

*Keep* Houston  
**SAFE**

# Personal Safety Guide



Building a Collaborative Partnership  
Between Citizens, Businesses  
and the Houston Police Department

**Emergency 911**

[www.houstonpolice.org](http://www.houstonpolice.org)

**REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY  
713-884-3131**



## ***“Keep Houston SAFE”***

### **What is “Keep Houston SAFE”**

***“Keep Houston SAFE”*** is a citywide collaborative partnership between citizens, businesses, and the Houston Police Department. The main focus is crime prevention and the implementation of proactive crime prevention efforts and measures aimed at the elimination of criminal incidents, rather than responding to them after they have occurred. Simply, the goal of ***“Keep Houston SAFE”*** is to prevent crime.

Crime Prevention requires the active cooperation of all members of the community. The Houston Police Department is working hard to catch the “bad guys” and put them behind bars, but we are counting on you, the citizens, to work together in the fight against crime. In fact, the Houston Police Department believes this team effort is so important that it is mentioned in the department’s mission statement, which states in part, that *the department will strive to enhance the quality of life in the city of Houston by working cooperatively with the public to prevent crime.*

***HOUSTON*** is a dynamic city with hard-working citizens who want a safe city. We need everyone to become involved and be energized in their efforts to protect themselves, family, and hard-earned property.

### **How Can You Help “Keep Houston SAFE”**

By pledging and practicing basic crime prevention, citizens will reduce the opportunities criminals look for when targeting a crime victim. Crime prevention starts with each person, family, and home. If we all do our part to fight crime and make it as hard as possible for a criminal to identify a crime victim, we are helping to ***“Keep Houston SAFE”***

The positive result is the reduction of crime and a safer Houston. Take the time to review the crime prevention material provided by the Houston Police Department. Make the pledge to ***“Keep Houston SAFE”*** and become a part of the solution. Remember that Crime Prevention starts with you.

# PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS

*The Houston Police Department wants you to be safe! By practicing these personal safety tips, you will reduce the opportunities criminals look for when targeting a crime victim.*

## **Street Sense**

- Always stay alert to your surroundings and avoid locations/situations that make you more vulnerable to crime such as alleys or dark parking lots.
- Avoid distractions that decrease your awareness level, i.e. talking on a cell phone or wearing headphones.
- Walk with a purpose to communicate a message of confidence. Make eye contact with people, however do not engage in conversation with strangers on the street.
- Travel with family and friends. Walking in a group decreases your chances of becoming a victim.
- Stay in well-lighted areas and avoid short-cuts through deserted areas.
- Avoid displaying large amounts of cash or other tempting items, such as expensive jewelry and clothing.
- Always trust your instincts. If a person or place makes you uneasy, leave.

## **Work Safety**

- Never give telephone numbers, addresses or plans of fellow co-workers to anyone without their permission.
- Use discretion in revealing personal plans to people at work.
- DO NOT leave valuables in plain view. Always secure your property.
- DO NOT leave the reception area unattended.
- If you work alone or work outside of normal business hours, keep your office door locked.
- If you leave the office after hours, have a co-worker or security guard walk you to your car.

## **Personal Safety Tips** continued...

### **Driving Safety**

- Immediately lock your doors.
- DO NOT become involved with angry drivers and don't take traffic problems personally.
- Avoid eye contact with an aggressive driver and do not make obscene gestures.
- If someone is tailgating you, pull into the slow lane and allow them to pass.
- DO NOT tailgate other drivers or cut them off.
- If you have car problems, raise the hood and tie a white cloth to the door handle to signal for help. Get back into the car and keep the doors and windows locked. If someone stops, do not roll down your window. Ask them to call for help. Do not accept rides from anyone.
- If you think someone is following you, do not go home. Drive to the nearest police station, fire station, open gas station, or well-lighted place where there are people that can help you.
- Don't lose your life or the life of a passenger by becoming involved in ROAD RAGE.

### **Reduce Your Chance of Being Carjacked**

- Always park in a well-lighted area so you can see your car and its surroundings from a distance.
- Have your car keys ready as you approach your vehicle and look under, around, and inside your car for persons who may be hiding. If safe, enter and immediately lock all doors.
- While stopped in traffic, leave enough room between your car and the one in front of you so you can maneuver and escape if necessary.
- Keep an alert eye out for any suspicious characters at intersections.

# BURGLARY PREVENTION AT HOME

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*A burglary is reported every 15 seconds in the United States. The U.S. Department of Justice defines household burglary as “unlawful entry or attempted entry of a residence.” This crime usually, but not always, involves theft. Of all the major criminal offenses, residential burglary is the most common. By following these simple steps, you can reduce the possibility that your home will be targeted.*

## HOME SAFETY

- Acknowledge all callers through locked doors. Before opening an exterior door to your home, know who is at the door and do not open the door to an unexpected visitor.
- Lock your doors and windows when you are at home. Criminals look for houses with the easiest entry.
- Never leave notes on your door that reveal that your home is not occupied.
- Trim Shrubs to deny intruders a hiding place to work; shrubs can block the view to the house. Walks and Driveways should also be kept free of objects or plants that might offer concealment for intruders who are trying to break into your house.
- Lawn Care is an effective indicator that someone is home. Keep your yard maintained.
- Permit easy visibility of your home by neighbors and/or police.
- Trim Tree Limbs from the bottom, up to 8 feet, to allow for clear visibility by neighbors and/or police.
- Install large reflective numbers (minimum 3 inches) on your house and mailbox so police and other emergency personnel can find your home quickly.
- Be alert in protecting not only your home, but your neighbors as well. Don't tell a stranger that your neighbor is not at home or volunteer any personal information about your neighbor.
- When traveling, have a neighbor collect the mail/newspaper or have the deliveries temporarily stopped.
- Before moving into a new house or apartment, ensure all exterior door locks on your new home are re-keyed or changed. Also change the code to the garage door opener.
- Alarms provide added protection and are most effective when used with other security techniques.

### **Remember:**

- Choose a reputable, well established alarm company.
- Set the alarm system at night and when away from your residence.
- Do not write your alarm code or password on or near the alarm keypad.
- Put a warning sign on windows and entrances to notify possible intruders you have an alarm.

# RESIDENTIAL SECURITY

## DOES YOUR HOME HAVE THESE SAFEGUARDS?

### Tip #1 Lighting

For outside lights, use photoelectric cell lights which automatically turn lights on and off at dusk and dawn.

### TIP #2 Lighting

Make your house look "lived in" by keeping lights on automatic timers, especially when not at home.

Install and use a peephole with a 190-degree viewing area.

Install another lock in addition to the manufacturer's lock on ALL windows.

Homes with good EXTERIOR LIGHTING will provide additional protection from intruders. Outside lighting should be located high and out of reach. A good location is under the eaves. Inexpensive timers or photoelectric cells will automatically turn the lights on and off at dusk and dawn.

Secure cash and jewelry in bonded storage.

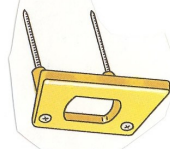
### TIP #1 Exterior Doors

All exterior doors should be equipped with double cylinder deadbolt locks having a minimum one-inch throw when in the locked position.

Close all curtains or shades at night.

### TIP #2 Exterior Doors

The deadbolt locks should use a heavy-duty strike plate secured with three-inch steel screws.



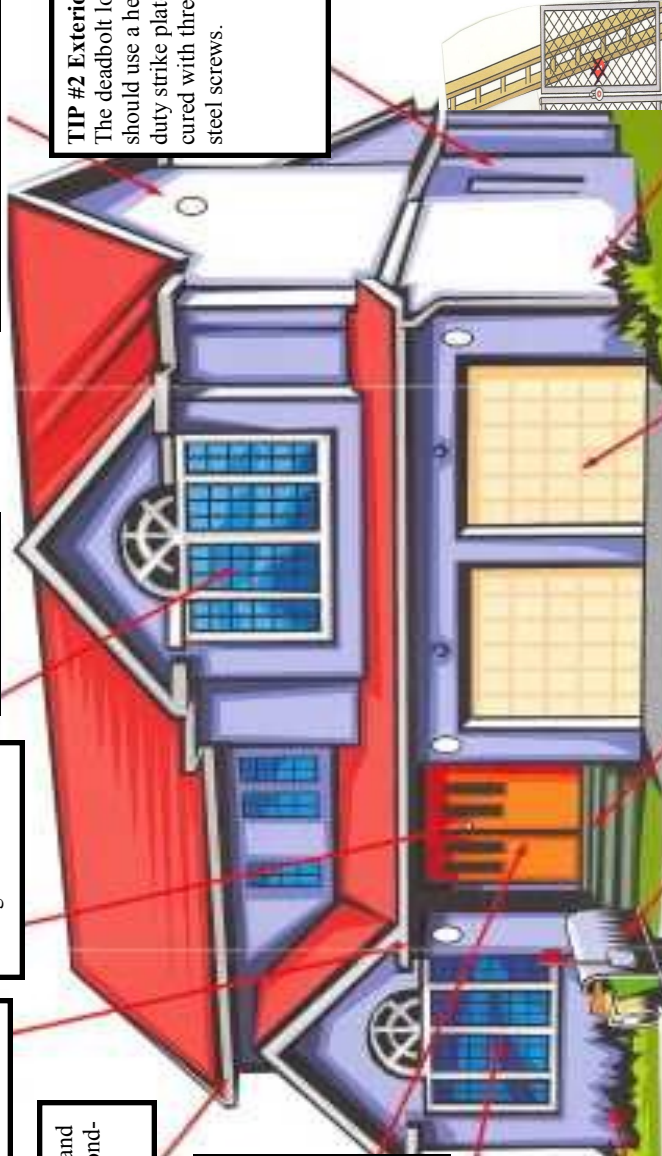
Check the shrubs and bushes around the doors and windows. They should not provide cover for an intruder attempting to force open a door or window. By trimming shrubs, you will limit the intruder's OPPORTUNITY! Place thorny plants along fences and near windows.

Use initials or just numbers on your mailbox.

Don't hide a key under the door mat...or anywhere else! Burglars know ALL the hiding spots.

Keep garage doors closed and locked even when at home.

Don't leave ladders or tools out. Burglars can use these items to break into your house. Lock them in a garage or tool shed.



# ROBBERY PREVENTION

*A robbery is one of the most serious and potentially dangerous crimes committed in the United States today. A robber commits a holdup because he or she believes that their profit will be worth the risk. By decreasing the possible profit and increasing the risk of apprehension, potential victims can reduce their chance of becoming a target.*

## **Walk Alertly and Confidently**

- Try not to walk alone. It's a lot safer if you walk with at least one other person.
- Be alert, walk with your head up and do not let your mind wander. Frequently scan your surroundings, that includes behind you.
- When walking at night, consider a taxi cab even for short trips.
- Trust your instincts, avoid uncomfortable situations. It's better to be safe than sorry.
- Be observant for groups of males/females driving or just hanging around.
- Do not take shortcuts through unlit, sparsely traveled paths such as trails, stairwells or alleys.

## **In Parking Lots**

- Arrive and leave areas early to avoid being out after dark.
- DO NOT park next to a vehicle with dark tinted windows that can prevent you from seeing if someone is sitting inside it.
- Park in a high visibility areas and check for lighting in case you leave when it is dark.
- Ask a security officer to escort you to your vehicle if you feel uncomfortable.
- Walk briskly, confidently, and directly through the parking lot. Be cautious of people handing out fliers or asking questions.
- Have your car keys ready to unlock your car door, look around and under your car and observe other vehicles parked nearby for suspicious persons before approaching.
- Watch for people who may be following you. This can occur inside as well as outside businesses. If you suspect that you are being followed, report it immediately to security or police.
- Glance into the backseat and at the floorboards of your car before entering to check for anyone hiding inside.
- DO NOT sit in a parked vehicle. If a stranger approaches your vehicle, sound your horn and don't let off.
- DO NOT open your car door or window for anyone. If someone is standing near your unoccupied vehicle, do not approach it.

# Robbery Prevention continued...

## **Be Smart About Cash**

- Carry only the amount of cash that you expect to use. If cash is needed use ATM or debit cards.
- Avoid outdoor ATM's, particularly at night and those in secluded areas inside.
- Be alert at banks or check cashing businesses. Carrying cash marks you as a target. Avoid showing your wallet when possible. Keep needed cash, ID, and credit cards in an accessible pocket.

## **What To Do During a Robbery**

DO NOT argue or fight with the robber. Any amount of money or valuables is not worth personal injury to you.

Follow the robber's directions, but do not volunteer more than asked for.

If you have to move or reach, tell the robber what you are going to do and why. Assure the robber that you will cooperate.

Make mental notes of:

- The robber's race, age, height, sex, clothing, complexion, hair, eye color, etc.
- Anything unusual about the robber such as scars or tattoos.
- The number of accomplices and how they left the scene, direction of travel, type and color of vehicle. Get the license number if you can safely do so.

## **Did You Know?**

- Many of the robberies occur when you're alone and are committed by one or more male robbers.
- A lot of these robberies take place on the way to and from your car, especially in shopping centers and apartment parking lots.
- The use of a cellular phone or headset, whether driving or walking, is a distraction which can increase your likelihood of being robbed.
- Robbery is a crime of violence that threatens the safety and quality of life of a community.
- Robbery is a crime of opportunity that can be reduced through awareness and prevention.
- Robbers are serial criminals and will continue to prey on victims until arrested.
- Failure to report a robbery, not prosecuting the criminal if you are a victim, not providing information to police or Crime Stoppers about robbers ensures continued victimization.
- One of the most important robbery reduction strategies is to arrest the criminal.

# BURGLARY OF A MOTOR VEHICLE



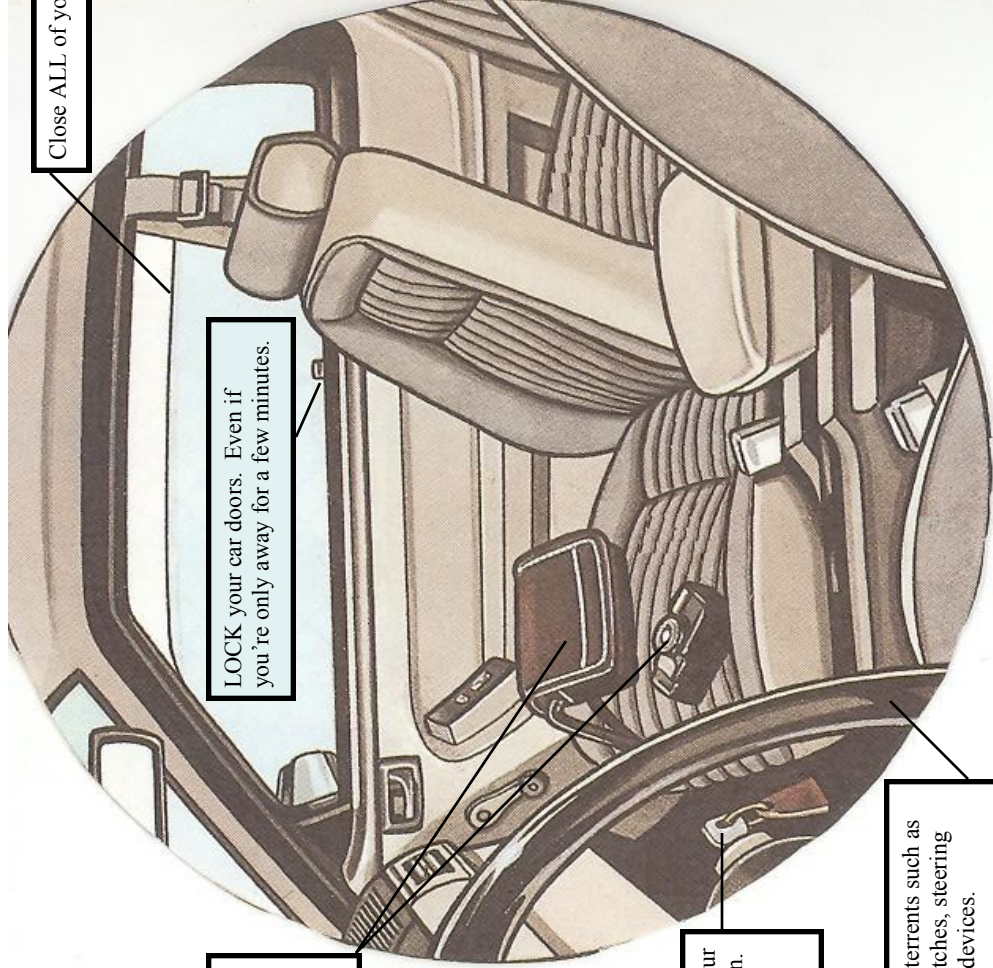
*The Houston Police Department wants you to be safe. By practicing the suggested crime prevention tips you can help reduce the chances that you will become the victim of a burglary of a motor vehicle.*

You can take an active role in reducing the crime in our city by securing any property in your vehicle where thieves cannot see it, taking your keys with you, and locking your car doors.

- Be aware of your surroundings at ALL times.
- Park only in well-lighted areas and in high traffic areas of a parking lot.
- Remove all interior valuables/packages from plain view (preferably prior to reaching your destination). Lock these items in the trunk. These items often encourage a theft.
- Do not leave any articles of value in your car unattended, especially overnight (cell phones, laptops, money, wallet, purse).
- Lock all doors and roll up all windows. Whether you leave your vehicle for a minute or several hours, secure your belongings, lock your car and take your keys.
- Use auto theft deterrents, such as car alarms, kill switches, steering wheel and column devices.
- Park your vehicle in your garage when at home.
- Purchase stereo or television equipment that can be removed and placed out of sight.
- Carry your registration with you. Don't leave any personal identification documents, keys or credit cards anywhere in the vehicle.
- If you notice anyone acting suspicious or hanging around the parking lot, return to the business and notify the management or call the police at 713-884-3131.

Burglary of a motor vehicle is most often a crime of opportunity. If you take away the opportunity, you reduce the chance of being a victim. Most thieves won't gamble with breaking into a vehicle where they may walk away empty handed. Remember, they're looking for a sure thing. In the majority of these cases, property can be seen by looking into your vehicle.

**BURGLARY OF MOTOR VEHICLE PREVENTION TIPS**  
**DID YOU FOLLOW THESE TIPS BEFORE LEAVING YOUR VEHICLE UNATTENDED**



Close ALL of your windows.

LOCK your car doors. Even if you're only away for a few minutes.

DO NOT leave any valuables or packages in plain view or unsecured.

DO NOT leave your keys in the ignition. Always take them with you.

Use Auto Theft Deterrents such as car alarms, kill switches, steering wheel and column devices.

PARK ONLY in well-lighted areas of a parking lot.

# IDENTITY THEFT

*Identity Theft is a common term used for all types of crime in which someone wrongfully obtains and uses another persons personal data in some manner that involved fraud or deception, usually for economic gain. Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in America.*

## **Protect Yourself From Becoming An Identity Theft Victim**

Identity Theft is quickly becoming the crime of choice for criminals. It is imperative that you take the proper precautions to minimize the risk of becoming a victim. If you have already been victimized, however, HPD recommends that you visit the Federal Trade Commission's web site at [www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft) and print the publication titled "ID THEFT, When bad Things Happen to Your Good Name." The publication contains information useful to begin to resolve the issues that are facing you. Although you can not protect yourself entirely from ever becoming a victim of identity theft, there are steps you can take to minimize your chances of being targeted.

### **How Identity Thieves Get Your Personal Information**

- Stealing wallets and purses containing your identification and credit and bankcards.
- Stealing mail to get new credit cards, bank or credit card statements, new checks, tax information, and pre-approved credit offers.
- Completing a "change of address" form to divert your mail to another location.
- Rummaging through your trash or the trash of a business looking for individual's personal data in a practice known as "dumpster diving."
- Obtaining your credit report by posing as a landlord, employer, or someone else who may have a legitimate need for, and legal right to, the information.
- Stealing personal information from your home or from businesses or institutions where you are a customer, patient, employee, etc.
- Obtaining personal information that you share with others over the Internet.
- Scamming you, either by U. S. Mail or e-mail, by posing as legitimate companies or government agencies you do business with. This usually happens after someone gets your information from businesses by stealing files out of offices where you are a customer, employee, patient or student. Sometimes an employee of these businesses is bribed or files are hacked into via the Internet.

## Identity Theft *continued...*

- Copying data from credit and debit cards as the card is being used for a legitimate transaction using a device called a "skimmer".
- Setting up look-alike web sites for legitimate businesses that you transact with and tricking you into sending personal information by sending e-mails warning that your accounts have been compromised or are about to expire and instructing you to click on a link.
- Standing behind you as you enter your PIN number or credit card number in a practice known as "shoulder surfing".

### **What to Do to Avoid Becoming a Victim**

- Manage your personal information wisely and avoid disclosure unless absolutely necessary. Remember that your Social Security number is the key to obtaining your credit report and other confidential information. Disclose only when absolutely necessary.
- Keep personal information in a secure place at home. Shred all documents containing identifying data.
- Limit the number of credit and debit cards in your purse or wallet. Never carry documents such as social security cards or birth certificates with you.
- Never disclose personal information in response to a telephone call or an e-mail. Legitimate business that you transact with are never likely to ask for this information. If you are instructed to click on a link contained in an e-mail asking for personal information, visit the organization's web site instead. Criminals will sometime create authentic looking false web sites for businesses you are already familiar with in order to obtain your information.
- Shield your hand when entering your PIN number at bank ATMs or point of sale terminals. Always take receipts with you and shred them. Never have check orders delivered to your home. Instead, pick them up at the bank yourself. In addition, never print your driver license or social security number on your checks or allow anyone to write this information on your checks.
- Order a copy of your credit report from one of the three major credit reporting agencies every 3 months. Check each report carefully for signs of unusual activity. The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires each one of these agencies to provide you with a free copy of your credit report once every 12 months. Call toll free 877-322-8228 or visit [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com).
- Always place payments in a postal service box or arrange for them to be paid via the Internet. Never place outgoing payments in the mailbox in front of your home.

# Identity Theft continued...

## **Warning Signs That You May Have Become A Victim**

- Monthly credit card or bank statements stop arriving. Criminals will usually call your card issuer or financial institution and, pretending to be you, file a change of address request. The impostor then runs up charges on your account and, because the statements are being sent to the new address, it may take some time before you realize that there is a problem.
- You start getting bills from companies that you don't recognize or a creditor calls to inform you that you have been approved for or denied credit that you have not applied for. Criminals will open up new accounts using your name, date of birth, and social security number. Since they don't pay the bills, the delinquent accounts are reported on your credit report. Sometimes your information is also used to establish utility service, phone or wireless service for various addresses.
- You receive calls or letters from collection agencies, creditors, or companies claiming that you have written checks with insufficient funds. Criminals will open a bank account in your name or print bogus checks using your information. Sometimes they will drain your bank account after copying your bank's routing and account numbers off one of your checks or by cloning your debit card.
- There are unusual entries in you credit reports. Criminals will sometimes buy cars and even sign mortgages using your personal information. Persons – sometimes undocumented aliens - have been known to completely assume another's identity and file for bankruptcy and even give it to the police when they are arrested.

## **What To Do If You Have Become A Victim**

Report the crime by calling the Houston Police Department at 713-884-3131 if the illegal activity occurred in the City of Houston. Filing a report is the first step in what may be a lengthy and frustrating process to repair your credit and reclaim your identity. Please note that any damage to your credit can only be corrected with your participation and cooperation. By completing the following steps, you will help resolve problems with creditors and merchants, remove inaccurate information from your files at the major credit reporting agencies, and help prevent future fraudulent use of your credit and identity. You should retain copies of all correspondence and documentation related to your case.

The Financial Crimes Unit of the Houston Police Department will review your report and, if assigned for follow-up, an investigator will contact you with additional information. Please note that due to the volume of reports received, jurisdictional issues such as where some of the illegal acts occurred, availability of solvability factors, and limitations on available resources, not all reports of this type of criminal activity are assigned to an investigator for follow-up. There are, however, several steps that you can take to minimize the impact that this crime will have on your personal affairs.

# Identity Theft continued...

New information about your case or new fraudulent transactions should be reported under your original incident number to one of the following:

- The Teleserve Unit (713-884-3131) if your original report was filed with our Teleserve Unit.
- The Financial Crimes Unit (713-308-2500) if a patrol officer filed your original report.

You may obtain a copy of your incident report by contacting the Records Division at 713-308-8585, by appearing in person at 1200 Travis, 23rd floor, or by requesting one by mail. Please call the Records Division in advance to confirm that your report is available and to receive a quote on the cost of your report. The cost of a report is 10 cents per page. If you would like the report mailed, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request. Your report should arrive about two weeks from the time your request is processed. Please note that you may be provided with only the public release portion of the report which, in most cases, consists of only one page.

## **STEP I: Notify Credit Agencies**

Contact the following credit reporting companies:

- Trans Union 1-800-680-7289 [www.tuc.com](http://www.tuc.com)
- CSC Credit Services 1-800-272-9281 [www.csccredit.com](http://www.csccredit.com)
- Equifax 1-800-525-6285 [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)

Experian 1-888-397-3742 [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)

- Explain to each agency that you have been a victim of fraud and give them your HPD incident number.
- Ask each agency to place a "victim of fraud" statement into your credit file.
- Ask each agency to send you a copy of your credit report.

**\*\*Upon receipt, examine each report carefully for unauthorized accounts and inquiries.**

- Ask each agency for the names and addresses of creditors reporting the unauthorized accounts and inquiries.
- Trans Union, Equifax, and Experian will now temporarily remove disputed charges from your credit history when you provide them with a copy of your police report detailing the fraudulent charges. This allows you to obtain credit while your case is being investigated.

# Identity Theft continued...

## **STEP II: Notify merchants and creditors**

Contact each merchant and creditor who accepted the fraudulent charge or opened the fraudulent account.

- Advise the merchant or creditor that the account was opened or the charge was made without your permission.
- Ask the merchant or creditor to explain their process for resolving fraudulent transactions.
- The merchant or creditor should provide you with an affidavit to complete and return to them.
- Many merchants and creditors accept the "Affidavit of Fraud" form found online at [www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft). Please do not send affidavits to the Financial Crimes Unit. Your original police report is sufficient.
- Maintain contact with all merchants and creditors until their investigations are completed. Ask merchants or creditors to instruct the credit-reporting agency to remove all information related to a fraudulent transaction from your file.

## **STEP III: Review your credit report**

Allow 30 days after completion of a merchant or creditor's investigation for the credit-reporting agency to send you an amended credit report. If you have not received an amended report after 30 days, request one from each credit reporting agency that listed the fraudulent transaction or inquiry in your credit file. Upon receipt, ensure that the fraudulent transaction or inquiry has been removed from your report.

## **STEP IV: Contact the Federal Trade Commission**

The Federal Trade Commission compiles a nationwide database of victims of identity theft and of addresses where fraudulent credit cards and mail orders are sent. This allows law enforcement agencies around the country to contact you in case there are other charges or credit cards going to that same address. The FTC's toll-free number is 1-877-IDTHEFT (438-4338). Their web site is [www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft).

## **If You Have Been The Victim of Check Fraud**

### **STEP I: Notify your bank**

Advise your financial institution that you have been a victim of fraud, and give them your HPD incident number.

# Identity Theft continued...

## **STEP II: Send checks to your bank**

Return all forged and unauthorized checks to your bank or other financial institution, along with a notarized "Affidavit of Fraud" form provided by the bank or found online at [www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft) The Financial Crimes Unit does not need a copy of the affidavit.

## **STEP III: Notify the check-processing companies**

The listed check companies require copies of the police report; a notarized affidavit of forgery filed with your financial institution; and a copy of your driver license. Advise the agencies you are a victim of check fraud:

- National Check Fraud Service 1-843-571-2143 [www.ckfraud.org](http://www.ckfraud.org)
- Telecheck 1-800-710-9898 [www.telecheck.com](http://www.telecheck.com)
- Global Payments Check Service 1-866-860-9061 [www.globalpay.com](http://www.globalpay.com)
- Consumer Debit Resource 1-800-428-9623 [www.consumerdebit.com](http://www.consumerdebit.com)
- Consumer Debit Resource only receives reports from financial institutions. You may contact Consumer Debit Resource to obtain additional information if someone has opened a checking account in your name or used your social security number to open an account. You may also order your personal consumer report from their web site.

## **STEP IV: Inform merchants**

Contact the merchant if your bank notifies you regarding a forged check; or if the merchant who accepted your forged check contacts you:

- Advise the merchant that you have been the victim of check fraud.
- Provide the merchant with your HPD incident number.
- Complete a notarized "Affidavit of Fraud" form provided by the merchant or found online at [www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft) and return the form to the merchant. The Financial Crimes Unit does not need a copy of the affidavit.
- Request that each merchant file a police report with the local police department.

## Identity Theft *continued...*

Other resources that you may find useful or informative include the following:

- Postal Inspector 877-876-2455
- Social Security Fraud Hotline 1-800-269-0271

The Harris County District Attorney's Office estimates that the investigation and prosecution of many forgery, identity theft, and related cases can take up to one year to complete. Many cases have insufficient evidence to permit a complete investigation, and many others are resolved to the satisfaction of the victim without criminal prosecution. You may, therefore, wish to explore civil remedies by consulting with an attorney. Bear in mind, however, that criminal charges will not be pursued solely to gain advantage in a civil matter.

Please visit the Houston Police Department's web site at [www.houstontx.gov/police](http://www.houstontx.gov/police) and click on the "Crime Prevention" link for additional information regarding Financial Crimes.

### *Lock Out Intruders From Your Personal Information*



## *Houston Safety Net*

Working Together  
to End  
**DOMESTIC**



Houston Area Women's Center  
*Ending Domestic and Sexual Violence*

**The Houston Police Department and the Houston Area Women's Center are working together to educate the community in order to prevent domestic violence, sexual assault and dating violence. Through education we work to provide resources for survivors and to increase the reporting of sexual and domestic violence to law enforcement.**

### **What is Domestic Violence?**

Domestic violence is the use of physical force or threatening behavior by one member of a household towards another. **It is against the law!**

### **Domestic Violence Includes:**

**Physical Abuse:** hitting, kicking, choking, punching, slapping, burning and shoving

**Emotional Abuse:** constant criticism and insults, isolation from family, friends and coworkers, threats against the victim and the victim's family

**Economic Abuse:** not allowing the victim to work or study, not allowing the victim to have access to checking and savings accounts, controlling finances

**Sexual Abuse:** rape, forcing the victim to participate in sexual activities that she or he finds degrading

### **Warning Signs of a Batterer**

- Excessive jealousy / possessiveness
- Unrealistic expectations of self and others
- Anger is a typical response when limits are set
- Doesn't want you to go out with friends or family
- Controlling behavior
- Calls you all the time or spies on you
- Isolates or restrains you
- Tells you what to wear
- Sudden mood swings
- Threats of violence or suicide
- Cruelty to animals, children, or the elderly
- Humiliates or belittles you
- Does not let you work
- Does not let you have access to bank accounts
- History of past battering
- Intentionally damages your personal property
- Playful use of force during sex
- Pushing or hitting with a fist or palm
- Threatens you with a weapon or physical violence
- Dr. Jekyll / Mr. Hyde personality — Makes false promises to change abusive behavior
- Blames others for problems or actions
- Abuses drugs and / or alcohol and pressures you to do them
- Forces you to work and turn over your paycheck

# Working Together to End Domestic Violence contin-

## **Break Through the Lies!** **It is NOT Your Fault!**

- **Lie #1: "I'm the only one."**
- **Truth:** According to the FBI, every nine seconds a woman is beaten in her home.
- **Lie #2: "I asked for it."**
- **Truth:** It is not your fault! Domestic Violence and sexual assault are crimes punishable by law.
- **Lie #3: "Batterers don't rape."**
- **Truth:** Most often, a woman is raped in her home by someone she knows.
- **Lie #4: "This is normal."**
- **Truth:** Battering is a serious problem which affects our families, our friends and our community.
- **Lie #5: "No one can help me."**
- **Truth:** The Houston Area Women's Center and the Houston Police Department are here to help.

### IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Emergency and Police / Ambulance **911**  
Non-emergency Police **713-884-3131**

#### **The Houston Area Women's Center**

Sexual Assault Hotline  
713-528-RAPE (7273)  
Domestic Violence Hotline  
713-528-2121  
Community Education  
713-528-6798

#### **Houston Police Department**

Adult Sex Crimes Unit  
713-308-1180  
Juvenile Unit  
713-731-5335  
Family Violence Unit  
713-308-1100  
Hours (6:00am to 4:00pm)

**Houston Independent School District Police Department**  
713-892-7777

# SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION



*SEXUAL ASSAULT IS A CRIME OF VIOLENCE, NOT SEXUAL PASSION. IT IS MEANT TO DEGRADE, HUMILIATE AND CONTROL. IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE, AT ANYTIME, AT ANY PLACE.*

## MYTHS

- **It could never happen to me.**
- **Truth:** Everyone is a potential victim. Man, woman, child, any age, race, religion, occupation, education, or sexual preference.
- **The motive is sexual.**
- **Truth:** Rape is a violent assault and the motive is aggression, anger, and hostility.
- **Rape is committed on impulse and by a stranger.**
- **Truth:** Most rapes are planned and often occur in one's house. Many times the offender is a relative, friend, neighbor or other acquaintance of the victim/survivor (such as in the case of "date rape").
- **"Women who are raped are asking for it."**
- **Truth:** Rape is a violent and degrading crime. The youngest reported rape victim was 3 months old. The oldest was 99 years old. Both victims were in their bed sleeping. Age, what one wears, or the sex of the victim does not matter.
- **A rapist is easy to spot in a crowd.**
- **Truth:** Most rapists are young, married and appear normal. They can be of any race or economic background.
- **Rape is a non-violent crime.**
- **Truth:** Rape is a violent crime. 98% of the rapists either carry a weapon or threaten the victim with violence or death.

## Safety at Home

- Install good solid wood or metal doors on all exits.
- Install double cylinder deadbolt locks on all exit doors.
- Practice key control by limiting the number keys issued.
- Always lock doors.
- Secure windows with a secondary locking device.
- Acknowledge all callers through a locked door.
- Make sure exterior is well lighted.
- Do not advertise name on mailboxes.
- Get an unlisted phone number or when listing your name, use initials only and not including your address.

# Sexual Assault Prevention continued...

## Safety While Driving

- Keep your vehicle well maintained.
- Always check the front and back seats before entering your car.
- Keep doors locked and windows rolled up.
- If you think someone is following you, do not go home. Drive to the nearest police station, fire station, open gas station, or well-lighted place where there are people that can help.
- If you have car problems, raise the hood and tie a white cloth to the door handle to signal for help. Get back into the car and keep the doors and windows locked. If someone stops, ask them to call for help. Do not accept rides from anyone.
- If possible, always carry a fully charged cell phone for emergencies.

## Safety While Shopping

- Avoid parking next to vehicles with persons still inside. Avoid parking next to panel vans.
- Park in well lighted areas.
- At night, shop with others.
- When walking to and from your vehicle, have keys in your hand ready to unlock the door.
- Use customer pick-up when available.

## Street Sense

- Walk with an "ATTITUDE."
- Avoid walking alone.
- If you live in an apartment, pick up mail during daylight hours.
- Avoid taking shortcuts through alleys or fields.

## If You Are Attacked

- Stay as calm as possible, think rationally and evaluate your resources and options.
- It may be more advisable to submit (this does not mean you consent) than resist and risk severe injury or death. Everyone has different strengths and abilities. You will have to make this decision based on the circumstances. Remember, do not resist if the attacker has a weapon.
- Keep assessing the situation as it is happening. If one strategy does not work, try another one.
- Other options to nonresistance are negotiating, stalling for more time, distracting the assailant and fleeing to a safe place, verbal assertiveness, screaming to attract attention and physical resistance.
- Fighting back or struggling may discourage the attack, but remember you have to hurt the rapist bad enough to create the time you need to escape.
  - Scratching with your fingernails
  - Poking/jabbing the eyes and throat area
  - Punching the nose
  - Biting
  - Kneeing/kicking the groin
- Weapons such as guns, knives, and chemical sprays can easily be turned against you unless you are trained and not afraid to use them. You must be prepared to possibly kill the attacker.
- If you are determined to carry some type of weapon, a chemical spray (ex. Pepper Spray) is your best choice. It is non-lethal if used against you. Remember, you already have weapons with you such as your keys, pens, pencils, and the most important weapon **your brain**.

## What to do if you become a victim/survivor of a sexual assault.

- Report it to the police immediately.
- Do not bathe.
- Do not disturb the scene of the rape.
- Do not wash your clothes.
- A medical procedure at a hospital should follow the police report consisting of a medical examination and a rape kit.
- Psychological assistance will be available to you.

# A Parents Guide to Child Safety

*Child Safety starts with “you” the parent/guardian. We must teach our children to be safe and to follow our lead in personal safety. Take the time to teach your child these important safety tips to help reduce their chances of becoming a victim of crime or the victim of a child predator.*

## **SAFETY WHILE AT HOME ALONE**

- Keep doors and windows locked at all times.
- Acknowledge all callers through a locked door.
  - Never let anyone know you are alone.
  - Tell callers to come back later and if they do not leave, call 9-1-1.
- Answer all telephone calls.
  - Remember to NEVER let anyone know you are home alone.
- Post important telephone numbers near all phones in case of emergencies:
  - Call 9-1-1 for Police, Fire, Ambulance, Poison Control.
  - Parent’s/guardian’s work and cellular phone numbers.
  - Neighbor’s phone numbers.
- If a latch key child:
  - Check with parent/guardian or neighbor upon arrival at home.
  - Explain to the child the consequences of not making the call.
- Never display the house key around the home (keep the key concealed).
- No visitors are allowed while the parents/guardians are not at home.
- Never enter the house when you find the door ajar or a window open.

## **SAFETY AT SCHOOL/PLAY**

- Develop a safe route to and from school/playground with your child. Stress to your child to stick to this route and explain the reasons why this is important.
- Never take short cuts through fields, construction sites, wooded areas, or dark isolated streets/alleys.
- Familiarize your child with your neighborhood.
- “Safe Havens”- If your child is out, these are the places your child can go for safety:
  - Houses of neighbors you trust, stores, shops, police stations, fire stations, and business offices.
- Walk/play with other children and try not to be alone. There is always safety in numbers.
- Be alert and aware of people and their surroundings.
- Stay in well-lighted areas.
- Teach your child to report suspicious persons to you, teachers, or police officers.
- If your child is approached or followed by a suspicious vehicle or person:
  - Scream, run away in the opposite direction, run to a safe haven, and call the police.

# A Parent's Guide To Child Safety *continued...*

- Teach your child what to take notice of when they encounter a suspicious vehicle or person:
  - Type and color of vehicle, license plate number.
  - Male/Female, clothing description, distinguishing marks.
- Never hitchhike.
- Talk to your child about their friends ( get to know them).
- Let your child know that they can dial 9-1-1 from a public phone for free.
- When looking for a daycare/after school program for your child:
  - Verify the business license and certificates.
  - Review the staff qualifications.
  - Discuss the rules for visitations, check-ins, check-outs, and safety precautions
  - Talk to friends and neighbors about the business and it's reputation.
- Check out your child's school policy on absenteeism (Are the parents notified?)
- What is the school's policy on visitations? (Discuss all safety concerns with the school.)

**Child predators look for children demonstrating specific traits and habits. Parents/guardians must take the offensive in understanding what these predators look for in choosing their child victims. The Child Safety recommendations discussed cover many areas which, if followed, will reduce the likelihood of your child becoming a victim of this type of crime. Another important safety precaution parents/ guardians must be aware of includes the next topic.**

## **What Do Predators Look For**

Child Predators/Abductors look for children who:

- Appear unkempt or neglected.
- Are small built.
- Travel alone, especially at night.
- Frequent video arcades.
- Smoke at an early age.

## **Common Child Lures**

- **Request for Assistance:** The child is asked directions, assistance to find small animals, carry groceries, etc.
- **Prevention:** Let your child know that adults **DO NOT** ask children for assistance. Your child should step back and run.
- **Emergency:** This lure is used to confuse the child. Example: "Your mommy was taken to the hospital and she sent me here to pick you up."
- **Prevention:** Establish a list of trusted persons that can pick up your child in an emergency and teach your child that they may only leave with someone from that list.

# A Parent's Guide To Child Safety *continued...*

## **What Your Child Should Know**

- Full name and address including city, state, and zip code
- Parent's/Guardian's full name
- Home phone number, including area code
- Emergency phone number 9-1-1. How/when to use it
- Never accept things or go anywhere or with anyone without parent/guardian's permission
- Safe havens
- What a stranger is - (Anyone you don't know good or bad)
- NO one has the right to touch them
- Threatening areas (wooded lots, alleyways, etc.)
- How to operate door and window locks
- Escape routes from the house and vehicle and the designated meeting point
- That their parents/guardians will always love them

## **What Parents/Guardians Should Know**

- Do not place the name of your child on their clothing
- If your child walks to school or in your neighborhood, walk with them and discuss the safe routes and safe havens
- Have your child fingerprinted and keep updated records, including the child's photo and a hair sample
- The name of your child's playmates and their parents
- Important contact information if your child is missing

*Call 9-1-1 to report your missing child  
Contact the Center for Missing & Exploited Children  
**(1-800-843-5678)***

# A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety For Children



The Internet is a valuable educational and entertainment medium kids are using and **child predators know it**. Child predators are taking advantage of the internet to expose your child to inappropriate subject matter. By following the safety tips below you can reduce the chance of your child becoming a victim of a child predator.

## What Are The Risks

- **Exposure to inappropriate material** - Some material may be hateful, sexually explicit, illegal, or violent.
- **Physical molestation** - Some children, while online, may risk their safety by giving out information or arranging personal encounters. Pedophiles are known to spend time in chat rooms, make postings on bulletin boards and to use email to gain a child's confidence where they may setup a face-to-face meeting.
- **Harassment** - Some children receive messages that are harassing, demeaning or belligerent through chat rooms, bulletin boards and emails.
- **Financial risks** - Parent's credit card numbers and other personal financial information are sometimes given out which may cause negative financial consequences.

## Your Child May Be At Risk

### *If He Or She:*

- Switches screens or becomes defensive or uneasy when you enter the room.
- Makes calls to unknown numbers or receives strange phone calls from people you do not know.
- Uses the Internet at odd hours of the night.
- Receives unexplainable presents, clothing, jewelry, or money.
- Becomes withdrawn from family or friends.
- Uses an online account that belongs to someone else.
- Has pornography on the computer.

## Parental Guidelines

- Place the computer in an area that is accessible by the whole family.
- Subscribe to an online service that offers parental control features.
- Purchase blocking software that utilizes passwords and parental controls.
- Spend time with your child exploring the Internet.
- Tell your child that he/she can confide in you without the fear of being punished.

## **A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety for Children** *continued...*

- Talk openly with your child about your suspicions and about online dangers.
- Review all content on your child's computer including email, browser history, etc.
- Use caller ID services to monitor who is calling.
- Monitor your child's access to the Internet including email, chat rooms, instant messengers, etc.

### **Internet Safety Rules**

#### *Instruct Your Child To:*

- Always let you know immediately if they find something scary or threatening on the Internet.
- Never give out their name, address, telephone number, password, school name, parent's name, or any other personal information.
- Never meet face to face with someone they met online.
- Never respond to messages that have bad words or seem scary or weird.
- Never enter an area that charges for services without asking first.
- Never send a picture to anyone without your permission.

### **If Any Of The Following Occur**

- Someone in your household has received child pornography.
- Your child has received sexually explicit images from someone who knows that your child is under 18 years of age.
- Your child has been sexually solicited by someone who knows that your child is under 18 years of age.

### **Contact the following agencies:**

- Houston Police Department  
713-731-5335
- FBI  
713-693-5000
- Center for Missing and Exploited Children  
1-800-843-5678

**Be sure to keep your computer turned off to preserve any evidence and do not copy or print any images or text unless specifically directed to do so by law enforcement.**

# CHILD CAR SAFETY SEATS

## What are the Facts

- **FACT:** Motor Vehicle Crashes are the leading cause of death and serious injury for children over 1 year old.
- **FACT:** Every day an unrestrained child under age five is killed in a traffic crash in this country.
- **FACT:** The Safest place for a child in a car is in the rear seat, properly buckled into a child safety seat or a booster seat.

## Texas Law States

- A person commits an offense if the person operates a passenger vehicle, transports a child who is younger than five years and less than 36 inches in height, and does not keep the child secured during the operation of the vehicle in a child passenger safety seat system according to the instructions of the manufacturer of the safety seat system.
- "Child Safety Seat System" includes car seats and booster seat, including high-back and backless boosters.
- A person commits an offense if the person operates a passenger vehicle that is equipped with safety belts; and allows a child who is younger than 17 years of age and who is not required to be secured in a child passenger safety seat system, to ride in the vehicle without requiring the child to be secured by a safety belt.

## Texas Law Summarized

- All children under 17 years old must be secured in a safety belt or child safety seat, whether they are sitting in the front seat or back seat.
- Children under 5 years old **and** less than 36 inches tall must ride in a child safety seat.
- Children more than 36 inches tall and at least 5 years old but younger than 17 years old must be secured by a safety belt.

# Child Car Safety Seats continued...

## The Best Safety-Seat Parents/Guardians can use is:

- One that fits their car
- Easy to use
- Appropriate for their child's height and weight

## What Type of Child Car Safety Seat Should I Use?

- If your child is:
  - ⇒ **Under a Year old and less than 20 pounds** , use a rear-facing infant car seat. A rear-facing infant car seat should never be placed in the front seat of a car with an air-bag. The infant child seat should sit at a 45-degree angle or the angle specified on the seat. This helps keep the baby's head from drooping forward and cutting off the air-way.
  - ⇒ **Under a Year old and less than 30 pounds** , use a rear-facing convertible car seat. A rear facing convertible car seat should never be placed in the front seat of a car with an airbag. The convertible child seat should sit at a 45-degree angle or the angle specified on the seat. This helps keep the baby's head from drooping forward and cutting off the airway.
  - ⇒ **At least one year old and 20 to 40 pounds** , use a convertible car seat. You may turn the seat to face forward.
  - ⇒ **At least one year old and 30 to 40 pounds**, use a booster seat with a harness.
  - ⇒ **Over 40 pounds and less than 4'9"**, your child should use a booster seat but remove the harness straps. The booster seat must be used with a lap/shoulder seat belt until the child is about 4'9".
  - ⇒ **Over 4'9" tall**, your child must use a lap/shoulder seat belt. Children younger than 13 years old should never ride in the front seat of vehicles with active-passenger air-bags.

## Did you know?

- Four out of five car seats are installed and/or used wrong.
- Could your child's be one of them?
- What can you do to make sure you install the car seat correctly?

## Free Car Safety Seat Checks

- Make an appointment today for a free car safety seat check, sponsored by *Texas Children's Childhood Injury Prevention Center* and the *Greater Houston Coalition for SAFE KIDS*.
- Visit [www.texaschildrenshospital.org/carecenters/InjuryPrevention/Childsafety.aspx](http://www.texaschildrenshospital.org/carecenters/InjuryPrevention/Childsafety.aspx) for a list of the locations in the greater Houston area offering free car safety seat checks or call Texas Children's Hospital at 832-828-1314.

# Senior Citizens Crime Prevention

*A lifetime of experience coupled with physical problems associated with aging often make older Americans fearful of being victims of burglaries, robberies, physical assaults, and other violent crimes. However, the greatest crimes against senior citizens comes from fraud and con games.*

## Personal Safety

- Go with family, friends, or a group if possible rather than by yourself when going to the store, bank, and the doctor.
- Use direct deposit for any checks you receive such as your Social Security and retirement payments.
- Avoid displaying large amounts of cash or other tempting items, such as expensive jewelry, clothing, and wraps.
- Carry purses close to the body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket.
- Travel only well-lighted streets and avoid short cuts through deserted areas.

## Safety at Home

- Lock your doors and windows when home alone.
- Do not let strangers in your home.
- Do not judge a book by its cover, well-dressed people commit crimes and so do women.
- If you have not called or signed up for social services, free groceries or medical attention, do not let a stranger convince you that you need their services.
- If you have called for services, check the person's identification before they enter your home.
- Never let anyone know that you live alone or that you are home alone.
- Work out a "buddy" system with a friend to check on each other. As soon as a stranger appears, call a trusted neighbor to come over.
- Consider a home alarm system that provides monitoring for burglary, fire, and medical emergencies.

## Telemarketing Fraud

- Be skeptical of "too good to be true" telephone offers.
- Resist pressure for an immediate decision and ask for written follow-up materials that explain the offer.
- Agree to pay no more than the price of a postage stamp when notified about "winning" a sweepstakes. All legitimate sweepstakes must allow a "no purchase necessary" way to play the game and collect the prize.

## Senior Citizens Crime Prevention continued...

- Never provide your credit card or checking account numbers to a caller from an unfamiliar company without first checking the company out with your Better Business Bureau, state consumer protection agency or state Attorney General.
- Never allow yourself to be drawn into a conversation with an unknown caller in which you reveal your name, address, marital status or anything to indicate you are alone.
- Ask to be placed on the company's "do not call" list to reduce the number of unwanted telephone.

### Latest Scams

- A woman states that she is a Social Worker and needs to give you a hearing test. When you turn away from, she grabs your valuables or you discover items missing after she has left.  
During the spring, summer or fall when the weather is nice outside, individuals working on their yard most often do not lock the doors to their homes. One individual will approach the victim and occupy his/her attention while a second person enters the victim's home and steals money, jewelry, and other valuable items.
- Another home diversion technique is for perpetrators to come to a residence and ask for a drink of water, use the bathroom, or use a telephone to gain entry into your house. The person will divert the victim's attention while an accomplice searches for valuables.
- Be aware of anyone claiming to represent companies, consumer organizations, or government agencies that offer to recover lost money from fraudulent telemarketers for a fee. As a twist on this same theme, cons sometimes pretend to be officials trying to "catch" a thief with your assistance. Never go along with these schemes.
- Individuals offering to perform various home repair jobs such as roof or lay down ceramic tiles for cheap. The suspects claims to have materials left over from other jobs. Once the job is completed, the cost of the work is more than the first quote and payment in cash is demanded. Also, the suspects might demand money upfront to buy materials for the job and leaves without coming back.

# **ROBBERY PREVENTION FOR BUSINESSES**

## **Stay Alert**

- Know who is in your business and where they are.
- Be suspicious of people wearing inappropriate clothing for the weather.
- Be aware of suspicious activity outside of your business especially at opening and closing times.
- Write down license plate numbers of suspicious vehicles if visible from inside your business.

## **Physical Deterrents**

- Keep your business well lit, especially at the entrances and exits.
- Maintain visibility throughout the business. Make sure signs and displays do not obstruct the view of the customer service area from the street.
- Mark the edge of the main doorway at varying heights to help identify the height of a robber.
- Keep cash at a minimum, and post notices in the doorway of this fact.
- Consider the installation of video cameras and/or alarm systems.

## **Bank Deposit Procedures**

- Avoid wearing name tags or clothing advertising your business.
- When carrying large amounts of cash, use police/armed guard protection.
- Try to make deposits during daylight hours.
- At least two employees should make the deposit.
- Go directly to the bank. Do not make other stops along the way.
- Use various routes and times.
- Inform your business when you arrive as well as when you leave the bank.
- Vary the vehicles and personnel used if possible.
- Be aware of any vehicle that may be following you.
- Never leave the deposit unattended in the vehicle.
- If you pick up cash from the bank, follow the same procedures while returning to your business.

# Robbery Prevention for Businesses continued

## Opening and Closing Procedures

- Have at least two employees present when opening and closing the business.
- Upon arrival at the business, look around the building for suspicious persons or vehicles as well as possible break-ins.
- At closing, have all areas inside business check to make sure no one is hiding inside.
- DO NOT open the door to anyone after business hours.

**Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Employees are sometimes followed to their business or to their homes by robbers. Certain safety precautions should be followed regarding vehicles and home safety. Be observant of vehicles following you.**

**Know where police and fire stations are in your area. These are places of safety, should you suspect you are being followed. Write down the license plate of any suspicious vehicles. It is better to throw it away because you do not need it than to wish you had it later.**

## Planning for a Robbery

Although this is something that no person should ever have to experience, it is better to be prepared. The main objective should be to survive the robbery.

- Do not argue or fight with the robber. Any amount of money is not worth personal injury.
- Listen to your own instincts. If something seems wrong about a situation or a person, it probably is.
- Mentally review as often as possible the actions you should take if confronted with an emergency so that it becomes "second nature."
- Keep a spare key in any room in which an employee may be locked after a robbery and keep a hidden phone for such an emergency.
- Keep the telephone number of the police near the phone.
- Actively participate in all training sessions offered to become thoroughly familiar with company policies and procedures.

Have regular safety meetings to develop and discuss your "Plan." Some elements of a good plan include:

- Employee demeanor during a robbery (do not resist)
- How to notify police.
- An escape route
- How to obtain a suspect's description and/or vehicle information.
- Have prearranged signals between employees.
- How to activate an alarm.
- When not to activate an alarm.

# **Robbery Prevention for Businesses continued**

## **What To Do During a Robbery**

DO NOT argue or fight with the robber. Any amount of money or valuables is not worth personal injury to you.

Follow the robber's directions, but do not volunteer more than asked for.

If you have to move or reach, tell the robber what you are going to do and why. Assure the robber that you will cooperate.

Make mental notes of:

- The robber's race, age, height, sex, clothing, complexion, hair, eye color, etc.
- Anything unusual about the robber such as scars or tattoos.
- The number of accomplices and how they left the scene, direction of travel, type and color of vehicle. Get the license number if you can safely do so.
- Any conversations the suspects may have with one another.
- What the suspect's weapon looked like so you can describe it later.
- Also, try to remember what the suspect touches so that fingerprints may be lifted.

## **After the Robbery**

- Call the police, 9-1-1, immediately.
- Lock all doors and ask all witnesses to remain until the officers arrive. If a witness must leave, obtain his/her name, address and telephone number to give to officers.
- All witnesses should write down a description of all the suspects. Do not discuss the robbery or compare notes about the robber's appearance.
- Protect the crime scene. Do not touch anything.

# Navigate Your Way to Crime Statistics in Your Area

The Houston Police Department receives numerous requests from citizens for crime statistic data in specific areas of our city. The department provides crime statistic data on our Web site at [www.houstonpolice.org](http://www.houstonpolice.org). To assist you in navigating your way to crime in your area, illustrations are provided below.

## Your Step By Step Guide

It is important for users of crime statistics data on the Houston Police Department web site to understand that the primary objective is to generate a reliable set of crime statistics for use in law enforcement administration, operation, and management. HPD does not provide this data as a method of determining if one police beat or area of the city is safer or more dangerous than any other beat or area. Police beats and districts vary in size, population, and density, making such comparisons difficult.

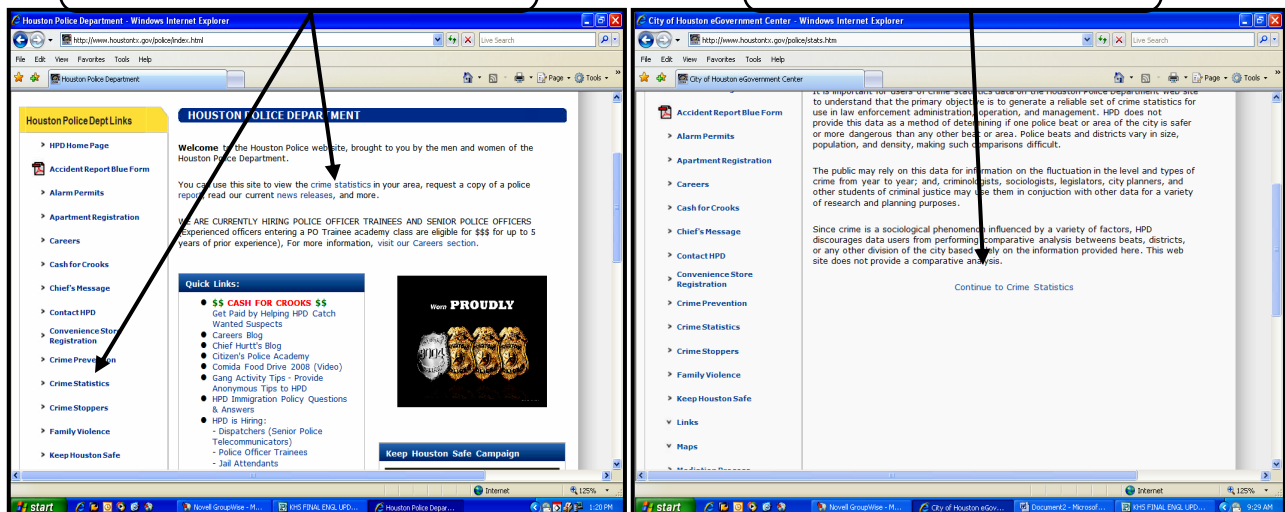
The public may rely on this data for information on the fluctuation in the level and types of crime from year to year; and, criminologists, sociologists, legislators, city planners, and other students of criminal justice may use them in conjunction with other data for a variety of research and planning purposes.

Since crime is a sociological phenomenon influenced by a variety of factors, HPD discourages data users from performing comparative analysis between beats, districts, or any other division of the city based solely on the information provided here. This web site does not provide a comparative analysis.

Go to [www.houstonpolice.org](http://www.houstonpolice.org)

Click on "Crime Statistics" located on the Homepage

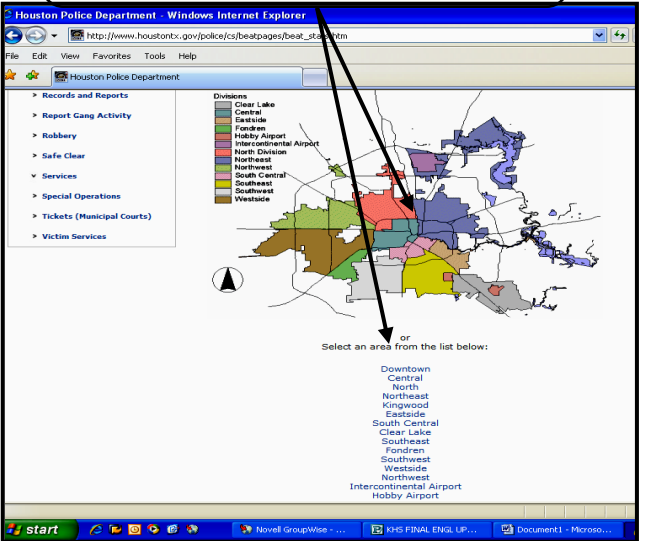
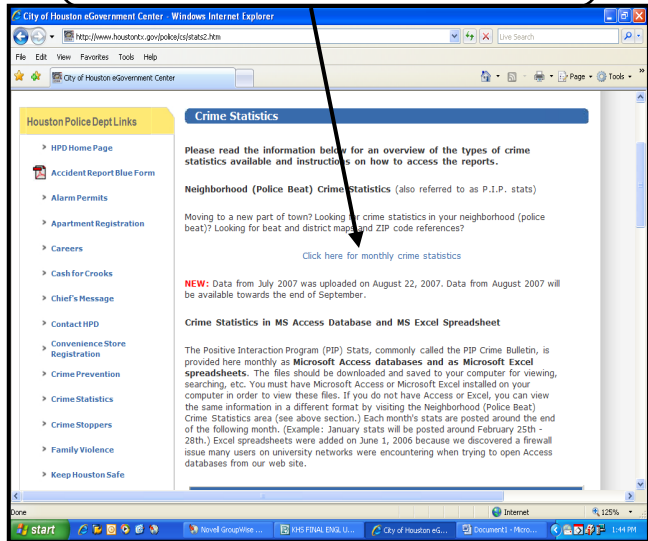
Next, click on "Continue to Crime Statistics"



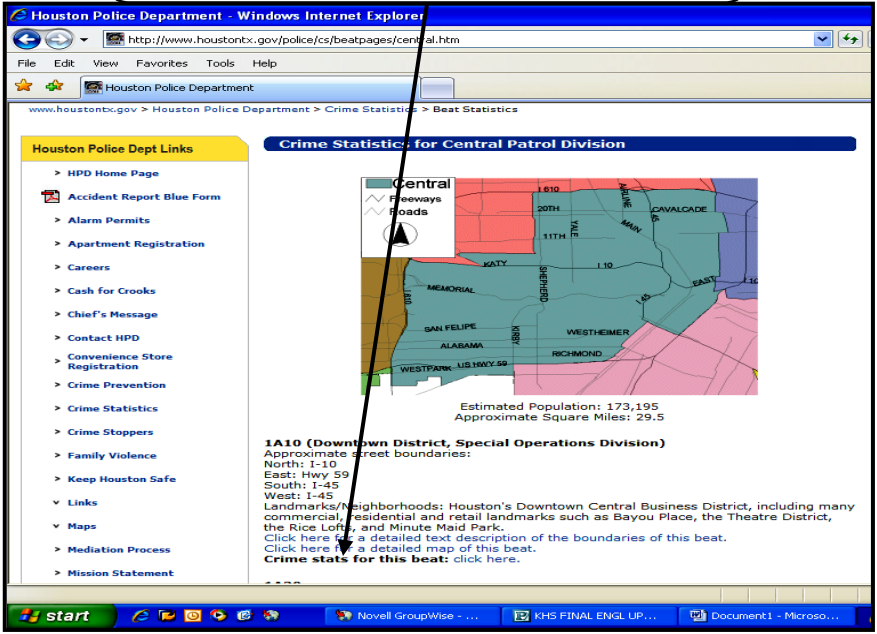
# Navigate Your Way to Crime Statistics in Your Area continued...

Click on "Click Here for Monthly Crime Statistics"

Scroll down until you see map. Click the area of Houston you wish to research from the clickable, graphic map or from the list.



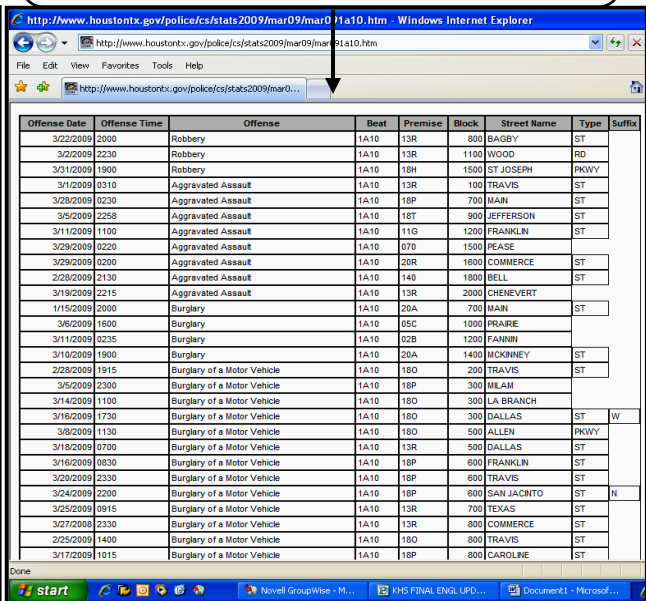
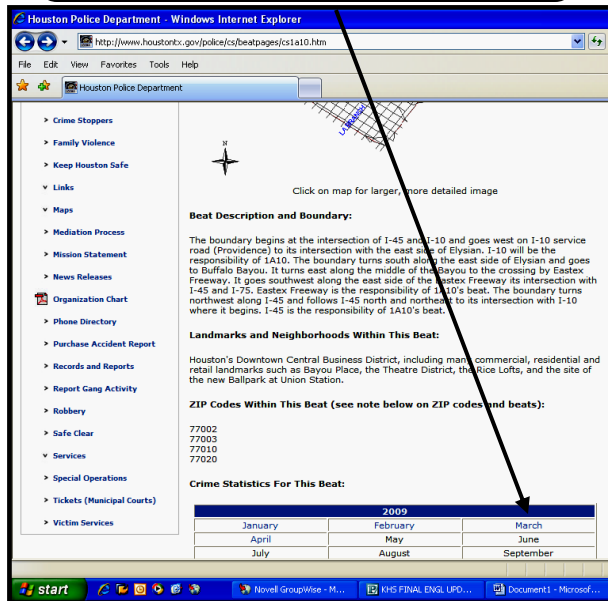
Each beat provides a detailed text description of the boundaries and a detailed map to assist you in locating your area. Choose "Click Here" next to Crime Stats for once you locate the area you want to view



# Navigate Your Way to Crime Statistics in Your Area continued...

Select Month and Year of crime stats you want to view

You will be provided with the following information: Offense Date, Offense Time, Offense, Beat, Premise, and Street Name



## Notes:

- The Houston Police Department does not recommend raw data comparisons be made between police beats. This web site does not provide a comparative analysis of the various beats.
- The data presented in these reports is NOT the official Crime Statistics for the Houston Police Department. This data is being provided prior to the release of the Department's Official Monthly Uniform Crime Report. For information on requesting UCR data and other reports, please see our [Public Information page](#).
- If you plan to print out the crime statistic tables, for best results, choose the "landscape" orientation from the properties menu in your printer dialogue box.
- ZIP code boundaries and police beat boundaries do not correspond. ZIP code boundaries may overlap beat boundaries and there may be several beats within several ZIP codes and vice versa. ZIP codes are provided only as a reference.
- Each month's statistics are posted by the 25th of the *following* month.

