

Crime Tips for the Elderly

“Crime is especially heinous when committed against the elderly. It is an unfortunate reality that some criminals prey on senior citizens because they are viewed as ‘easy’ targets. The following tips are offered in an attempt to lessen the risk of crime faced by our elderly residents.”

Chief Brian Miller - Hammond Police Department

Shopping:

- **Always place packages or bags in the trunk. Thieves often scan cars for high value items in plain sight, those that they can clearly see through the windows.**
- **Do not “flash” cash. Use credit or debit cards, or write a check for purchases.**
- **Don’t wear jewelry, and dress casual when shopping. Flat shoes are preferable to high heels.**
- **If someone grabs your purse, don’t fight back. It’s better to lose your purse or wallet than your life.**
- **Use a “fanny pack” when shopping. If you carry a purse, wear it under your coat. When you’re in your car, place the purse under your seat or out of sight. This discourages “smash & grab” robberies.**
- **Travel along well-lit and busy streets. Map out your route before going shopping.**
- **Robbers often follow their victims to their homes. Look in your rear-view mirror often. If you suspect that you’re being followed, make three consecutive right turns. If the car is still behind you, drive to the nearest police station or call the police on a cellular phone.**
- **Never, under any circumstances, should you pick up a hitchhiker or give a stranded motorist a ride. Offer to call the police, or roadside repair, for them.**

When at home:

- **As you approach your house and prepare to park your car, be observant. Look around your house and garage. If something seems suspicious, don’t exit your car. Call the police!**
- **Make sure that your door, the front, and back of your house are well-lit. Electricity for security lights is cheap. Your life is not! Burglars will not attack a house that is enveloped in light.**
- **Have your door key in your hand so that you can enter your house quickly and without delay. Lock your doors immediately behind you.**
- **Do not open the door for strangers. If a person asks to use the phone, do not open the door. Tell them that you will call the police for assistance.**
- **When gardening, or performing outdoor chores, lock your house. This deters “sneak attacks”. Criminals often enter a house through the front door while the occupant is working in the backyard.**
- **Lock your door and windows. Most burglaries are committed by suspects coming through an unlocked entrance.**
- **Leave a light “on” or use a timer to light up your house when you’re away from home.**
- **When you leave for extended periods of time, have a trusted neighbor take in the newspaper and mail. Burglars troll the streets looking for overflowing mailboxes.**
- **Do not put empty boxes from new stereos or televisions out for trash pick-up. This alerts a criminal that you have valuable “goodies” in your house.**
- **Above all, stay alert!**

