

THE DENVER CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIMS
CRIME PREVENTION TIPS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

- The easiest safety tip a senior can use is to simply display confidence. Criminals look for victims who appear timid. They are less likely to assault someone who is confident and alert, who walks with purpose and holds their head up instead of shuffling feet and staring at the ground.
- When possible, go out with other people, or stick to areas where large crowds are present. Predators are unlikely to strike if there are others around.
- While shopping, park close to the destination and always stop in a well-lit area.
- When done shopping, make sure hands aren't too full with packages and bags. Keep keys out upon approaching the vehicle to be ready to get in and drive away quickly.
- Before you sign a contract for services, especially for home repairs, ask for references, check with a lawyer, or call a representative of the Better Business Bureau or the District Attorney's Consumer Fraud Division. Do not allow yourself to be pressured into something that is too good to be true or that you are uneasy about.
- Have Social Security or retirement checks sent directly to your bank, not to your home. Avoid keeping large sums of money in your home or billfold. Ask your bank if they have services such as direct fund transfer for paying bills to keep you from having to carry money with you.
- Leave your purse at home, or if you must carry a purse, do not have all your keys, identification papers, valuables and essential medications in it. Use pockets, a money belt, or a pouch that can be worn or pinned inside your clothes—anything that makes you a less easy target for a purse snatcher. Avoid a strap around your neck.
- If someone tries to snatch your purse, give it up! Older people can likely be injured in a struggle. Your health is more important than your purse. Try to remember details of what the robber looked like so you can tell police.
- Get to know your neighbors. Be involved with your community. Criminals find it harder to operate when neighbors are alert for suspicious events or people. Knowing your neighbors gives you someone to call for help; someone to look out for you.
- Check in regularly with family and friends.
- Review bank and credit card statements for suspicious items. Request a copy of your personal credit report from major credit bureaus to learn if someone is using your identity.
- Check out charities before giving by going to www.charitynavigator.org or call 201.818.1288, or www.give.org or (703) 276-0100. Know where your money is going.

CRIME PREVENTION TIPS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS (cont.)

- A senior citizen self-defense class can teach some basic, but highly effective moves designed to catch an assailant off guard and give an opportunity to get away safely. Some personal defense classes show how to defend using items most people commonly carry, such as turning walking canes into very powerful weapons.
- If traveling by bus, prior to stepping on, study the route you need and find out if you will have to transfer to another one. Have your fare in hand as you step on to the bus, and try to find a seat close to the front.
- Be wary of people who are acting suspicious, or anyone who sits too close when there are plenty of seats available. If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, move to another seat, or alert the driver if you feel you are in danger.
- While riding, you may want to read, nap or find something else to pass the time, but stay alert at all times, especially important when you have bags or packages with you. A predator can easily grab something that belongs to you if you aren't paying attention.
- Taxi drivers have their official licenses posted in the vehicle, so make sure you only accept a ride from a legally authorized person. Never exit a taxi in a dark area where a criminal could be hiding. Ask the driver to deliver you to a safe, well-lit location.
- If you're concerned about your safety where you live, contact your local police department Community Resource Officer to come by to check things out for you.

Computer Internet Safety—Seniors can be very trusting, making them targets for scam artists.

- Two common Internet scams: the Lottery and the offer to deposit millions into your bank account if you just pay some money. Never pay money as a way to get money.
- Phishing is a criminal activity where people send phony emails and ask people to click on a link. These emails appear to come from reputable businesses: banks, insurance companies, social networking sites, etc., but click on the link and criminals can access your user name and password and get personal info. Never click on a link you are not familiar with.
- Never provide your social security number or bank PIN numbers to anyone online.
- When you shop online, first make sure you are making a purchase from a reputable website. If you aren't sure, go somewhere else, or check them out by calling them, contacting the Better Business Bureau or looking up the site name to see what others who have bought from there have to say.
- Make sure your computer anti-virus and anti-spyware programs are up to date and that your computer is protected from anyone being able to access your personal information.

CRIME PREVENTION TIPS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS (cont.)

Helpful Telephone Numbers:

Denver Better Business Bureau.....(303) 758-2100
District Attorney’s Consumer Fraud Division.....(720) 913-9179
Identity Theft Hotline, Colorado Bureau of Investigation.....(855) 443-3489

Denver Police Community Resource Officers (for a free home security check)

District 1, 1311 W. 46th Ave.....(720) 913-0400, TTY (720) 913-0404
District 2, 3921 N. Holly Street.....(720) 913-1000, TTY (720) 913-1149
District 3, 1625 S. University Blvd.....(720) 913-1300, TTY (720) 913-1196
District 4, 2100 S. Clay Street.....(720) 913-0200, TTY (303) 937-4446
District 5, 4685 Peoria Street.....(303) 376-2300, TTY (303) 376-2306
District 6, 1566 N. Washington Street(720) 913-2800, TTY (720) 913-2805

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