

With crime and safety on the minds of many, we are encouraging community members to review common crime prevention tactics such as these below. While this is by no means an exhaustive list, these are some ways we can reduce opportunities for crime and protect ourselves, our homes and our belongings.

### **Personal Safety**

- Keep the doors to your car locked when you're inside. This prevents someone from opening your door to grab you, a bag or phone from inside.
- Be aware of your surroundings, look at who and what is around you and take note of anyone approaching you or your car. A person "heads down" looking at their phone is much easier to take by surprise.
- Be aware of what's happening to others around you and call 911 if you see signs that someone is being threatened or assaulted. Try to pass along any license plate information as well as vehicle and suspect descriptions so responding officers know who or what they are looking for.
- Never leave your car running while unattended and never leave a key inside a parked vehicle.
- Keep some distance between yourself and a stranger who approaches you. Staying more than arm's length away means someone can't grab your bag or you, as easily.
- Be alert if someone approaches you to ask a question like what time it is or if you have a cigarette. This may be a ruse to get close to you.
- Don't carry your cell phone in your hand. Keep it out of sight in an inside pocket or zipped in a bag.
- Don't give your cell phone to anyone who approaches asking if they can use it to make a call. This is a common ruse used to get control of the phone by a thief who promptly runs off with it.
- If you carry a purse, consider a cross body bag, fanny pack or travel-style money belt. Don't hang a purse on the back of a chair in restaurants, bars or coffee shops but keep it in your lap or between your feet beneath the table – out of reach of passers-by.
- Don't carry more documents, credit cards or valuables with you than what you need. The loss of a social security card, birth certificate or passport can create more identity theft complications later.
- Take a self-defense class. That can increase your confidence and decrease fear.
- Consider the usefulness of self-defense tools carefully before purchasing. In order to be effective, the tool must be at hand at the moment needed (not in a bag, under the car seat or in the glove compartment) and you have to know how to use it properly. Seek reputable advice and be prepared to practice.

### **Residences**

- Keep exterior doors locked with quality locks including garage doors.
- Pin all windows that can be reached from the ground, including those that can be reached by standing on lawn furniture. Pinning will keep the windows from being pushed open wide enough for a person to cut the screen and reach or climb inside.
- Do not leave valuables like bicycles unsecured on porches or patios.
- Use good exterior lighting. Some people like smart lighting and recommendations can be found online for example: <https://thewirecutter.com/blog/smart-lights-home-security-crime/>
- Consider using security cameras. The cost is low, quality is high, set-up is easy and many models are readily available. If something happens, camera images may be the only evidence left behind. Many recommendations can be found online including here:

<https://thewirecutter.com/reviews/best-security-cameras-for-your-home/>. Consider lighting and security camera coverage at points of access for your garage or outdoor parking pad too.

- In a multi-unit building, be aware of people seeking to gain entry to the building without a key by slipping in behind you.

## Garages

- Keep the service door locked with a deadbolt. Check to make sure the door and door frame are sturdy. Rotted wood is often a culprit in making a secured door insecure.
- Don't leave the garage door up while you are not in the garage. An open door while you are in the house or in the front yard is a tempting target. If anyone in your household is prone to forgetting to close the overhead door, consider a smart garage door sensor that sends an alert to your phone when the garage door is left up.
- Don't leave a garage door opener in a car parked outside on the street, parking pad or alleyway. Thieves look for garage door openers.
- If you keep very valuable bikes in the garage, secure them by locking them to a bolt drilled into the concrete floor or other immovable fixture.
- Don't leave wallets, purses, computers or other valuables in a car in the garage.
- Always lock the door between the house and an attached garage.
- In a multi-unit building with a parking garage, watch for garage doors to close behind your car before pulling away to prevent another vehicle or person from slipping into a secure area without a key.

## Cars

- Don't leave a key or keyless fob in your car – ever. Not in the ignition, the glove compartment, the center console or hidden anywhere in the car.
- Check your owner's manual for a valet key and remove it from the car.
- Don't leave a spare key hidden nearby in a garage or in another parked vehicle.
- Consider an anti-theft device such as The Club.
- Don't leave personal property visible in a parked vehicle. Thieves don't know that the bag only has sweaty gym clothes or other non-valuable property in it.
- Don't keep a wallet, ID, passport, checks, credit cards, money, house keys, work keys, work ID, computers, phones, tablets, guns or anything else valuable in a parked car.

## Phones/Credit Cards

- Keep the box for your phone if it shows the IMEI/serial number or record the model and IMEI or serial number somewhere safe. (<https://www.imei.info/faq-what-is-serial-number/>)
- Activate any finding features available on your phone.
- Use pass codes to control access to your phone and to apps for banking, credit cards or other sensitive information. Set the lock time on your phone to a shorter period.
- Record your credit card information somewhere safe so you know how to contact the issuers easily.
- Know how to access your accounts online so you can quickly check for fraudulent activity.

If you have questions about crime prevention, home or business security or a specific incident, please contact one of the MPD Crime Prevention Specialists. You will find contact information for the Crime Prevention Specialist at this link and below:

<http://www2.minneapolismn.gov/police/crimeprevention/WCMSP-212158>

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