

CRIME PREVENTION  
AND  
PERSONAL SAFETY



PRESENTED BY:

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# IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY		9-1-1
AMBULANCE	American Ambulance Company	523-3636
	Springfield Area Ambulance, Inc.	546-0202
	Superior-Lifestar Ambulance Service	522-8831
POLICE	Springfield Police Department	788-8311
	Sangamon County Sheriff's Dept.	753-6666
	Illinois State Police	786-7110
CRIME STOPPERS		788-8427
FIRE DEPT.	Springfield Fire Dept.	9-1-1
HOSPITAL(s)	Memorial Medical Center	788-3000
	St. John's Hospital	544-6464
	Doctors Hospital	529-7151
RICS		753-8081
(Rape Information Counseling Services)		
SOJOURN SHELTER & SERVICES	Hotline:	726-5200
	Office:	726-5100
MINI-O'BEIRNE		525-6800
TRIANGLE CENTER		544-9858
(Drug & Alcohol Treatment)		
AARP-American Association of Retired Persons		522-7700
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF ILLINOIS		782-1090
CENTRAL IL AGENCY ON AGING		785-3356
IL DEPT. ON AGING		1-800-252-8966

# **CRIME PREVENTION AND PERSONAL SAFETY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this booklet is to provide the citizens of Sangamon County with a complete guide on Crime Prevention and Personal Safety. It is our hope that by providing this manual, the citizens of Sangamon County will gain a better understanding of things they can do to help reduce their chances of becoming the victim of a crime.

# HOME SECURITY

The first step is to call your local police Department crime prevention unit for a home security survey. It's free of charge.

## Doors:

Always lock your doors.

Use solid core wood doors for exterior doors and for the door that leads from the garage to the home. Steel reinforced doors are good security too.

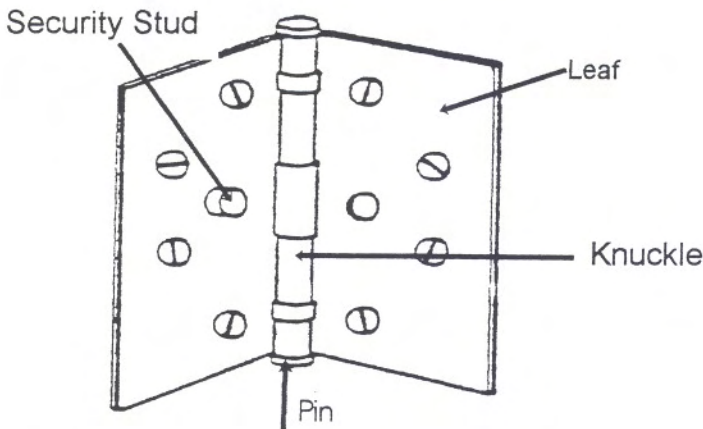
Do NOT use hollow core doors. The average man can kick a hole through the door with one or two blows.

Have strong door frames. No door is any more secure than the frame it is mounted in.

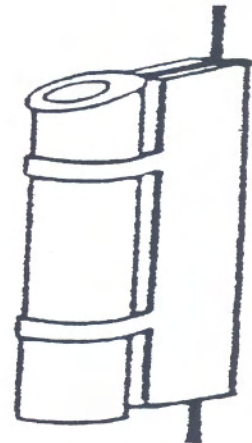
## Hinges:

Door hinges should be appropriate to the size and weight of the door and installed correctly.

Always install door hinges on the inside. If this is not possible then use hinges with fixed pins or use a steel stud which penetrates each side of the hinge leaf set.



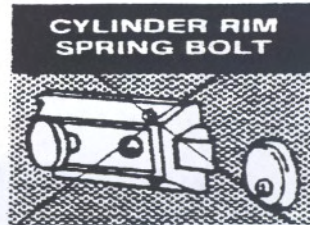
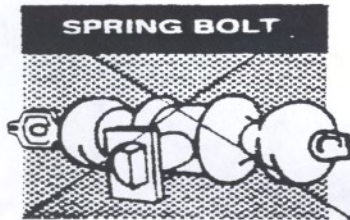
Leaf Hinge with Security Stud



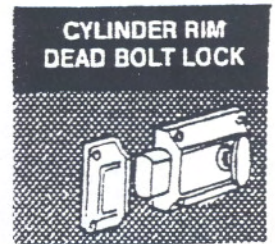
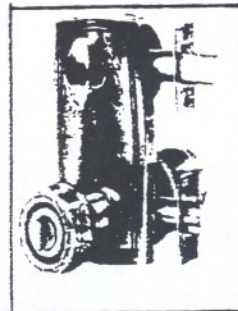
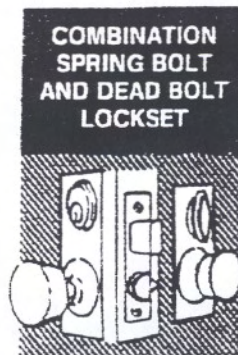
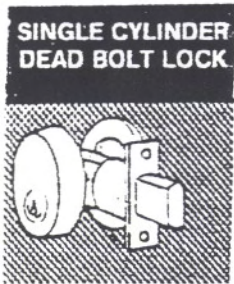
Fixed Pin Leaf Hinges

Locks:

**DON'T** use the key-in-the-knob lock on exterior doors.



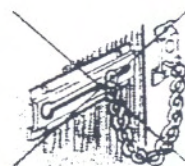
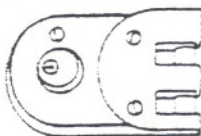
**DO** use deadbolt locks with at least a 1 inch throw.



An interlocking vertical-throw deadbolt on exterior doors also provides excellent protection.

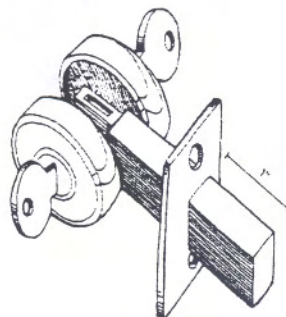
Interlocking Vertical-Throw Deadbolt

Chain locks are not good security.



If there is glass within 40 inches of your deadlock, then a double cylinder deadbolt lock is necessary. This prevents the intruder from breaking the glass, reaching in and unlocking the lock from the inside. If children, handicapped, or elderly persons use a such a door, then a key should be left in a location inside the house that is known and can be found at all time in the dark and in case of fire when the home may be filled with smoke causing poor visibility. A double cylinder deadbolt is the type of lock that requires a key to unlock the door from the inside.

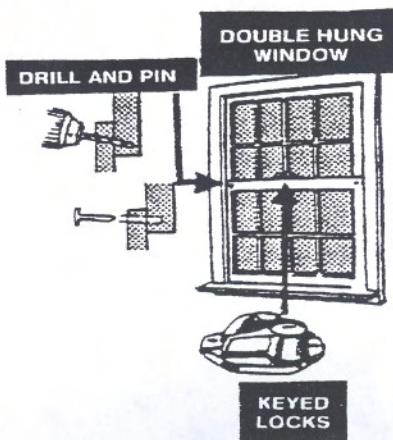
Double Cylinder Deadlock



When installing a deadbolt lock, sometimes the screws that come with a deadbolt lock are inadequate. When installing a deadbolt lock, use good wood screws at least 2 inches long.

### Windows:

Double hung windows can be secured very easily and economically by using a sash lock. This should be mounted with 2" to 3" wood screws. Double hung windows can also be secured by drilling two holes into both the upper and lower sash and inserting long nails into the holes. This can be done to allow ventilation.





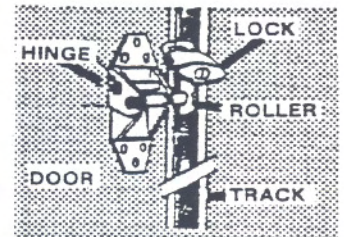
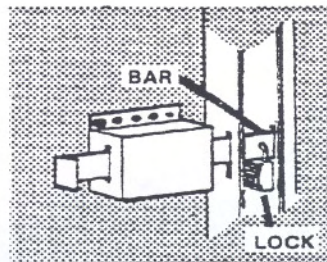
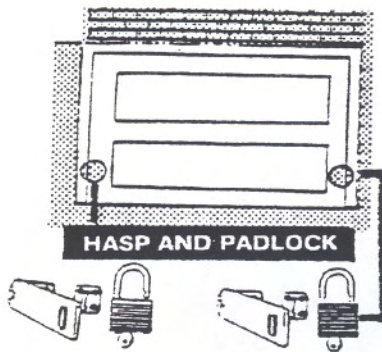
## Sliding Windows:

These can be secured by using of wood or a bar placed in the track against the frames.

## Garages:

Locks installed by manufacturers are usually of poor quality. This can be improved by:

- 1) Installing case hardened hasp and padlock on the outside.
- 2) Securing the track to door with heavier screws in hinges.
- 3) Pin track above bar by drilling two holes and inserting heavy nail or bolt.
- 4) Padlock can be used instead of a pin.



## Sheds:

Sheds can be secured with solid core doors and a case hardened hasp and padlock.

## Lights:

Exterior lights at night are a deterrent to burglars.

For outdoor lighting, mercury vapor is both economical to buy and burn, and puts out a lot of light.

When away from home, invest in a timer for your interior lights.

## Other Home Security Measures:

Most important, call local police and let them know when you will be gone. They will try to check your house everyday while you are gone.

Before you leave, notify your news carrier and the post office to hold all newspapers and mail. A home with a stuffed mailbox and a yard and front porch littered with newspapers is a good tip to a burglar that you are away.

Make arrangements with a trusted neighbor or relative to check your house daily. They can even pick up your mail and newspapers if you prefer. Have your relative or neighbor rearrange window shades, curtains and lights. Remember, you want your home to look occupied.

Before you leave, take all your valuables and extra cash to your safety deposit box at your bank and lock them up. If time does not permit or if you do not have a safety deposit box, then distribute your valuables throughout the house. The master bedroom is the obvious "gold mine" for a burglar. Hide your jewelry and extra cash in the not-so-obvious places in your home.

If you are going to be gone during the spring and summer months for a lengthy period of time, make arrangements for someone to mow your lawn. An unkempt yard is a clue to a burglar that you are gone.

If you leave your car parked in the driveway, make sure it is locked up.

**Important** - Make sure appliances and valuable items are marked with an engraver. You should use your driver's license number. Do not use your social security number.

It is important to protect your home and property. But it's more important to protect yourself. So remember, if you come home and see a broken window or a jimmed door, don't go in. Confronting a burglar is dangerous. Go to a neighbor. Call the police immediately.

## OPERATION IDENTIFICATION

- 1) Obtain the engraving pen from your local police agency.
- 2) Engrave your driver's license number followed by the abbreviation of Illinois on all valuables. If you don't have a driver's license, senior citizens may get an identification number free of charge from the driver's license bureau.
- 3) Photograph valuables which you choose not to engrave.
- 4) Compile an itemized list of all valuables (both photographed and marked). Keep this list and photographs in a secure place. These will be a vital reference source in case of a burglary.
- 5) Place a decal declaring you a participant in Operation Identification in an obvious, visible location.

### Special Tips:

- 1) Use only one number for the entire family.
- 2) Mark all removable parts of the item.
- 3) Mark engraved figures large enough to be easily discernible without defacing the item.
- 4) Mark number in an obvious place on each item.
- 5) All items of value should be marked or photographed which include the following "choice" items for burglars: fishing and golf equipment, televisions, tape players, stereos, radios, cameras, typewriters, computers, projectors, bicycles, guns, musical equipment, lawn mowers, snow blowers, expensive tools, jewelry, and furs. Furs can be marked with an indelible pen on the pelt beneath the lining.
- 6) Polaroid pictures and video tapes are an excellent way to record valuables.

## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH is probably the most effective way citizens can combat crime. The primary objectives of NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH are to:

- 1) Maintain a cooperative system of surveillance over one another's property, children, etc.
- 2) Report suspicious activity or persons or crime in progress to the police.
- 3) Encourage the accomplishment of home security inspections and target property marking activities by all neighborhood residents.
- 4) Disseminate educational materials relative to self-protection and criminal awareness.
- 5) Assist the victims of crime and assist in their readjustment to normalcy.
- 6) Encourage citizens to come forward as witnesses.

Being a member of your local NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH group does not take a lot of work - just cooperation and communication between your neighbors.

Contact the crime prevention unit in your county if you are interested.

If you see anyone or hear anything suspicious, call the police. The police would rather handle a false call than miss a legitimate one.

## PERSONAL PROTECTION

Plan your route before departure. Avoid dark, strange or unfamiliar routes.

Carry car key or house key in hand ready to open car door or house quickly.

Carry purse close to your body with your hand covering the clasp.

Keep some money separate from wallet or purse.

Always have enough change for a telephone call, cab or bus fare.

When using public transportation:

Do not wait alone at bus stops.

Be alert as to whom gets on and off the bus with you.

It is best to sit near the front of the bus close to the driver.

Never walk alone if you can avoid doing so.

If you think you are being followed, go to an area where there are several people, or to the nearest business or lighted home and have someone call the police for you.

If you have an encounter, be confident and stay calm. Size up the situation and use your good judgment.

If an assailant grabs you, fight viciously - kick, hit, slap, bite and SCREAM.

If the assailant has a weapon, distract him and try to get away immediately.

Do not carry anything deadly or harmful. It may be used as a weapon against you by an attacker.

Remember, you must judge your situation for safety. Money and property can be replaced; you can't.

## Tips for Older Women Living Alone:

Post/remember "9-1-1". Don't be afraid to use it. Follow your gut instinct if you think or feel something is wrong in your environment.

Vary your routine so that your actions are not predictable to an observer.

Don't put notes on the door telling service providers your whereabouts and when you expect to return home.

Develop a "buddy system" with a trusted friend or relative, and check in with each other daily.

Create a plan in your mind of what you can do if someone tries to enter your home, or if you are attacked. Think about various violent situations and plan your defense in advance. Be realistic about your abilities. If you are prepared, fear can be your ally, make you think and react quicker, due to the adrenaline boost. If you are not prepared, fear can be paralyzing.

Don't leave cash, jewelry, or other valuables in plain sight to attract attention.

Don't try to save on your electric bill by leaving your entrance light off -- use lights to provide an extra measure of safety. Intruders do not like light.

Install a deadbolt lock, chain lock, and a peep hole and use them.

Don't leave a key hidden outside, no matter how cleverly located.

Do not open your door to strangers -- even if they appear to be service men, mailmen, or others who state they have business with you -- without asking them to show an I.D.

Ask packages to be left on the porch or step where you can pick it up after they have gone.

When receiving phone calls, answer the phone and then speak to an imaginary party to indicate you are not alone. Example: "Oh Tom, it's okay -- I've got the phone."

## Rape Prevention:

Rape is a violent crime -- a cruel attempt to hurt and humiliate. It is not the result of "uncontrollable passions." It can happen to anyone. Boys and girls, senior citizens, and women and men are all victims of rape. It can happen anywhere. In over 1/3 of reported cases the rapist is not a stranger to the victim.

General measures to prevent rape:

1. Consider preventive measures beforehand.
2. Think about how you will act if you should ever be attacked.
3. Learn emergency phone numbers. Remember "9-1-1" if it is used in your area.
4. If you have a face-to-face encounter with a stranger, look him in the eyes and look stern and confident.

Prevention on the street:

- Don't walk alone after dark.
- Stick to well lighted streets.
- Stay in open areas.
- Walk at a steady pace and look confident.
- Know where you are going.
- Don't use the same route at the same time every day.
- Don't overload yourself with packages; try to keep your hands free.
- Choose practical clothing; some shoes are difficult to run in.
- Necklaces and chains may be used to choke you; keep them hidden inside clothing.
- Keep an eye on others walking around you.
- Be suspicious of cars that pull up nearby or pass repeatedly.
- If you suspect someone is following you, run up on the porch of the nearest house with lights and knock on the door or go into the nearest business; ask the occupants to call the police immediately.
- Don't allow anyone in your home without identification.
- If an apartment, don't allow anyone to follow you into the building.
- Don't get into an elevator with an unknown person and if one enters before you reach your floor, get off.
- Avoid going to the laundry rooms alone.
- Don't list your full name on the mailbox or in the telephone book.

## Prevention in the car:

- Always lock your car while parked and while driving.
- Have your keys in your hand when going to your car.
- Keep the gas tank full and the car in good repair.

## If you are a victim of rape:

- Get help quickly.
- Call the police, sheriff, a rape crisis center, doctor, friend or relative.
- Make sure you do not destroy anything that might be used as evidence if you have been raped; i.e., do not wash, douche, change clothes, or clean up in any way until after talking to the police and going to the hospital.
- Most importantly, remember you are the VICTIM and you have nothing to feel guilty or ashamed of.

**REMEMBER, THE LESS RAPE IS REPORTED  
THE MORE IT WILL OCCUR!**

## Purse Snatching:

Purse snatching may be one of the most pervasive crimes in this country. Unfortunately, no solid numbers are available because purse snatching is often obscured in police reports under the guise of other crimes.

Purse snatching is the crime of the future and strange as it sounds, gang related. Young gang members have discovered older women control cash and carry the money in their purses. Gang members share this information and the fact that these victims pose little threat to the robber.

A simple solution to reducing purse snatching is not to give up carrying a purse, as women not carrying a purse are more at risk for bodily injury, but to be very careful about it's contents. Carry a purse with only the amount of money needed for the day and keep personal identification information and house keys separate, preferably in a pocket. Also, it is very important not to carry important papers in the purse. Some experts recommend carrying the



purse upside down with the clasp open. Should the purse be snatched the contents would spill out, foiling the attempt.

One additional point needs to be made. Should a woman of any age be the target of a purse snatching, it is vital she not resist and risk injury.

## Car and Highway Safety:

Always keep your car doors locked and the windows rolled up. Lock it or lose it.

At stop signs and stop lights keep your car in gear and keep alert.

Keep your gas tank well supplied with gasoline.

If another car follows close trying to force you over or threatening you in any way, honk your horn in short blasts and drive directly to the police or fire station or to a well lit business.

Travel well lit and busy streets. Plan your route to avoid high crime areas.

Don't leave tempting articles in plain sight in a locked car. Lock them in the trunk. If someone is watching you, move your car to another parking area.

Never leave your car unattended with the engine running.

If you turn your car over to parking or service stations attendant, leave only your ignition key.

At night, park in a well lit spot close to your destination. As you leave, make metal notes where your car is located. If some suspicious person is watching, wait and move your car. When returning to your parked car check in the front and back seats for uninvited guests before getting in.

Remember to call police to report suspicious person(s) or activity.

A remote garage door opener offers security especially if you live alone.

Never pick up a hitchhiker.

If you have car trouble when driving on the highway, drive off the road far enough so you won't be hit. Turn on your emergency hazard lights. Raise the hood and tie a handkerchief to the aerial or door. Stay in your car, keep doors locked and wait for help. Don't accept a ride from a stranger. Ask them to send help.

If you have a CB radio use Channel 9.

Do not stop to assist a stalled car. Send help. It may be a plant for a robbery.

Most car thefts are a matter of opportunity, so always lock the car, take the keys and never, never leave your car unattended with the engine running.

Do not put your name and address on your key chain.

Carry credit cards instead of cash.

When in a hotel or motel room use all auxiliary locking devices on doors and windows.

Don't rely on chains only as a deterrent.

### Hotel and Motel Fires:

When you check into a hotel or motel:

1. Check for exact location of all fire exits.
2. Know the distance to the exits.
3. Know where your keys are.

In case of fire:

1. Don't panic.
2. Call fire department if you smell smoke.
3. Feel door knob for excessive heat before leaving room.
4. Take your keys with you.
5. Never use the elevator in case of fire.
6. Walk, don't run.
7. Crawl on your belly if there is heavy smoke in the hallway.
8. Close stairway fire doors.

If you stay in your room:

1. Open windows to get fresh air.
2. Do not break window.
3. Close window if smoke is coming in.
4. Fill bath tub with water.
5. Block all vents and doors with wet towels.
6. If doors and walls are hot, throw water on them.
7. Swing a wet towel around to clear smoke.
8. Put a wet towel over your nose and mouth.
9. Take a wet towel or wash cloth with you and hold over your nose and mouth.

## Arson and Vandalism:

### Arson Prevention:

- Keep a close eye on vacant buildings, schools, businesses and construction sites.
- Do not leave trash lying around your property. This presents an opportunity for crime to kids.
- Always report to the police any suspicious looking person(s) or vehicle(s).
- Create a public climate of a negative attitude toward arson.
- Support your "Arson Hotline" and encourage workshops and other groups.

### Vandalism Prevention:

- Keep your house and outside buildings well lighted.
- Report mischievous youths.
- Keep your car in the garage or near the house.

### In case of a holdup:

(Note: The following suggestions are referred to with the male gender; (he, him, his) being the holdup person This is only done so it trying to make the sentences a little more simpler. A holdup may be performed by a male and/or female)

1. Keep calm. If possible, set off an alarm. Don't be a hero.
2. Note the time of the holdup.
3. Do what the holdup man tells you and keep your eyes open.
4. Get the description of the holdup man.
5. Compare his height and weight with someone you know.
6. Note his clothing, any particular manner of speech, and distinguishing features or scars.
7. Remember what he did and everything he touched.
8. Note how and in which direction he made his getaway.
9. Get a description of the car, the license number, and any other people in the car.
10. Call the police as quickly as possible and don't touch anything before they arrive.

## Credit Cards:

The most common version of credit card crime is theft. When a credit card is stolen the owner is responsible for up to \$50.00 of the amount charged before the credit card company is notified. Notify your credit card company immediately.

Never let your credit card out of your sight when your purchases are being recorded and always remove and destroy the carbon paper.

Protect your cards. Carry only those you plan to use, and keep the others in a safe place.

Never leave credit cards in the glove box of your car or in a hotel room. After you have used a credit card, be sure you have put it back in your wallet or credit card case.

Make a list of all your credit cards, including the issuer, the account number, and the telephone number to call in case of a loss. Keep the list in a safe place.

Open all of your credit card bills immediately to be sure that all of the charges are authorized.

The fact that you have your card does not mean you are safe from credit card fraud. Someone may have counterfeited a card with your name and number on it.

Never lend your card to anyone and don't let family members use it without permission.

Never give your credit card number to someone who calls you on the phone. Ask for a name and telephone number so you can call back.

Always use the same signature.

When using a telephone credit card, block the view of the phone with your body when entering your account number.

## Medical Fraud:

Elderly persons especially have health concerns. This concern can be the very reason they are vulnerable the practice of quackery, hospital frauds, "aging cures", miracle cures, and "medical aids". Probably the most frequently offered medical frauds are the unproved "remedies" or "cures" for baldness, "miracle diets", aging inhibitors and pain relievers.

## Bunco Schemes:

"Pigeon drop" occurs when a stranger approaches a person and claims to have found an amount of cash. Through a series of deceptions, the victim is convinced to put up good faith money in order to share in the find. In the final deception, the victim is distracted and the parcel containing his money is switched for another.

A "bank examiner" is only a con artist. He succeeds by getting our confidence, and his only intent is to bilk a person of money. He may say that he is checking on an employee and, once he has the victim's confidence, he will persuade the victim to withdraw large sums of money from his account in order to entrap the so-called employee.

## Home Repair and Improvement Frauds:

The phony home repair man may make a direct approach by appearing at the victim's home, claiming to be a city or county official, or has been referred by a neighbor. His specialties are roofing, siding, insulation, furnace repair, chimney repairs, wet basements, and driveway topping. never give cash to a stranger or agree to participate in any of these suggestions until checking references on these people.

## Mail Fraud:

Many elderly citizens are cheated through the mails by swindlers, confidence men, and dishonest promotions. Example: land sales, franchises, correspondence courses, charity rackets, work-at-home

schemes, investment swindlers, medical aids, ways to cut fuel bills, and home improvement ideas. If you have been victimized through the mail, contact your local postmaster.

### Insurance Fraud:

Probably the largest number of fraud cases are in the insurance category. The elderly should be alert to people attempting to sell more insurance than is needed, called "stacking". "Misrepresentation" is the deception as to the policy's coverage.

Forging of the victim's signature on a policy is another insurance fraud.

Do not buy more insurance than companies will pay claims on, often called "Supplementary Insurance".

### Charitable or Social Frauds:

There are many so-called charitable organizations just looking for elderly dollars on which to work their fraud schemes. Example: religious groups, misrepresentation of charity, or health associations.

Be aware of sales people attempting to sell obituary items, or items supposedly ordered by the deceased.

### Do's and Don'ts:

**Do** stop payment on a check immediately if you have been victimized. Also make a list of all pertinent information relative to the transaction.

**Do** be aware that most surveys or questionnaires are attempts to sell something.

**Do** be alert to the person offering investment or land deals.

**Do** be cognizant of the fact that some people are swindlers.

**Do** be alert to the "terms of a loan" when borrowing money and only borrow when absolutely necessary.

**Do** notify the Better Business Bureau if you have become a victim of fraud.

**Don't** expect to get something for nothing.

**Don't** draw cash from the bank or savings at suggestion of a stranger.

**Don't** send cash through the mail.

**Don't** discuss personal finances with a stranger.

**Don't** sign a contract until you have read and thoroughly understand it.

**Don't** pay for unordered merchandise.

**Don't** allow anyone to inspect your property for free.

**Don't** accept an oral guarantee.

**Don't** pay any medical bills until Medicare or Medicaid or other insurance have made final payments.



## RURAL SECURITY

Crime is not limited to the big city. Rural residents, who are often more trusting than their city friends, are being victimized more and more by thieves and burglars.

Livestock rustling is a big business in the rural areas. Rustlers look for isolated pastures and feedlots, unlocked corrals and loading chutes, unbranded animals and absent owners.

Mark your animals. A permanent brand, tattoo or other marking system is essential to prevent stolen livestock. Make marks distinct and identify young stock soon after birth.

Check stock frequently. Most livestock thefts occur away from buildings in isolated pastures or feedlots.

Check fences and gates regularly. Lock corral gates and loading chutes.

Report missing stock immediately.

Lock up your vehicles. Don't make it easy for a thief to use your truck or trailer to steal from you.

Do not leave major farm equipment out in the field.

Light up your house, yard, or corrals.

Tools should be locked up. Small expensive tools should be kept in a locked building. Don't leave tools in open pickups.

Join OPERATION ID and mark farm/shop tools, and equipment with your driver's license number.

Gas pumps, gas tanks, storage bins and grain elevators should be locked.

Good watch dogs are an asset to the rural dweller.

Use marked confetti in your grain.

Use recommendations suggested in "Home Security" to make your home more secure.

## IF YOU ARE A CRIME VICTIM

1. Don't be ashamed of your fears, but don't panic.
2. You should fear the criminal.
3. You can protect yourself by understanding that criminals are predators who prey on the elderly.
4. Never try to make a criminal feel guilty.
5. An experience of a crime leaves the victim feeling powerless.
6. After a crime, the victim has feelings of apathy, anger, resentment, and rage.
7. The victim of crime suffers two losses: financial and personal and that inflicted by the community.

### Witness Information:

The victim-witness program provides these services to the victim and family:

1. Provide counseling to victims of violent crimes and their families.
2. Provide elderly victims of crime with services appropriate to their special needs.
3. Provide transportation to those victims participating in the criminal justice process.
4. Provide victims of domestic and sexual violence with services appropriate to their special needs.
5. Provide courthouse reception and guidance, including explanation of unfamiliar procedures and bilingual information.
6. Provide in-person or telephone hotline assistance to victims.
7. Provide public education on crime and crime victims.
8. Provide training for persons who work with victims of crime.

Rights of victims and witnesses:

1. Victims and witnesses have a right to be treated with dignity and compassion.
2. Victims and witnesses have a right to protection from intimidation and harm.
3. Victims and witnesses have a right to be informed concerning the criminal justice system.
4. Victims and witnesses have a right to restitution.

5. Victims and witnesses have a right to preservation of property and employment.

6. Victims and witnesses have a right to due process in criminal court proceedings.

### The Illinois Crime Victims Compensation Act:

The Illinois Crime Victims Act is intended to reduce the financial burden imposed on innocent victims of violent crime and their families.

You are eligible for compensation if:

1. You are a victim of violent crime and sustain physical injuries.
2. You are a survivor of a victim of violent crime and were dependent upon the victim for support.
3. You are related to the victim and pay reasonable medical and/or funeral expenses.

You are eligible for compensation if you:

1. Report the crime to proper authorities within 72 hours and cooperate with law enforcement officials.
2. Are 65 or older and satisfy the income eligibility test set forth in the Senior Citizen Property Relief Act.
3. If injury or death was not attributable to wrongful conduct or provocation.
4. If you and the assailant are not living together at the time your claim is filed. For further information, contact the Attorney General's Office at (217) 782-3356.



