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**THE SALEM CITY
CRIME PREVENTION
CONNECTION**

SALEM CITY
POLICE

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"Junk" mail can be more than just a nuisance

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There are times, if not daily, where we feel that there is more "junk" in our mail than actual mail! Some of the ads and promotional announcements can easily be recycled; however, there are some items that could put you at risk when you throw them in the recycling or garbage bin. A credit offer with some of your personal identification information and an authorization code is a prime target for identity thieves.

To help protect yourself and limit the number of firm "pre-screened" offers you receive, you can "opt out" through each of the three credit reporting bureaus. Collectively, they have authorized OptOutPrescreen.Com to manage the opt-out processing for them. To opt out, go to www.optoutprescreen.com or you can also make your request via phone at 1-888-567-8688.

While it's nearly impossible to escape from all other "junk mail," there is a way to limit the amount you receive. If you contact the Direct Marketing Association, they will send a request to all of their member organizations to remove your name and address from their lists. Go to their website at www.dmchoice.org.

HOME SECURITY 101 Everything to know about doors (well, almost everything!)

A door is only as good as its hardware? Yes and no, hardware is an extremely important part of door security, but the most critical and overlooked part of door security is using the hardware! Many families have good locking hardware and other security features but fail to use them. It's only as good as the user and user error can result in someone getting inside that you don't want in!



In discussing doors, it's not just about hardware, it's the actual door and what it's made of. In some cases, homes have been equipped or retrofitted with doors not intended to serve as security (exterior) doors. They are hollow core (meaning there is a space inside of the door and it is not solid). Other than steel doors, these doors are generally not to be used for residential security and may not even be appropriate for exterior applications. Check to be sure that your door is solid (wood) or is steel/aluminum and could withstand a solid blow if someone attempted to gain entry.

Next, the hinges for your door should have the pin on the *inside*. In rare situations the door may have been installed backwards with the hinge pins on the outside. If that's the case be sure to use locking hinge pins that cannot be taken out.

Deadbolts are a must! The deadbolt, when used, has a solid, steel "bolt" that goes into the receptacle (strike plate) and secures the door. These locks are difficult to pick or tamper with as opposed to the more traditional "dead-latch" (door knob with a button). However, a deadbolt is only as good as the strike plate that it goes into. Consider using a heavy duty strike plate (which makes tampering more difficult) and be sure the screws holding it in place go beyond just the trim around the door and go all the way into a wall stud.

Peepholes are critical! Those little optical viewers that allow you to look through the door and see who's on your front porch are an important part of door security. Make sure that it's placed at a height that most persons within the house can use (special peep holes are available for mobility limited persons) and that when you look through it you have a true 180° view. Can you see all the way to the left and right, as well as nearly straight down (in case someone is crouching in front of the door)?

Make your home's first line of defense a door that will keep persons out that you don't want in, and don't forget to always use your deadbolt lock!

A Safe Date



Date rape incidents can have a devastating and long-term effect on their victim. From the psychological impact to the physical injuries, a dating "attack" of any type can profoundly shake a person's trust in others and crush their sense of personal safety.

The vast majority of dating experiences end safely. Maybe not always happily, but fortunately safely. However, on rare occasions, persons go beyond the line of decency and even further into the realm of committing a crime.

While there is no absolute, guaranteed plan for safety there are certain things a person can do to greatly enhance their safety. First and foremost is the most basic of safety techniques - common sense! Evaluate the dating situation before you agree to go and check to make sure that you have a reasonable amount of knowledge about the person you are meeting and where you are going. It's always a great idea for the first date to be somewhere that is very public (lots of people around) such as a restaurant or other popular location. If you don't know the person well, it may also be wise to meet them at your destination versus having them come to your home or getting in their vehicle. An extra safety measure is to let a friend or family member know where you're going and when you'll be back.

One of the most significant personal safety threats is the possibility of being "drugged." Unfortunately, there are a variety of narcotics (drugs) that are used by criminals to incapacitate their victims. Some can put the victim into a state of unconsciousness and others relax the victim's decision-making faculties. Others can impact the victim's memory.

The most common way to use these drugs on the victim is to place them in a beverage. Many are colorless, tasteless and odorless making detection difficult. Keep careful watch over your beverage and if possible do not leave it unattended. If you must leave it unattended consider ordering a new drink when you return to the table. If you're out with friends or alone and someone you don't know and trust offers to purchase you a beverage, use extreme caution.

Have an Escape Plan

Be prepared in case the date doesn't go as planned. Contact a friend to come pick you up or plan for other safe, backup transportation. Don't ever feel pressured into going somewhere you're not comfortable. Your "inner voice" can be an important warning and should not be ignored!

**Remember, most criminals don't "look" like a criminal..
Use good safety awareness and common sense!**

Babysitters...The right choice

Babysitting is arguably one of the most important jobs a person can ever hold, simply because they are looking after and protecting a family's greatest treasure; their children. It is important the right babysitter be selected but it is equally important that your expectations (actually your demands) for safety be met each and every time they are watching over your treasures.



Make sure that the babysitter is mature enough for the job, preferably with some experience. It is absolutely acceptable (and encouraged) that when interviewing them, you ask how they would respond to certain household emergencies. A list of references, that you check, is also a great way to identify the best person to watch your children. Although some babysitters come with natural talent for the challenges of managing small children, they may not have expertise in certain areas of child management. Classes that the babysitter has completed that will enhance the safety of your children include: babysitter safety course, first-aid and CPR.

- ✓ Provide detailed directions, expectations, and a list of important emergency information including: House address, medications that the children are allergic to and names of anyone who is authorized to come into the house.
- ✓ Show and tell the babysitter: emergency exit points, fire extinguishers, phones, how to lock doors, location of second story escape ladders, life saving medicines and everything they may possibly need to know about your home in the event of an emergency.
- ✓ The most important rule...No visitors. You want the babysitter to concentrate on your children so make sure to remind them that they are doing an important job and no one is to come for a visit.
- ✓ Provide your emergency contact list that includes at least one other family member or trusted friend.

The Monthly 2do List



What's In Your Car?

Treasures await many auto burglars as they venture out looking for the perfect opportunity to enhance their finances. Unfortunately, the treasures to be found are one person's gain (the burglar) and another's loss (the victim). Most burglars are looking for the easiest of opportunities and less "work" usually means less chance of being caught.

To better protect ourselves from crime, such as theft from vehicles, we need to take a quick step into the shoes of burglars and see what helps them decide which cars to target and those to skip. Key factors that encourage a burglar's vehicle selection include:

- ✓ The PERFECT LOCATION – out of the immediate eyesight of you and most anyone else.
- ✓ DARKNESS can be a plus, aiding the burglar in their "secretive" act.
- ✓ SILENCE – a burglar alarm can be very distracting and make a vehicle much less attractive.
- ✓ UNLOCKED DOORS OR OPEN WINDOWS can be a burglar's best friend.

Reducing and eliminating these opportunity enhancements will certainly help to make your vehicle less desirable to a thief. However, the most important deterrent is simply to remove the treasure. A laptop, purse, backpack, camera, GPS or cell phone is exactly what they're looking for.

Check your vehicle today. Is there something, anything, in there that would be a treasure for a burglar? Every time you leave your vehicle do you put loose items, electronics, phones and other items in the trunk or take them with you? The perfect New Year's resolution is to not leave anything in your vehicle when you're not inside with it!

Who'd want my dirty gym socks?

Would you believe, a burglar might? Well, it's not so much that they are interested in your dirty laundry, but rather they're interested in your duffle bag or other baggage. Not knowing what's inside is an enticement; it's a challenge for the burglar. They may be willing to take a risk to see what's inside. Their curiosity may be short lived when they unzip a bag full of dirty clothes, but the damage is already done and a broken window or forced open door can be a lot more costly than a pile of dirty gym shorts!



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