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**THE SALEM CITY  
CRIME PREVENTION  
CONNECTION**

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**Don't be scared****October 2010**

It's time for goblins, ghouls, comic book characters, favorite movie actors and just about any funny, scary or realistic looking person (or thing) to come out of the woodwork...yes it's Halloween time!

Halloween safety for our young trick-or-treaters is a community-wide effort; from parents outfitting kids in safe costumes to drivers navigating the streets with the multitude of ghostly pedestrians to the candy suppliers (residents); it's a team effort to make sure this fun night stays exactly that, fun! Here are some tips for everyone to keep in mind for Halloween night!

**Parents:**

- ✓ Dress your children in costumes that are not dark in color and can easily be seen by motorists.
- ✓ Make sure the costume does not have any loose or dangling items that could come in contact with a jack-o-lantern candle.
- ✓ Masks and other face covering items should not obscure or reduce the child's visibility.
- ✓ When trick-or-treating, be sure to escort your children, or go as a neighborhood group with at least one parent.
- ✓ Go to homes that you trust and that you select. Inspect all treats when you return home *before* the candy "feast" begins.

**Kids:**

- ✓ There are a lot more of you out at night than normal so be extra careful when crossing the street at crosswalks. Be sure to look both ways and only go if you have PLENTY of time... don't forget, costumes can slow you down!
- ✓ Use a flashlight when out trick-or-treating to light up the way.
- ✓ Only go to homes that you know and trust and be sure to have your parents inspect all candy before you dig in.

**The Rest of Us:**

- ✓ On the road, it's the perfect night to slow down and be extra vigilant for pedestrians (and goblins).
- ✓ Only open your door to visitors if you feel safe and you can see through your peephole or window and determine that it is most likely candy seekers.
- ✓ Make sure the path to your front door and your front porch doesn't pose any significant safety hazards such as exposed burning candles, tripping hazards or other things that can make your home one to skip.

**HOME SECURITY 101** Secure your Sliders

No, we're not talking mini-hamburgers and hotdogs; we're talking about doors and windows that slide to open. While very popular and easy to use, sliding doors do come with some special security concerns. Newer doors may (and should) already have the security weaknesses addressed, but older doors may not quite meet the bill of true home security; but don't worry there is a fix!

The two *main* vulnerabilities of the door are that it may be lifted out of its track and that it may be forced to slide open. Let's first deal with coming out of the track...



When installing a door, the frame, which includes the permanent (non-sliding) door, is installed into the wall. Then the "slider" door is lifted up and into the track (so the bottom of the door clears the lower track "lip") and then set down into the track. Likewise, when you have a broken window or need to do maintenance on the door, you can do just the opposite; lift up, pull out from the bottom and you now have the door separated from the track. Many burglars are well aware of the design of these doors and may try to do exactly the same thing, just from the outside (although some doors are made even easier for burglars because they were installed backwards with the sliding section on the *outside* track instead of the inside track!).

So first, open your slider and look up in the track. Is there any type of block or peg that prevents the door, when in the closed position, from being lifted up? You can also test this by closing the door (not locking) and lifting up; did it go up enough to lift out? If so, it's time for the fix.

Reopen the door and in the track install a screw or two (you're putting the screw straight up in the track). Don't put the screw in all the way. Instead, let it hang down 1/4" or so. Now slowly try closing the door, if it hits the screw while sliding, stop and turn the screw in a little more. If it doesn't, back the screw *out* slightly. The goal is to have the screw out (unscrewed) as far as possible without interfering with the sliding of the door. Once we've accomplished the right length for the screw to extend out, test the door vulnerability by closing and attempting to lift it up. The door top should hit the head of the screw and cannot be lifted out.

Next is stopping the *slide*. Some people simply put something in the track to prevent it from sliding like a piece of wood, stick or other object. This is effective, but vulnerable. Due to the large size of the doors, they can be easily warped or separated (where the slider and permanent windows meet). This allows someone to stick a screwdriver or other object in and lift the piece of wood or other object out of the track, so while this is an added security measure; it's probably not the best. Most people depend heavily on their installed lock (usually a simple up-down lever). Again, this is a good safety measure, but depending on the quality and age of the door, these can be weak security points, too. The best alternative is a sliding bolt. Installed in the floor right in front of the sliding door, or attached to the trim at the top of the door, the bolt slides right into a hole drilled into the sliding door's frame. This securely keeps the door from sliding. These sliding door bolts are easily found at your favorite home improvement or security hardware supplier.

We almost forgot the other sliders...windows! They're just like the sliding doors and carry the same security risks and fortunately, the same fixes!

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## A Month We Can't Forget



It has been estimated that one in four women will be victims of domestic abuse (domestic violence) in their lifetimes. To combat this crime and bring attention to the abuse, the national Domestic Violence Awareness Month was established and is observed in October.

Many victims of domestic violence remain silent through weeks, months and years of needless suffering and pain. While some do take the first steps in seeking help by calling upon law enforcement or other resources, they become sidetracked with their abuser's pleas for forgiveness and false promises. Many people may not realize that men are also victims of domestic violence and can be even more "silent" as victims, refusing to report incidents of violence. Estimates of men who are victims range from 100,000 to nearly 6 million cases a year in the United States. Violence against men and women by their intimate partner is unacceptable, unlawful and must be stopped.

Combating domestic violence begins with knowing, accepting and understanding that **NO ONE** *deserves* to be abused. In some cases, the abuser will attempt to put the victim in a position of guilt, blaming the victim for their abuse or promising that it won't happen again. In far too many cases, the first violent act is just the beginning and professional help is needed.

- If you are aware of an in-progress incident of violence, please call 9-1-1 immediately.
- If you are in a relationship that is building in tension that you believe will lead to violent acts or mental or physical abuse, get help by contacting a resource. (See information below.)
- If you're in a situation where it's occurring, do your best to get out and get away for your own safety. Many times this means leaving the abuser for a period of time or even permanently separating yourself from them. If you do leave, be sure not to go where they would expect you to go and make sure to change all of your contact inform-

ation and access codes (such as on email accounts, financial systems and voicemails) so they can't track your location.

- Remember that there can be other, less obvious victims of domestic violence. Children listening from their bedrooms as one of their parents is abused will be profoundly affected.
- Get help by requesting a restraining or protective order against your abuser so that they legally must stay away from you and violations can result in arrest.

**DON'T TAKE IT!** If you are the victim of violence, report the crime to us so that we may evaluate the situation and determine the most appropriate response. **SEEK HELP!** There are organizations that provide assistance for victims of domestic violence. Contact us or the National Domestic Violence Hotline listed below for referrals. **DON'T BE FOOLED!** In some cases the pleas for forgiveness are sincere, but in others, they are just a "timeout" until the next incident. Use caution in reconciliation and seek professional assistance.

Stopping the cycle of violence involves not only the victim, but in many cases the assistance of law enforcement, the courts, counselors, advisors, and advocates. If you are a victim or you may believe you will be one, act now.

**National Domestic Violence Hotline (24 hours / 7 Day a Week)**  
**1-800-799-SAFE Hearing Impaired TTY 1-800-787-3224**

### The Monthly 2do List



### Where's your computer?

Most likely you know exactly where your computer is, but is it really in the best place? While prevention of theft of your computer is extremely important, we'll talk about that in a future edition. Today we're talking about where your computer is in relation to young people having access.

There is so much great information available at the touch of our fingertips these days with the Internet, the ultimate resource tool. For young people the draw to the Internet can be games and social networking (hopefully school work, too!). However, most know, there are things out in cyberspace that we don't want our children exposed to and even more worrisome there are **PEOPLE** we don't want them to have contact with!

The placement of your computer is paramount. As children begin to find the different sites on the Internet or connect with persons they really don't know (we'll talk about how to limit their exposure to bad people in a future edition) they run a greater risk of connecting with the criminal element or those that want to do harm against them.

A computer in their bedroom with no supervision from the parent or guardian is a recipe for disaster. As kids begin to communicate with the outside world, predators can use this to their advantage and strike up an online (and seemingly harmless, because the child really doesn't know who they are communicating with) conversation and relationship. The computer out of the eyeshot of adults gives the young user the perfect opportunity to communicate with the person(s) that they know their parents may not be happy with. It also is an opportunity for them to visit sites that you may not approve of.

Make computer time and usage a family affair by placing the computer in a strategic location where it is highly visible and you're just over their shoulder. Be sure to put this on your 2do list **TODAY**.



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