

Safety Tips and Information

Vehicle Security

Protect your vehicle!

Lock your car and pocket the key when you leave - even if just for a minute. Close windows all the way and make sure the trunk is locked.

Control your keys. Never leave an identification tag on your key ring. If your keys are lost or stolen, it could help a thief locate your car or your home.

If carrying packages or valuable items, store them in your trunk if possible. If you do leave packages, clothing or other articles in the car, make sure they are out of sight.

Park in well-lit, busy areas. Avoid leaving your vehicle in unattended parking lots for long periods of time. If you park in a lot where you must leave a key, leave the ignition key only to protect items in trunk or glove box.

When buying a car, ask about anti-theft options such as steering column locks, alarms, switches that interrupt the fuel or electronic systems and locks for tape decks, batteries and gas tanks. Many insurance companies offer reduced rates to owners who install security devices.

Keep your car's Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and a complete description in a safe place at home. Since 1969, the federal government has required manufacturers to engrave a unique number, the VIN, on all passenger cars in one visible and several hidden locations. This information is very important in the event your vehicle is stolen and you choose to report it to the police.

Home Security

Make your home look (and sound) occupied

By day, leave drapes and shades in normal position - the way you have them when at home. (Don't leave easily moveable valuables in sight close to windows.)

At night, leave on some inner lights - bathrooms and hallways for example. Consider buying automatic timers that turn lamps on after dark, then off a few hours later or at dawn. These timers can also turn on a radio so your home sounds occupied.

Never leave garage doors open - especially with no car in sight. This is like a WELCOME sign to burglars. Closing garage doors is something to do every time you leave - even if only for a few minutes. When leaving for longer periods, don't forget to remove easily stolen objects like a power mower, garden hose, lawn chairs, bicycles and the like from your yard and keep them safely locked up.

Be a good neighbor

Keep an eye on your neighbor's homes; get them to do the same for you.

If you see something suspicious - movement inside when a home should be empty . . . a strange car or truck in the driveway . . . a loiterer - call the 911 immediately. Make a reasonable effort to get a good description and license number without endangering yourself. Burglars have been known to use a truck and openly carry off valuable possessions. If your neighbor didn't mention moving, be suspicious of a moving truck removing items from their home. The Police Department would rather you called them than wished you'd called them.

Install good locks. . . and lock them!

There is one lock that crime prevention experts recommend; it's a deadbolt lock with a one-inch throw. This type of lock provides better security than what many homes have. You can get more information from the police, locksmith or hardware dealer about these types of locks.

Besides good locks, it is also a good idea to have a one-way peephole in your front door so you can find out who's outside without opening your door to a possibly dangerous stranger. Such viewers are inexpensive and easy to install. They are much better than chain latches that are easy to force loose.

For windows, install window locks. They're inexpensive and provide some extra security. Another idea is to get wedge devices that prevent windows from being opened or allow you to open them an inch or two for ventilation but prevent opening them wider. Sliding glass doors are a special problem because they can be forced open sideways or simply popped out of the track. There are various inexpensive items such as a Charlie bar or supplemental locks which will give you better sliding door protection.

The best lock in the world is worthless if it isn't locked. Always lock up - even if you're away from the home only minutes. Houses have been cleaned out while the owner was mowing the lawn or visiting a neighbor. Remember, a lock is not a lock unless you lock it. This is also true for alarm systems!

Don't open your door to anyone that does not have business inside

This isn't just to guard against robbery by force or threat of force; sometimes burglars who have no intention of using force will first try to get in under some pretext so they can scout out valuables and study locks, windows and other means of entry. Ask repair people and others who claim to have business inside to show positive identification and keep the door closed while you study the identification through the peephole. If you have the slightest doubt, telephone their supervisors back at work, getting the number from your directory. If you wish to help a lost or stranded motorist, you make the call while he or she waits outside.

When you do admit a worker or a salesperson you were expecting, do not leave them alone at any time. Don't reward the burglar who does get in. If, despite your precautions, a burglar does get into your home, don't offer a "bonus" of cash or easily carried jewelry. Never keep large sums of cash around the house. Keep valuable jewelry that you don't often use in a safe deposit box.

Don't welcome burglars by telephone!

Burglars often try to find out if anyone is home by phoning. If you get several suspicious "wrong number" calls or "nobody-at-the-other-end" calls, call 911. Warn family members, especially children, never to give information out by phone - especially about who is home, who is out or how long anyone is expected to be out. Also, make it harder for burglars to "case" your home by phone by avoiding names on mailboxes or on doors. Your name on display only makes it easier for the burglar to look your name up in the phone book or online.

Identity Theft/Mail Theft

Identity Theft

- Always shred financial documents and paperwork containing personal information.
- Protect your Social Security number, don't carry your social security card in your wallet or write it on anything. Provide your social security number only if absolutely necessary, always ask if you can use another identifier instead.
- Never click on links sent in unsolicited emails, use firewalls, anti-spyware, and anti-virus software on all computers you use; and keep them up to date!
- Don't use obvious passwords like your birth date, pet's name, or last four digits of your social security number.
- Keep your personal information in a secure place at home.
- Detect suspicious activity by routinely monitoring your financial accounts and billing statements.
- Request your credit report annually and compare it to your financial documents.
- Report crimes that occurred online/on the internet via www.IC3.gov

Mail Theft

Pick up the mail from your mailbox on a daily basis, as close to the time it is delivered as possible. Invest in a locking mailbox. Have financially sensitive (or all) mail sent to a post office box.

Child Security

- Discuss with your children what to do if threatened by a stranger and to report any suspicious incidents to you. Tell your children never to go near a stranger's car, give someone directions or help look for a missing or lost pet if asked to do so by someone they don't know.
- Have current photos of your children. For children under seven, photos should be taken twice yearly; for children over seven, annually. If possible, videotape your children.
- Obtain passports so your children cannot be taken out of the country without your permission.
- Teach your children their full names, addresses, and phone numbers, including area code and long distance dialing information. Post emergency numbers near the phone and show children how to dial 911. They should also know what to say to an operator if they are lost or have an emergency.
- Never put your child's name on any article of clothing, lunch box, backpack, etc. A stranger should never be able to call your child by name.
- Be cautious when choosing daycare facilities, preschools or babysitters. Always check references. Make sure these facilities will release your child to no one but you without prior permission.
- Instruct babysitters or children left at home to never open the door to strangers and never volunteer information over the phone. If asked, your children should say that you are home, but are unable to come to the phone.
- Never leave children unattended in a car, not even for a minute.
- If your child is old enough to be out on his own, encourage him to use the "buddy system" and to avoid empty lots, fields and parks. Know the route your child takes to and from school. Have your children check in with you at a specific time if you will not be home upon their arrival.

Safe Parties

Safe Party Checklist

Please use the guide/checklist provided below when planning a party of any kind at your home. While the Clyde Hill Police Department would like you to have a successful and enjoyable party, we would also like you to be aware of the potential problems or risks associated with hosting a party at your home.