors after the parents leave.

**Don't** tell callers you are babysitting. Simply say the parents are not available right now and take a message. Ask for a ride or an escort home after dark.



## Street Wise Youth

**As** children grow older, the challenges they encounter become increasingly complex. Parents can help by continuing to encourage their children to exercise good judgement. You can help young people by encouraging them to read the following safety suggestions, which will help them deal with any new situations they may face.

**Don't** react to violence with more violence. Settle arguments with words, not fists or weapons. Avoid forming an audience when others argue.

**There** are groups of bullies who band together in "wannabe" gangs. Don't draw attention to their actions; that's what they want.

**Refuse** to hang around with friends who plan to steal, vandalize or commit other crimes.

**If** you're in a situation and need advice on how to prevent crime or violence, call the Youth Against Violence Line (anonymously, if it makes you feel safer). You will receive assistance from school liaison or a youth police officer in your community. It's a safe, simple and confidential way to get help and prevent crime.

**Call** the Youth Against Violence Line at **1-800-680-4264** or go to [www.takingastand.com](http://www.takingastand.com) to e-mail the Line.

**If** you become the victim of harassment, violence or theft, or if you're in a situation and you don't know what to do, tell someone who can help or call the Youth Against Violence Line.



**Take** a stand. When you see or hear something you know is wrong, speak up or get help. The less you tolerate violence, the less it will happen.

## Safe Dating

**Learn** how to stop an unwanted sexual advance or any behavior that makes you feel uncomfortable. You have the right to say no. No, means no! No matter what's happened. Be direct and assertive. Let your date know your limits clearly and firmly.

**If** you don't know your date well, stay in public places with other people. Tell a parent or friend where you're going. Be prepared to find your own way home. Carry money for a cab or transit, or call someone for a ride.

**Be** aware that alcohol and drugs reduce your ability to think clearly and make good decisions. Don't accept hurtful behaviour from a boyfriend or girlfriend.

## Youth Action

**One** way that youth can take a stand against violence and crime is by getting a copy of the *Taking a Stand Youth Crime Prevention Kit*. *Taking a Stand* is packed

with information and ideas to help you and your peers take action to prevent crime and violence.

For more information about the *Taking a Stand Kit*, call the *Youth Against Violence Line* at **1-800-680-4264**, or visit the *Taking a Stand* website at [www.takingastand.com](http://www.takingastand.com).





## Children And The Internet

**The** Internet is a wonderful source of information, education and entertainment. It gives children access to a large amount of diverse material, some of which may be inappropriate. Fortunately, there are effective ways to keep this material inaccessible to children.



### Monitor Internet Activity

**One** of the best means of Internet control is diligent monitoring by parents. Sit with your children while they navigate the Internet, see where they go, and point out any material they should avoid. Be frank with children about material that is inappropriate, like pornography, violence and hate literature, and limit the time your children spend on the Net. Here are some other things to consider:

**Choose** an Internet Service Provider that provides information and access to parental control features.

**Install** filtering software. There are two basic types of monitoring software:

**Blocking** software stops children from accessing sites with adult material.

**Filtering** software prevents sites with chosen "keywords" from being accessed. Filtering can also stop children from sending personal information over the Internet.





## Privacy And The Internet

**Make** sure children know they should:

**Never** divulge personal information, including names, addresses, credit card or phone numbers, passwords, or any information someone could use to find out who you are or where you live. Never answer messages or mail that are inappropriate, hostile, or seem scary.

**Let** you know immediately if they find something threatening or frightening on the Internet and that they should never arrange to meet with someone they've met through the Internet, unless you go with them.

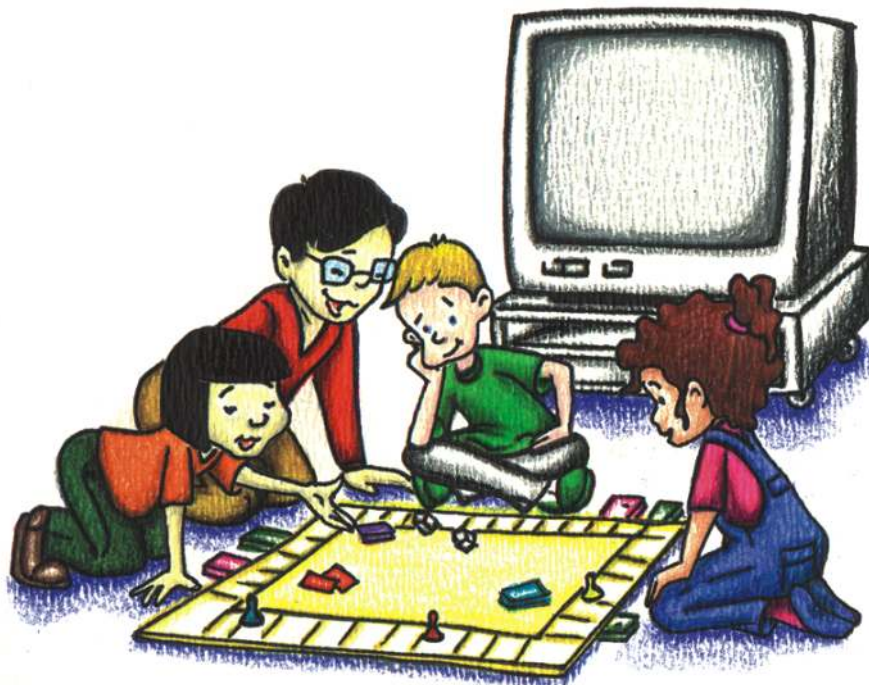
## Safe Television Viewing

**Studies** have shown the environment you provide for your children far outweighs the influence of TV. The following tips will help you make television a positive part of your children's environment:

**Watch** TV with your children and interpret the material for them. Let them know "what is" and "what is not" acceptable to watch.

**Make** sure your children understand the difference between make-believe and reality.

**Reduce** television's influence by encouraging everyone in the family, including adults, to get involved in a diverse range of activities.





### 3. HOME AND POSSESSIONS SAFETY

**Property** crimes account for more than 60% of all crimes. When you take the time to improve the security of your home and belongings, you contribute to the safety of your community.

**Exterior** wood doors should be a minimum of 1 ¾" thick and made from solid or laminated wood. Reinforce your door if necessary and make sure all hinges are on the inside.

**Rather** than leave spare keys under the doormat or outside your home, leave a spare set with a neighbour, friend or relative.

**Cut** back trees and bushes, and keep your house well lit, especially around entrances and the driveway. Keep basement windows in plain view. Put bars on lower level windows, which can be removed in case of fire.

**Install** motion-sensing spotlights on the corners of your home to light large areas.

**Identify** all points of entry into your house and make sure each of them is secure. Keep garage doors locked with a sturdy lock, preferably sliding bolts.

**Replace** the latch on double-hung windows (ones that slide up) with a keyed lock latch. Don't forget to keep the key close by in case of fire.

### Some Other Things To Help You Keep Your Home Safe:

**If** you have "key-in-the-knob" locks on your doors, add a deadbolt or interlocking bolt lock for extra reinforcement. Secure the strike plate that holds the lock in place with 3" to 3 ½" screws. Deadbolt locks work best when they are made of solid metal, have a minimum 1" bolt, contain a cylinder guard, and are installed with hardened steel screws.



**Protect** sliding windows with a metal bar or sturdy stick like a hockey stick cut to fit snugly along the bottom track. Install screws or shims in the upper track of sliding glass doors to prevent the door from being lifted out of its frame. Install a keyed-slide bolt in the bottom track to keep sliding doors from being forced open.







**Automatic** garage door openers allow you to stay in your vehicle until safely inside the garage, and they help to keep intruders out. Treat the clicker/ garage door opener as you would a house key. Take it with you when you leave the vehicle. If you use an automatic garage door opener, make sure the door is completely closed before you drive away.

**Ensure** ladders, garden and other tools are out of sight so they will not be used to break into your home.

## Home Alarm Systems

**Alarm** systems provide an excellent back up to the security methods already mentioned. They discourage thieves, and alert people should a break-in occur.

**If** you install an alarm system, do your part to prevent false alarms. Make sure your alarm system functions properly, and teach everyone in your home how to set and cancel it properly. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Security Programs Division licenses companies to sell and install residential alarms. Make sure your alarm company has this licence.



## Operation Identification

**Operation** Identification makes your valuables a lot less attractive to thieves and helps police identify stolen property. You can start by borrowing an engraver, free-of-charge, from your local police station, and marking all of your valuables with a number that can be easily traced back to you. Police recommend using your driver's licence number.





## Auto Crime

### Protecting your car and its contents

**Cars** and their contents are one of the most common targets for thieves. Auto crime is often a crime of opportunity; if you take away the opportunity, you are more likely to prevent the crime. Reducing your risk can be as easy as locking your doors or taking valuables out of your car when you leave it. Take your garage door opener with you as well.

**Here** are some tips that will help reduce the chances of you having your car or its contents stolen or damaged:

**Take** your possessions with you. This includes loose change, CDs, bags, jackets or anything that might be tempting to a thief.

**Don't** leave your keys in the ignition or keep spare keys in or on your vehicle.

**Always** close and lock all doors, windows and the sunroof before leaving your car.

**Don't** keep tags with your name and address on your key-chain. They may help thieves find your car or your home.

**Wherever** possible, park in a well-lit, supervised lot with restricted entry and exit. Keep your vehicle away from fencing or shrubs that could provide cover for a break-in.

**When** you enter or leave private underground parking through an automatic gate, wait for the gate to close and make sure no one slips in behind you.

**If** you park in a garage, always lock the garage and your vehicle. Report any suspicious persons or activities to police.

### Anti-theft Devices

**Thieves** target vehicles that pose the least amount of hassle. They're not just after new or luxury cars.

**The** best way to ensure you have adequate theft protection is to assess your car's risk of theft. If it has been stolen once, there is a good chance it might be stolen again.





**You** should invest in the highest level of protection you can afford. Take into consideration factors like where you live and where you park for business or pleasure. Protection ranges from steering wheel locking devices to immobilizing systems.

**There** are two types of anti-theft immobilizing systems. A “passive” system sets itself when you turn off the vehicle or lock the doors. You have to set an “active” system. A passive system provides the best protection because you cannot forget to set it.

**Any** alarm system or electronic immobilization unit should be installed professionally to avoid poor performance or electrical or computer damage to your car. It is best to layer your protection by using two or more types of devices.

**Select** anti-theft devices that come with a guarantee and have them installed by a professional who offers a warranty.

## Good Protection

**An** alarm system is designed to discourage thieves from breaking into a vehicle. The flashing warning lamps and audible siren are intended to attract attention. After-market steering wheel locking bars and transmission locks are good visual deterrents. It's best not to rely on this type of protection alone.

## Better Protection

**An** audible alarm system may deter vehicle break-ins, but you will want an alarm with an “engine disable option” to prevent someone from driving away with the vehicle. For maximum protection, choose a system that will prevent the vehicle from starting even if it is damaged or torn from the vehicle.



## Best Protection

**An** electronic immobilization system offers advanced protection through anti-theft features integrated into the engine's electronics. The engine will not start until an electronically coded ignition key is used to start the vehicle. This system will automatically arm itself when you turn the vehicle off.

## Automated Teller Machines (ATMs)

**Treat** an ATM card like cash. When you key in your Personal Identification Number (PIN), don't allow others to see it. Binoculars and hidden cameras have been used to collect PIN codes.

**Keep** your PIN code confidential. Don't write it on your ATM card or on a piece of paper kept in your wallet. Don't use obvious PIN codes like your birthdate or phone number. A thief who steals your wallet and ID could gain access to your bank accounts.

**After** dark, look for well-lit ATMs. If you see anyone or anything suspicious, use a different ATM. When using drive-through ATMs, keep your car doors locked.

## Credit Cards

**Carry** only the credit cards you need. Make a list of all your credit cards and their numbers. Keep this information in a safe place. Destroy unwanted or expired credit cards immediately, and cancel with the issuer.

**Carefully** check your monthly statements to make sure each purchase was made by you. Make certain your card is returned after each purchase. Keep credit cards on your person. Don't leave them in a car, hotel room, or any public place.

**Never** lend a credit card to anyone, and don't give out any information about your cards over the phone or Internet unless you know the request is legitimate. If you notice a credit card missing, report it immediately. The quicker you call, the less time there is for unauthorized use.



## Fighting Fraud

**Con** artists use phones, mail, faxes and the Internet to target people all over the world. Some con artists even prey on people's desires to find miracle cures for chronic conditions and fatal diseases.

**Trust** your instincts. If you feel uneasy or unsure about an offer, simply refuse. It's your right. Get a second opinion.

**Never** give credit card, bank account, Social Insurance Numbers or other confidential information to anyone over the phone, unless you are absolutely sure of their honesty. If an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If you've won a prize, you should never have to pay for it, buy anything or pay for delivery.



**Only** pay for services you have received. If you are asked to make a down payment or deposit, 10% should be enough. Before you make any commitments, tell the person you will call them back. Once you hang up, check with the Better Business Bureau, consumer services office or police.

## Home Repair Fraud

**A** door-to-door contractor or contractors who are just in the neighbourhood may claim your house needs repairs to prevent extensive damage. Be wary of quick estimates or anyone who offers to perform work you never requested.

**Never** deal with anyone who will not provide local references, asks for money before starting the work or wants to use special materials.

**If** you think you need repair work done, get detailed estimates from at least three contractors, and make sure the written contract includes all the verbal promises made by the seller.

**Before** you sign a contract or pay any money, make sure you fully understand the terms. If you are at all concerned, contact the Better Business Bureau or your local consumer services office.

**Contractors** who sell door to door must be licensed. Ask for their business card, a copy of their registration and check their references. All contracts must include a seven-day cancellation clause. You do not have to give a reason for cancelling.

## Confidence Games

**Be** aware of confidence scams where someone tries to earn your trust, and asks you to perform what seems like a noble task. Alert the Better Business Bureau or the police if you are suspicious, or if you think you have been defrauded.

**The** Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Consumer Services Division provides advice and assistance for resolving consumer problems. Knowledge is powerful protection against fraud and deception. Look under consumer services/ consumer protection in the blue pages of your phone book, or visit the Ministry's website at [www.pssg.gov.bc.ca](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca) for more information.



## 4. COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Prevention** is the most powerful tool in the fight against crime and becomes even more effective when people in the community work together. Your efforts can help create a stronger sense of community and build a neighbourhood that's pleasant and safe to live in. You'll get to meet your neighbours, discuss concerns about your neighbourhood, and help guide your community towards a better future.



**Getting Started:** Begin with the suggestions listed below, or find out about existing programs in your area and get involved. To find out more, contact your local police, community centre, neighbourhood house, community crime prevention office or Block Watch/Block Parent program. If you have an idea for a program that isn't available, contact your neighbours or the police, and start your own. A safe community is everyone's right, and responsibility.

**Individuals:** Begin with your own household, and follow the guidelines in this book to help keep you, your family, and your home protected. Try organizing a neighbourhood gathering like a block party and bring along your Neighbourhood Tree (pages 26-27), to complete. You can make your community stronger by volunteering at a food bank or community centre.

**Schools:** Start a peer mediation program, a buddy program, or a bullying prevention program. Sponsor a

contest that involves crime prevention messages. For more information, contact the BC Safe Schools and Communities Centre at 1-888-224-SAFE (7233).

**Groups:** Your group can play a role in community crime prevention. Ideas include helping seniors perform home safety audits, hosting talks featuring crime prevention specialists, and initiating a program to help children get to and from school safely. Your club can also volunteer to coach youth teams or visit seniors.

**Communities:** Make crime prevention a priority in your community plan. You can start with a neighbourhood safety audit, involve the media in a public awareness campaign on crime prevention, hold community meetings or join efforts with existing community crime prevention initiatives.

### Your Partners In Crime Prevention

Community Programs Division Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General	604-660-2605
or Toll-free	1-866-668-2137
Victim Link	1-800-563-0808
Youth Against Violence Line	1-800-680-4264
B.C. Safe Schools and Communities Centre	1-888-224-7233
B.C. Crime Prevention Association	604-529-1552
B.C. Coalition for Safer Communities	1-877-802-5228
B.C. Block Watch Society	604-529-1552
B.C. Block Parent Program Society	1-888-474-9577
Crime Stoppers Tipline	1-800-222-TIPS (8477)
National Crime Prevention Centre	1-877-302-NCPC (6272)



## 5. SAFETY CHECKLIST

Take a few moments to assess your basic level of security using this checklist. Keep in mind that these are just the basics of security. You'll find many more suggestions for enhancing safety throughout this guide.

### When You're Out

- Do you avoid carrying large amounts of cash?
- Do you carry valuables in a waist/fanny pack or front pocket to avoid carrying a purse?
- Do you choose well-lit, busy streets after dark?
- Do you have your key in-hand when approaching your home or car?

### Inside Your Home

- Do you confirm identification before letting sales or service people into your home?
- Do you avoid leaving large amounts of cash in your home?
- Do you refuse to give personal details to telephone surveys?
- Do you lock all doors and windows?
- Do you leave lights/radio on when you go out?
- Are your possessions marked for identification?
- Do you keep a list of all valuables, along with their serial numbers?

### In Your Apartment

- Do you refer unknown persons seeking entrance to the building manager?
- Do you list your name on your mailbox/entrance with first initials only?

### Outside Your Home

- Are the trees and shrubs around your home trimmed back? Is your house well lit?
- Do you leave your front and back porch lights on at night?
- Do you have motion-sensing lights installed around the house exterior?
- Are ladders and tools locked away, out of sight?
- Are your exterior doors a minimum of 1 3/4" thick, and made of solid material?
- Do all exterior doors have cylinder type deadbolt lock with a throw bolt at least 1" long?
- Do entry doors have peepholes that let you easily see who is outside the door?
- Are all windows secured?
- Do sliding windows have a metal bar or sturdy stick in place?
- Are basement windows locked at all times?
- Are patio doors secured with a keyed slide bolt, together with screws, shims or sturdy sticks?
- Are garage doors equipped with a sturdy lock?
- If you use an automatic garage door opener, do you carry the clicker with you when you leave your vehicle?

### When You Travel

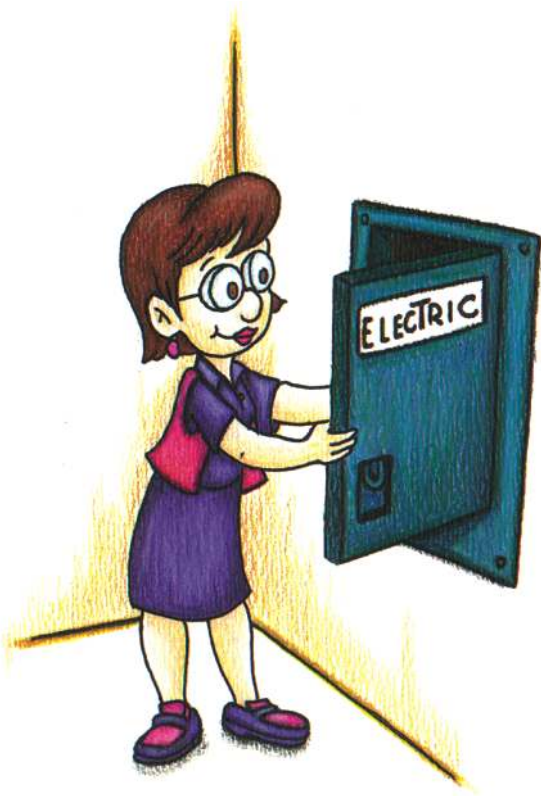
- Are lights set with timers to come on after dark, and turn off around normal bedtime hour?
- Is the radio or television left on to make it sound like someone is home?
- Do you suspend newspaper deliveries while you're away?
- Do you leave a house key and a contact phone number with someone you trust?
- Do you arrange to have someone pick up mail and circulars on a regular basis?
- Do you arrange to have your yard maintained?

### Around Your Vehicle

- Do you lock car doors – whether you are inside or outside the vehicle?
- Do you park in well-lit, open areas?
- Do you take possessions with you when you leave your car?
- Do you use an appropriate anti-theft device to protect your vehicle from theft?

## 6. EMERGENCIES AND HOW TO GET HELP FAST

### Emergencies: Staying Safe Through A Disaster



**A** disaster can seriously compromise the safety of entire communities, but you can reduce the risks if you are prepared. Natural disasters include everything from floods and forest fires to severe snowstorms or a major earthquake.

**Make** sure everyone in your household knows how to shut off the gas, water and electricity.

**Always** keep emergency supplies on hand. These should include enough food and water for three days, a first aid kit and medicines, a battery-operated radio, a flashlight, extra batteries, clothing, blankets and money. Learn firstaid and CPR.

**Designate** a family meeting spot central to most of your regular away - from - home spots.

### How To Get Help Fast

**Having** a list of emergency phone numbers handy can save precious time when it counts most.

**If** you have difficulty speaking have a friend record a message, giving your name and address, that you can use in the event of an emergency. Keep the tape in a recorder next to your phone.

**Where** 9-1-1 is available, the address and phone number of the registered phone line will be displayed in most cases. This means emergency service agencies can respond once a call is received even if the caller is unable to speak.

**For** the quickest response from emergency teams, follow these instructions:

- 1) Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.
- 2) Remain calm. Take a deep breath. Compose yourself, and you'll get the help you need much faster.
- 3) Speak clearly. It's easy to speak too fast when you're in a panic. Make sure the dispatcher understands your every word.
- 4) State the type of emergency.
- 5) Give the location of the emergency. Include as much detail as possible: exact street address with cross-streets, distances, etc.
- 6) Answer the dispatcher's questions clearly and concisely.





### **Emergency Numbers:**

Poison Control Centre:

**1-800-567-8911**

Earthquake, Flood, Dangerous Goods Spills, Tsunami

**1-800-663-3456**

Forest Fire Reporting

**1-800-663-5555**

Helpline for Children

**310-1234**

Victim Link

**1-800-563-0808**

Youth Against Violence Line

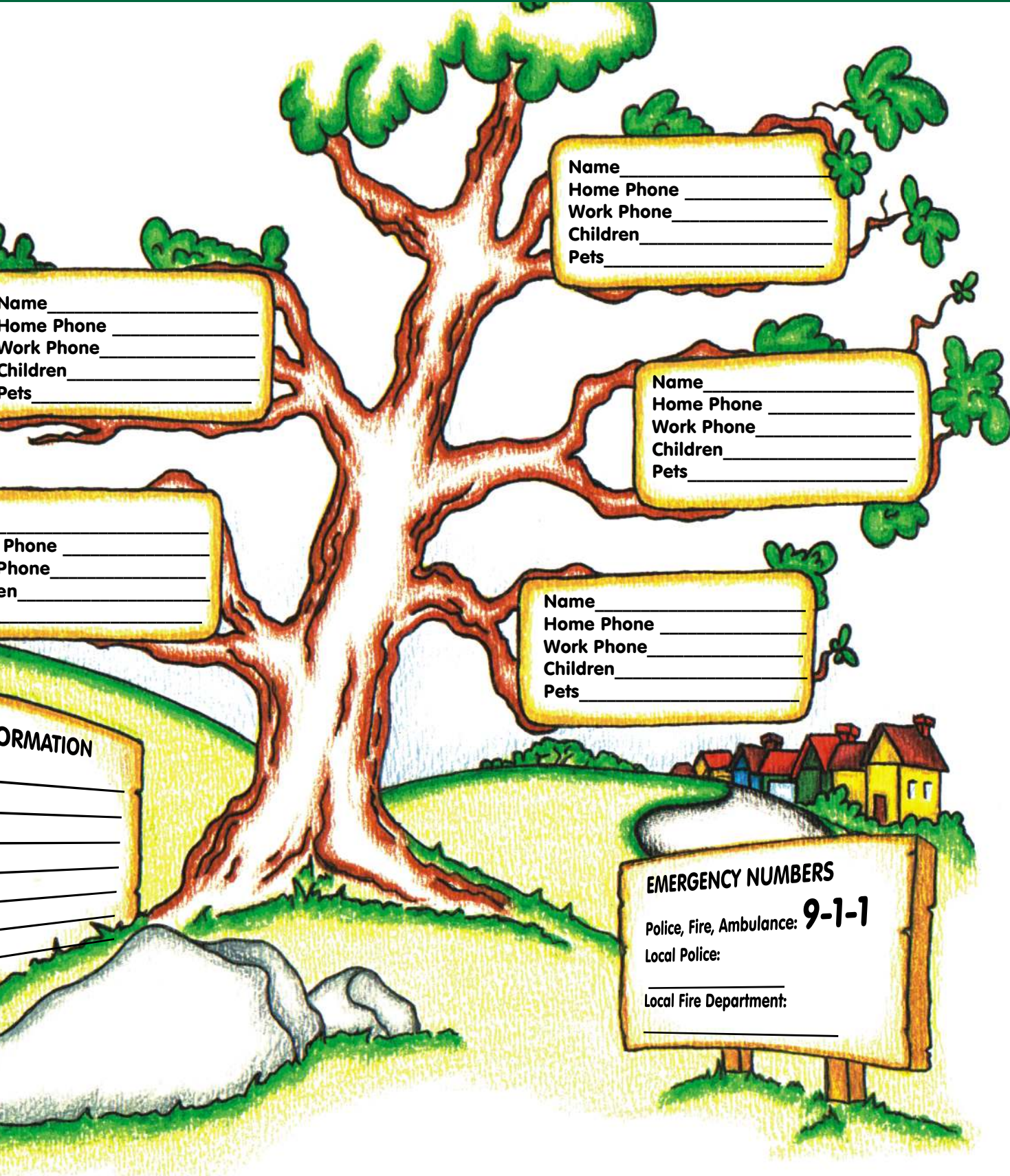
**1-800-680-4264**



## 7. NEIGHBOURHOOD TREE

**Residents** in safe communities keep an eye on their neighbours' homes and report suspicious activities to police. Fill in your Neighbourhood Tree so you and your neighbours can contact each other if something arises. It will also help you get to know your neighbours better, whether you live in a house, an apartment or a rural community. Make sure you keep the information up to date and that everyone in your house knows where it is.





Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Children \_\_\_\_\_  
Pets \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Children \_\_\_\_\_  
Pets \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Children \_\_\_\_\_  
Pets \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Children \_\_\_\_\_  
Pets \_\_\_\_\_

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FORMATION  
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**EMERGENCY NUMBERS**  
Police, Fire, Ambulance: **9-1-1**  
Local Police: \_\_\_\_\_  
Local Fire Department: \_\_\_\_\_

