

Prevent Identity Theft From Happening to You

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Start With the Front Door

- **Check who is at the door before opening it.** Pause before opening the door to verify the visitor's identity. If you are unsure of the authenticity of the caller's identity, do NOT open the door. Never open the door to an unexpected caller who cannot provide adequate identification. If you feel uneasy about the visitor, simply do not allow the entrance to your home. If they persist in demanding entrance, call the local authorities and report the situation.
- **Request identification from visitors you don't know.** If you do not recognize the visitor, request that they provide a photo identification to you by passing it under the door frame. If they do not comply, do not allow them to enter.
- **Install a door with a peep hole at the very least** or, if possible, a video surveillance unit to visually verify a visitor's identity. Do not rely on this alone, remember to always ask for identification. If the visitor obscures his face or avoids standing in an area that can be easily observed by you without opening the door, beware and ask that they present themselves clearly. If they refuse to comply, report this encounter to 911 as suspicious activity and provide a detailed report of the incident.

General Safety For Your Home

- **Every exterior door needs a deadbolt.** Equip every entryway into your home from the outside with a deadbolt locking mechanism. Also consider installing a professional security or alarm system with an access panel at each exterior door.
- **Leave interior light on while away.** If you will be away from your home over night, leave an interior light turned on.
- **Do not hide spare key in obvious locations.** Do not hide a spare door key over the door frame or under the welcome mat.
- If your home has a garage door, do not rely on the single lock present on most doors. Always install a padlock and keep it locked at all times. If the padlock is left open and unattended, a thief may remove the padlock and have a duplicate key made. Once the padlock is replaced by the thief, he can enter your garage at his convenience.
- **Make a list of all your valuable.** Keep an accurate log of your valuables including any identifying factors like serial numbers or engravings. It is also advised to mark all of your valuables to aid in your recovery of the items in the event that they are stolen.
- **Stop mail deliveries while on vacation.** When leaving for an extended period of time, stop all deliveries, set interior lights up on a timer. Notify your local C.O.P.S. Substation of your intended dates of absence from your home. You may also call Spokane Police Volunteer Unit at 622-5885 to request a Vacation Home Check. Ask a neighbor to check your home frequently at irregular intervals. Arrange for regular lawn care to be performed during your absence.
- **Post neighborhood watch signs.** Help protect your neighbors and let thieves know that your neighborhood is watched by the residents by posting neighborhood watch signs. If you see any suspicious activity, call 911 immediately.

Staying Safe in an Apartment

- **Make sure intercoms are working.** If your complex has an intercom system, report any malfunctions to the landlord and insist upon prompt repair and maintenance of the system.
- **Don't let strangers into the apartment building.** Never admit a person who claims to be visiting another resident of your building or a caller arrives who you do not recognize
- **Refer maintenance staff to the apartment manager.** If a repairman or delivery person requests admittance for interior work or for a resident that is not at home, refer him to the office manager of your building.

Report all unusually activity to 911. Report all suspicious persons and activity in your building to 911 immediately. If you notice someone loitering or acting strangely, call 911 and give as many details as possible. Practice in memorizing distinguishing physical features of those around you. Guess heights and weights and then ask friends if you were correct. Try to pay attention to eye and hair color. Take note of tattoos or scars and what they resemble as well as their location on the body. Practice by mentally recording what a person is wearing and then look away to see how many details you can recall accurately such as color, layers of clothing, glasses, and style of shoes.