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Greetings....Welcome to the Neighborhood!

We've all been there at one time or another....a new addition to the neighborhood. This can be slightly awkward as the newest face on the block, but it's important to get to know your neighbors.

If you are a long-standing fixture of the neighborhood, be sure to take some time to welcome the new members of the community and exchange emergency contact information. This is important in the event there is ever trouble at their home or your home and someone needs to be contacted.

Getting to know your neighbors also helps prevent crime by giving everyone the "inside scoop" on what the normal pattern of activity is for each home. Do they work during the day or at night? Who should or shouldn't be on the property? Are they on vacation? All of these are important tidbits of information that can help you and your neighbors be more observant and responsive to suspicious happenings in the neighborhood.

...and don't forget, call 9-1-1 for in progress incidents or crimes!

Home Security 101 – Dodging Doggie Doors



Escaping from a cold winter day or seeking refuge from sweltering heat during the summer months...giving our pets, specifically our canine friends, a way to get out of the weather is important to their health, well being and safety. The more common "escape" method is to install a "doggie door" or pet access door that allows them to seek refuge in the house or garage.

While these can be the ultimate access point for our beloved pets, it can also be a potential vulnerability to home security. When purchasing your pet access door there are important prevention tips to keep in mind. First, buy only what you need. A Chihuahua doesn't need the same size door as a Great Dane and obviously the larger the door the more access a creative (crawling) person may have to enter your home. Be sure the door has an interior guard that prevents a person from reaching in, then up to a doorknob or deadbolt where they can unlock and enter. The guard is a deflector shield that sits on the top inside of the door and makes it difficult to reach around.

Some doors have gone high tech and include electronic access (activated by a remote located on the dog's collar). This is ideal and prevents anyone (or any other animal) from entering unless they have the dog's collar.

When installing the door, consider the location....ideally in a wall as opposed to inside a door. That way, if someone were to attempt to reach in, there would not be a doorknob or lock to open the human door! When leaving for a trip or when the dog won't need access, be sure to close and lock the latch on the inside.

Doggie doors can be very helpful, when the right ones are installed in the right location!

A Plan For Survival...At Work

Sadly, society continues to produce examples of dangerous and deadly violence in the workplace. No particular type of business seems exempt from criminal acts of violence. From business offices to military facilities, crime can happen at any place at any time.

Knowing the warning signs of someone who may be on a path to dangerous and destructive behavior is critical to prevention, but in the chance that prevention is too late, it's important to know what you would do if something were to happen: **have a plan in place.**

Many businesses have done a commendable job of creating a violence prevention plan as well as an incident response plan. However, some have not. If you are employed by a business with a plan, take some time to re-familiarize yourself with it and be sure to ask your supervisor/managers if there are areas you are unsure of. If your business doesn't have a plan you can still prepare yourself and have your own safety and prevention "plan."

To create your plan, prioritize YOUR safety as the first order of business. Some terrifying incidents have been lessened by great heroic acts but there are also times where would-be heroes have become a liability and actually made the situation worse. Your decision to act and what to do is certainly yours to make but scoping out a plan ahead of time can make the difference between life, injury and possibly death.

When at work, imagine what you would do in an emergency situation. Do you know where each exit is? If it was unsafe to try and exit, do you have a "hiding" place available in which you could lock yourself (and is equipped with a phone)? Confirm today that your planned hiding place has locks on the door that can be locked from the inside.

If you were in a situation where you couldn't talk on the phone out of fear of being found, what would you do? Call 9-1-1 anyways and leave the phone line open so the emergency services dispatcher can hear what is going on in the background and will send emergency assistance.



Workplace violence is sometimes committed by persons who don't have authorized access to the facility. This puts more responsibility on you to use good crime preventive common sense. Use safety measures to ensure your safe arrival and departure from work, such as parking in well lit areas, *looking out* before going out to your car, reporting suspicious incidents to supervisors or security (or law enforcement when appropriate), keeping doors that are supposed to be closed and locked *closed and locked!*

Take some time to think about what you can do to help make your workplace a safe location and create a personal "plan" of how you would react to a variety of different situations.

Preparation, awareness and reporting will help to create a workplace free of violence.



Red Flags of Warning – In some cases, incidents occur that are of complete surprise and virtually no one could have predicted that they were going to occur. In many incidents there were "red flags" of warning on the part of the perpetrator, yet no one took action to address those warning signs.

If you see significant behavioral changes in a co-worker it is time to speak with your supervisor. Some issues, while certainly not a foretelling that a person is going to commit an act of violence, do provide an advance warning.

*New or increased talk of violence against others or new fascination in weapons, inappropriate and racially or religiously charged comments being made about others, acts of theft or dishonesty, use of drugs or unauthorized/excess use of alcohol, **bringing weapons to work** or newly self-imposed isolation from others. There are countless other "red flags" and it's impossible to list all of them here, but what it comes down to is taking action by reporting issues of concern to your supervisors.*

Out and About – Walk Safe

As adults, we can become over-confident in our security and complacent about our own personal safety. The reality is that incidents of crime can happen to anyone at anytime.

The good news though is that there are steps that we as adults can take to protect ourselves and help to prevent or deter criminals from preying upon us. It really begins with common sense and trying to imagine what would and would not be enticing for a criminal.

The average parent would never think of allowing their child to walk or go into an area that is known to be unsafe, but as an adult we may be more willing. If it's unsafe for kids it's probably unsafe for adults!

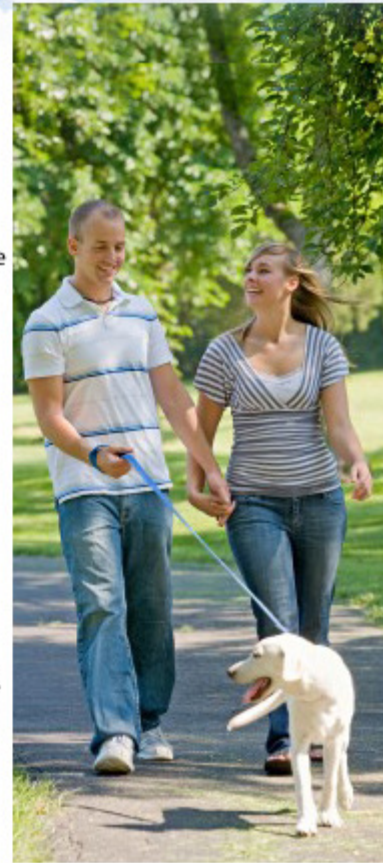
Being aware of those around you is an excellent prevention step. By looking at persons walking by (instead of pretending not to see them) and acknowledging them with a quick "hello" sends a message of confidence and awareness, a turn-off for many criminals.

Take a phone! When out for a walk carry a cell-phone to call for help in the event of an emergency.

Walk with a partner; a four-legged one is great too! While crimes can happen to more than one person at a time, there is a greater crime deterrence when walking with a partner or dog.

Take only what you need. Carrying a wallet or purse full of credit cards, cash and other valuables just doesn't make sense and certainly creates an incentive for a thief. If you need to carry any money or credit cards, limit it to one card or a small amount of cash that can be put in your pocket.

Kids look up to and learn from adults. Set an example when out and about by crossing the streets safely and legally. A child who sees their parent ignoring the laws or obvious safety steps will many times take that as their "permission" to do the same thing!



Monthly 2do List: It's Inventory Time!

It's inventory time this month! As tough as it can be, it's important to find time for this important task and be sure to place a reminder on your calendar for another inventory, no longer than six months out.

Check your current inventory list and be sure that all the information is correct and nothing is missing. Be sure to update any changes in location of the item (this is important in the event of a theft or fire, where you may need to have to recall where in the house the item was located).

Don't wait, conduct your inventory today!

First Time Inventory?

It's never too late to start! Compile a list of all valuable and semi-valuable items in your home (don't forget the garage, too!). Your list should include the MAKE, MODEL, COLOR, TYPE, SERIAL NUMBER, COST and location of each item.

Keep two copies of the list. One copy should stay in an accessible, but hidden, location in your home and the other kept at another, safe location (i.e. a safe deposit box or other family member's home). Also be sure to mark the most valuable of items with some distinguishing information (ideally something that can easily identify the property belongs to you, if found by law enforcement). An example of a good identifier is your name and telephone number or your driver's license number.

And don't forget...take those pictures and video! Keeping images of your home's inventory will help with replacement if lost or stolen.



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