



## Crime Prevention Tips

### Burglary and Theft:

- **Trim shrubbery** to waist level – leave no place to hide.
- Ensure **newspapers and mail are picked up** – both when you are home and especially on vacation. *NOCUPP members may request vacation watches to ensure extra patrols of your home during vacation and that papers are not piled in front of your house.*
  - **US Mail** can be held by going online at: [holdmail.usps.com/holdmail/](http://holdmail.usps.com/holdmail/)
  - **UPS** can be held by going online at: [wwwapps.ups.com](http://wwwapps.ups.com)
  - **FedEx** can be held by going online at: [www.fedex.com/us/delivery/](http://www.fedex.com/us/delivery/)
- **When away, leave lights on timers.** A few timers on a couple of lights can make your home not look vacant while on vacation or when you are working late at night.
- Ensure **doors are kept locked** at all times and have deadbolt locks with a minimum of 1” throw. Keep **windows locked**. Consider upgrading window locks with secondary protection such as a removable nail in the sash. When replacing glass, especially near a door, consider using burglar resistant glass as an added protection. Installing Mylar security window film over these existing windows can also make them more resistant to quick break ins.

*Half of all US burglaries are through an unlocked window or door*
- A **well-lighted yard** deters burglars. Be sure to use yard lights, and light your garage and storage shed areas. Use daylight sensor lights and LED type bulbs to save energy compared to old fashioned flood lights. **More lighting means less crime!!** Ideally have lights mounted at least 8’ high so they are hard to disable – Long life LED bulbs installed up high may not have to be replaced for 10-20 years...
- If you have an **alarm**, *arm it every time* you leave the house. Alarms do nothing if they are not armed.
- *Post your NOCUPP sign in front of your house to help deter burglars at your house and in your neighborhood.*
- Consider **engraving all your valuables** with your driver’s license number – engraved items are hard to pawn and easier to recover. *NOCUPP members may request borrowing a security pen or engraver from the NOCUPP officers by calling our member phone number.*
- Also keep a current **inventory list of the model and serial number of all your valuables** (a sample available on the NOCUPP web site), each time you update it email it to yourself or store it online, and you will always be able to recover a copy for insurance and police reports. When you buy an expensive item, take a quick picture with your phone of the item and its serial number plate so you have a record of it for insurance. If you ever need it you can dig it out of your saved photos.
- Make sure **garage doors and sheds** have very secure doors and locks. Cheap padlocks s don’t offer much protection, consider deadbolts or a good hasp and **“disc type” locks** on these doors that can’t be easily cut with a bolt cutter. These disc type locks, sometimes referred to a storage locks, are available at Home Depot, Lowes, and Walmart for about \$10.

- **Sliding glass doors** should have an **auxiliary locking pin, or drop a 1" thick dowel rod**, or 1" wide board left in the lower track when closed. If you cut the rod/board 4-5" short of the width of your door you can securely leave the door cracked for ventilation. For a pin a simple hole can be drilled into the track and a heavy pin/bolt inserted into the hole to prevent the door from forced opening.
- **Keep fence gates locked if possible.** That 6' fence you have does very little to prevent burglary if it is not kept locked. Padlocks, combo locks are good enough, and there are punch code gate locks available that can be easily installed. Consider this also as a personal safety measure to ensure no one "wonders" into your back yard when you might be enjoying having the back door open.
- Be sure to **keep track of keys you issue.** If you just moved into a house, or have had a contractor working there, or even an ex baby sitter, **consider having your locks rekeyed.** For as little as \$8 a lock you can have the peace of mind that no one else has your home's key.
- Be sure to **know the neighbors on all sides** of you, make sure you have their home and mobile phone numbers and they have yours, and let each other know if you have visitors staying at your house, you are on vacation, or you have people working inside your house. If you get in the habit of keeping each other informed, any unusual activity can be confirmed quickly by a quick text and the police called when needed.
- **Consider installing security cameras outside on the perimeter of your house.** These can be obtained for as little as \$299, can be easily installed by running a few wires across your attic crawl space in one day, and both act as a deterrent to crime, as well as a way to catch criminals after the act. If possible hide the recorder in a closet or other hard to locate place.
- *NOCUPP members may call the NOCUPP phone number and make an appointment to have an officer come to member houses and make recommendations to improve your security*
- Don't advertise new major purchases for potential burglars. When you buy that new TV, don't just leave the box at the curb, slice up the box and put it in your weekly recycling container.
- Consider drilling bolts into your porch or sidewalk when installing **expensive pots** in your front yard, these can be epoxied to the concrete and the bolt secured via the weep hole in the pot. Also **secure expensive Holiday ornaments to a tree or stake.**
- **Install a security system. If you install an alarm:** cheap alarms are easy to defeat by even common criminals by disconnecting the alarm before it dials out. Better ones have cellular dialers so cut phone lines don't prevent alarm calls (although we have few professional burglars it is common practice to cut phone and internet/cable lines). Big name security companies like ADT / Vista / Vivent, etc. make their money by offering highly discounted alarms at cheap prices or free with a few sensors, then charging you extraordinary rates per month on long term contracts, typically \$30-35 per month that really add up. Consider independent installers and pay full price for an unlocked alarm panel, and then using the company of your choice to monitor the system. You can search the internet for cheap alarm monitoring by companies like Next Alarm, Alarm Relay, Alarm Yourself, which can take over your existing security system and can monitor it for an average of about \$15 per month. Also, a good alarm system monitors not just a couple of doors, but all your windows and has at least a couple of motion detectors (they make motion detectors that are pet resistant too). **Don't lull yourself into feeling extra safe with an alarm that does little to protect your house** when you are away and very few people arm their systems at night when home asleep (although highly recommended). Real professionally installed alarm systems, when you have a valid city permit, can help you save on property and fire insurance. Please contact your insurance company for their discount rules.
- **Be sure your house number is easily readable at night from the street.** Make it easy for the police, fire, or an ambulance to find your house in an emergency.

## Vehicle Theft:

- **Always lock your vehicle and take your keys**, both at night and even when just parking for a few minutes at your house.

*Half of cars stolen or broken into were left unlocked or with a window open*

- Completely close all car windows
- Never leave a spare set of keys in your car
- Be sure **never leave valuables in your vehicle!!** If you absolutely have to, be sure valuables are never left where they are visible to someone from the outside. If there is nothing visible to be stolen, most thieves will skip your vehicle (actual car thefts are rare, but break-ins are common). People break in for small items like CDs/DVD, *so keep it inside or at least keep it hidden.*
- Preferably do not leave your garage door opener in the vehicle when it is parked outside your garage at home. This is a very hard habit to get into, but take your opener with you. Your garage door opener can usually be used to both get in your garage in the middle of the night once your car is broken into, and can often then be used to very quietly also get into your house while you are sleeping. A real security hole waiting to happen.
- **Park in a well-lighted area.** Car thieves avoid places they can be seen.
- **Keep tailgates locked with factory or an auxiliary lock.** Pickup Truck tail gate thefts are extremely common, and when they occur they tend to repeat several times in a neighborhood. Tail gate thefts also happen frequently at shopping mall and work place parking lots. Save yourself the hassle and cost of replacing your tailgate by keeping the tailgate locked or use the addition of an auxiliary tail gate lock available from car part stores. **Alternate:** Park with the tailgate facing against a wall so thieves cannot access the gate (Most cannot be removed if they cannot be opened fully), but this is very hard to consistently do in public lots like shopping centers, parking garages, and at work).

## Personal Security

- **Be aware of your surroundings** at all times.
- Always try to park or walk in **well lighted areas** and walk as part of a group.
- When walking at night, **consider carrying a walking stick, mace or pepper spray**, to protect yourself or to defend yourself and your pets from Coyotes or other predators.
- Always **carry your cell phone**.
- Never carry more money than you can easily afford to lose. If confronted be willing to give up any valuables, never challenge someone confronting you.
- If you see a **suspicious person please avoid them**, but if appropriate take a picture with your cell phone and email it to yourself in case a problem arises, and then **report suspicious people to 911** or the NOCUPP patrol number.

## ID Theft:

- Use **secure passwords** for your online accounts and pin numbers. Try not to use the same password for multiple websites, especially ones that have your credit card or bank information.
- One tip, think of **one or two throw away passwords you use for the majority of web sites** that you have to log into that you don't really need high security, **use another "base-word" password for web sites you give your credit card to**, changing a couple of letters specifically for that web site (for example adding the last two letters of the company's name to the end of your password) so that password is just slightly different from every other company's passwords. **For your financial web sites, like banks and investments, try to use an even more unique password with a different base-word and a few more**

**letters.** Overall you want to create a system of passwords that you can remember most of the time, but that are all slightly unique, so that if one company's web site is hacked, your email and password can't just be plugged in by a hacker into another company's web site.

- If you have to write your password's down or store it somewhere on your PC (such as in a spreadsheet, in a note, or in your contacts, try to just write down a "code word" for the base-word of your password and a hint to the unique part of the password:
  - For example:
    - For your throw away password you decide you want to use for general websites such as "Bambi26%"
      - In your notes put a hint such as: "Deer"+6%
    - For your credit card web sites you decide to use "Montana26#ON" for your Amazon account (the ON is the last two letters of Amazon"
      - Make your note saying: "State"+26%+letters
    - For your financial sites you use a slightly more complex password, for Bank of America, maybe use "BaMontana26%CA"
      - Make you note say: letters+State+26%+letters
  - This way even if someone gets ahold of your notes, only you know that Deer means Bambi, and that State means Montana, no one else could figure this out unless you specifically told them your code words, and even if a hacker gets ahold of your password for one web site, they really would have to very spend a lot of time and thousands of tries to even come close to guessing any of your other passwords. Just a quick tip of one way to help you secure your passwords.
- **Never carry your social security card** unless applying for a job or actually going to a social security office. This card should never just be kept in your wallet and no one else should request seeing it.
- **Be careful publishing your name, email address, children's names, phone numbers and your birth date on any kind of social media web site.** Don't build a history of your life's details where someone else could use them to fake your identity.
- **Don't respond to unsolicited emails.** For any email that seems to come from a bank, or other company that has your personal information always assume it might be spam or a trick. Instead of clicking on built in links, go direct to the web site using your browser and log in manually. Never give out your social security number, birth date, or other personal information. On social media and other sites, list your birthday a couple of days before or after your real birthday so that your actual birthday is never published online.
- **Use your email's built in filter, or rules function** to add any senders you don't want into a filter/rule to automatically delete these messages. Why read all that junk mail. Be sure your Spam filter is turned on. For legitimate looking companies that you don't want to see the emails from, click on their unsubscribe button. For questionable emails and companies, just delete their emails, or filter them from future emails (sometimes clicking on the undelete button for questionable companies actually confirms you exist and they send you even more spam in the future).
- **Register your phone numbers on the U.S. Do Not Call list**, [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov), and the Texas Do Not Call List [www.texasnocall.com](http://www.texasnocall.com). This does not stop all calls, but it should help reduce legitimate company calls.
- Order your free credit reports annually and confirm there are no open accounts that you did not open and close unused accounts: [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) or call 1-877-322-8228.
- Set up **email/text alerts on your bank account's** for unusual transactions via their web site, especially on credit card accounts. Common alerts are: Transactions over \$500 or other amount you rarely hit,

Transactions outside the U.S., Available credit has fallen under a dollar limit you set, External transactions, Password changed, Email address changed. Set these up so you are alerted on your email and text message phone so you will receive notifications at both places any time something unusual happens to your account. It helps secure your existing accounts.

- If possible also enable **two factor identification** for log in to secure websites, where a text message or email is sent to you to approve, or get a code from, before you can log into an important web site from an unknown device. This means someone has to both have your user id, password, and access to either your email or phone to access one of your online accounts.
- At a minimum ensure **when your PC boots up it requires a password before logging in**. This helps prevent someone from stealing your PC and getting access to all your important documents.

## If a Crime Event Does Occur

Please call 911 to report the crime, even if somewhat minor, so that we NOCUPP can track crime statistics from DPD within our neighborhoods and know how and when to increase patrols in response to temporary crime trends in a given area.

NOCUPP members can also call and arrange to have the next NOCUPP officer on duty come out to your house, at your convenience, to take a personalized crime report (instead of you going to the police station to file a report) and determine if it is appropriate for further forensic evidence to be collected. Reports made via NOCUPP officers are passed on to the other NOCUPP officers for follow up and monitoring (often times to specialist in auto theft, burglary, gangs, etc.). Members should take advantage of this as normal DPD patrol officers don't usually have time to take down and file most crime reports, and their reports are usually just data entered into a system and forgotten.