

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 to this same theme, cons sometimes pretend to be officials trying to "catch" a thief with your assistance. Never go along with these schemes.

Be aware of individuals offering to perform various home repair jobs such as your 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 the form of cash is demanded. Also, the suspects might demand money upfront to buy materials for the job and leaves without coming back.

## **Emergency 9-1-1 Police Non-Emergency 713-884-3131**

*For General Information, Contact  
Your Local Police Station*

*or*

*Contact Community Affairs at  
713-308-3200*

*Citizens Help Line Dial 3-1-1*

*For more information, visit  
[www.houstonpolice.org](http://www.houstonpolice.org)*

# **SENIOR CITIZENS CRIME PREVENTION**



*Keep* **Houston  
SAFE**



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.

### **Safety at Home**

- Lock your doors and windows.
- 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 are at 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.

- 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 calls.

### **Latest Scams**

A woman states that she is a Social Worker and needs to give you a hearing test. When you turn away from her, 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.