

Got a minute?



Learn
how to protect
yourself.

PREVENTING PERSONAL ASSAULT

Although most crimes are against property rather than against people, a substantial number of crimes involve robbery, purse snatching, or other form of physical or sexual assault. In order to reduce your chances of becoming a victim of crimes against your person, you must be cautious in your home, in your car, and on the street.

What can you do to decrease your chances of being assaulted, short of locking yourself in the house and not allowing anybody to enter? Here are several effective things that don't cost money that should be learned and practiced by everyone.

- First, when on the street, don't make yourself a target by dangling your purse from your wrist. A conspicuous display of cash, or a bulging wallet in your back pocket can also make you a target.
- If you do carry a purse, hold it tightly because if you are only holding onto it with one finger, the chances are a crook will be holding on to it with five fingers.
- While walking on the street, *be wise!* Stay out of high crime areas and stick to well-lighted and well-traveled parts of town. Avoid walking by doorways, shrubbery, and any other dark places where someone might hide. Never carry a weapon. It can easily be turned against you. If you think you are being followed, don't go directly home. Head toward the closest well-lighted area immediately, and then try to find a store or gas station which is open. Whenever you must walk outside at night, try to take a friend with you. Always act as if you know where you are going or like you are meeting someone. This may serve as a deterrent.

- While driving, keep doors locked and windows rolled up. Check your car for uninvited passengers before you get into it, and always park it in well-lighted areas. Never pick up hitchhikers.

- If your car breaks down, pull over to the side of the road. Put your hood up, turn on the flashers, and tie a cloth to the antenna. Then get in the car, lock the doors, roll up the windows, and turn the engine off. When someone stops, roll your window down just enough to ask them to phone for help.

- Most people lock their doors when they leave home, but it is just as important to lock them when they are at home. The best locks in the world won't do any good if they are not used. Install a peephole in your door and check the identity of all callers, including repairmen, deliverymen, and salespersons. Don't let strangers in to use the phone; offer to make the call for them.

- Don't give out information over the phone. Do not give your name or address to any caller, and never tell anybody you're home alone. Children and baby sitters should be instructed not to give out information either.

- If you live in an apartment house, don't go to the laundry room alone. If you are a woman, list only your initial and your last name on the mail box and in the telephone directory.

This publication was prepared by Dr. J. Douglas McAlister, Extension Community Development Specialist, Virginia Tech, from information obtained from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. For additional information on community protection of life and property, contact your local law enforcement agency, the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, or Community Resource Development, Extension Division, 438 CEC, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061.

**TAKE A BITE OUT OF
CRIME**

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Got a minute?

Learn
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PREVENTING PERSONAL ASSAULT

Although most crimes are against property rather than against people, a substantial number of crimes involve property, such as theft, or other form of physical or sexual assault. In order to reduce your chances of becoming a victim of a crime against your person, you must be certain in your home, in your car, and on the street. What can you do to decrease your chances of being assaulted, short of locking yourself in the house and not allowing anyone to enter? Here are several effective things that don't cost money that should be learned and practiced by everyone.

• First, when on the street, don't make yourself a target by displaying your purse, keys, or wallet. A conspicuous display of cash, or a bulging wallet in your back pocket can also make you a target.

• Will you do anything to help out? If you're driving, will you be holding onto it with five fingers.

• While walking on the street, be sure to stay out of high

• If your car breaks down, pull over to the side of the road. Put your hood up, turn on the flashers, and be a sign to the driver. Then get in the car, lock the doors, roll up the windows, and turn the engine off. When someone stops, roll your window down just enough to see them to phone for help.

• Most people lock their doors when they leave, but it is just as important to lock them when they are at home. The best locks in the world won't do any good if they are not used. Install a peephole in your door and check the identity of all callers, including repairmen, deliverymen, and salesmen. Don't let strangers in to see the phone, either to make the call for them.

• Don't give out information over the phone. Do not give your name or address to any dealer and give out all other information only to those who are asked for it.

• If you live in an apartment house, don't go to the laundry room alone. If you see a woman, let only your mail and your key hang on the mail box and in the telephone directory.

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