

## What CAN We Do?

The last piece of advice that my permit instructor left us with as he wrapped up the class was, “No matter what, always be a good witness.”

That piece of advice always stuck with me. Its not as easy as it sounds. We have to have the frame of mind to not be focused on the “what” of the event but to remember to take note of any details.

Any way we can help provide details to the police is always helpful, with a mind on our safety. We can video/capture an image of the event. Certainly call 911. Any verbal messages letting them know the police are on their way might serve to interfere with the crime.

But above all, our safety comes first before we can help any victim.



“Don’t put your safety, health and life in jeopardy over something whose value is measured in dollars.” – TRTG

## When We Witness A Crime

Recently MPD posted a notice that read, “If you witness a theft, let the crooks go. Property costs can be replaced, your life can’t.” TRTG reposted this and added, “...but be a good witness.”

Someone posted recently on the Next-Door app upset by what they witnessed and as a warning to others, “Poor lady next to me at the car wash on Union just got carjacked. We were vacuuming our cars. They dragged her about 3 ft. She’s a senior who was injured when it happened.”

Chances are if we are not a victim we will at least witness a crime in progress at some point. I have myself witnessed 2 men steal a shopping cart and an arm full of laundry detergent from a Walgreen’s in Bartlett and loading it in their car.

Our instincts and emotions will tell us to step up and do something, however, before we do “something,” we should consider the possible repercussions of our actions.

Here are some things to consider.

**Our Personal Safety** – Intervening in a situation could put our safety in jeopardy, especially if the suspect is armed or violent. Our intervening is not guaranteed to be

successful, and our safety might be compromised. Their commitment to carrying out the crime is much greater than ours to stop it.

**Legal Consequences** – Intervening could lead to unintended legal repercussions. Our actions, even though pure in motive, might have violated the law in the way it was carried out. We could be charged with a crime ourselves or even sued by anyone impacted by our actions.

**Lack of Training** – First responders undergo extensive training to handle dangerous situations. They have dedicated response protocols and teams in anticipation of critical situations. Civilians, even those with defensive training will probably only be acting alone and could further complicate the situation.

It sounds apathetic and cold to suggest that we not intervene. But there’s much to think about before we act. If it’s a property crime...no matter its value – let it go. Our intervention not only might affect us, but our families as well.

Before we leap into a bad situation let’s think thru what the best course of actions may be.