

Dear Neighbor,

Nothing is more important to me than working to keep our neighborhoods safe. That includes following important steps to protect ourselves and our belongings. This brochure contains tips to reduce your risk of becoming a crime victim.

I hope this information is helpful to you. You can contact my district office if you have any questions or concerns about this or any other matter.

Sincerely,



Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly

250 Broadway, Suite 2301
New York, NY 10007
212-312-1400

Room 932, LOB
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-3791

speaker@nyassembly.gov

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Crime Watch

Preventing
crime where
you live
and work



Important information from...
Speaker of the Assembly
Carl E. Heastie

Take action before crimes are committed

At home

- Use secure locks on doors and windows. Lock the door even if you leave for a brief time.
 - Use a deadbolt in addition to a key in your doorknob lock.
 - Never open the door to a stranger.
 - Leave extra keys with a trusted neighbor – not in the mailbox or under the doormat.
 - Install good exterior lighting. Burglars are more likely to avoid a space where they can be easily seen.
 - Keep shrubs and landscaping trimmed below window height. Don't create a hiding place.
 - Trim any branches that someone could climb to reach upper-floor windows.
 - Store ladders inside.
 - Secure sliding glass doors and windows with a broomstick or metal bar.
 - Don't leave tools exposed in an unlocked garage or shed; a burglar could use them to enter your home.
 - Be sure door hinges can't be removed from the outside.
 - Don't give information over the phone to strangers. Report suspicious calls and repeated wrong numbers to the police and phone company.
 - Report broken streetlights.
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- Record your credit card numbers and serial numbers of valuable documents and store them in a safe place or a safe-deposit box. Do the same with small valuables such as jewelry.
 - Keep emergency numbers on your cell and near your landline.
 - If you are in the backyard, upstairs or basement, keep the front door locked, day or night.
 - Close and lock all garage doors.
 - Those living alone should consider listing only their last name and first initial on mailboxes or in directories.
 - Photograph your valuables in their locations around your home and make a list of the make, model and serial numbers. Store copies of this for insurance claims in a safe deposit box or with a relative, not on a computer, which can be stolen.

(continued inside)



- Permanently mark your personal property with your name or an identification number (not your Social Security number) and record it in a safe place. Not only can you use this to identify as your property, it deters burglars who would have trouble selling items which clearly appear stolen. Some law enforcement agencies offer services, such as engraving a unique ID number on your personal property or registering the serial number of valuable electronics. Contact your local police department for more information.
- If you come home and find that your home has been burglarized, don't touch anything! Immediately go to a neighbor's home and call 911.
- Set up a buddy system or neighborhood watch in your community. Report unusual and strange activity in the neighborhood.

While you're away from home

- Get to know your neighbors and notify them when you're going on vacation or if you expect to be away for any length of time. Ask them to watch for strangers who might be near or around your home while you're away.
- Never announce your vacation plans on social networks. Avoid posting anything that lets people know exactly when you're going away or that you are currently gone.
- Don't let a growing pile of mail or other deliveries advertise your absence. Cancel newspapers and other deliveries and ask the Postal Service to place a temporary hold your mail, or ask a trusted neighbor to retrieve and hold your things until you return.
- Arrange to have your lawn mowed or sidewalks shoveled and the garbage cans brought in while you're away.
- Make your home appear occupied by attaching timers to lights and televisions and setting them to turn on and off at different times.
- Many police departments offer "Dark House" checks. You notify them of the period of dates you'll be away and give them a phone number for emergency use. The police responsible for patrolling your part of town will make regular checks on your home while you're away.

Your car

- Always lock your car. Never leave the keys in the ignition, even if you'll only be gone for a minute.
- Don't leave things in your vehicle. Thieves will target items such as loose change, shopping bags, cell phones, laptops, tablets and charging cords.
- Don't leave packages on the seats or where they're visible. Put valuables out of sight or lock them in the trunk.
- Never pick up hitchhikers.
- Only leave the ignition key when you have your car serviced or parked by an attendant. Take your house keys with you.
- If you are followed or harassed while driving, drive to a police station. If that's not possible, drive to a gas station, shopping center or other well-lit, populated area and call 911.



General tips

- ✓ Always pay attention to your surroundings and trust your instincts.
- ✓ When walking, avoid poorly-lit streets and deserted areas. Stick to well-lit, well-traveled streets and walk in a group if possible.
- ✓ If you suspect you're being followed, head for areas where there are people or to the nearest open store.
- ✓ Use direct deposit for paychecks or government checks and only carry the amount of cash or number of credit cards necessary to make your purchases for the day.
- ✓ Carry bags close to the front of your body or held tightly under an arm while walking. Don't leave your bag hanging on the back of a chair or on the floor.
- ✓ If you're carrying a wallet, keep it inside your coat or front pants pocket, not in a back pocket where it's an easier target for pickpockets.