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[www.miamisao.com](http://www.miamisao.com)

Justice Starts Here

**CRIME**  
*prevention guide*  
*for*  
*the* **Elderly**



# ELDERLY CRI

## *At the bank*

- Many criminals know exactly when government checks arrive each month, and may pick that day to attack. Avoid this by using Direct Deposit, which sends your money directly from the government to the bank of your choice. And, at many banks, free checking accounts are available to senior citizens. Your bank has all the information.
- You should store valuables in a safe deposit box.
- Never give your money to someone who calls on you, identifying himself as a bank official. A bank will never ask you to remove your money. Banks need the use of your money, and they don't want one of their customers to invite crime by having large amounts of cash around.
- When someone approaches you with a **get-rich-quick-scheme** involving some or all of **YOUR savings**, it is **HIS get-rich-quick-scheme**. If it is a legitimate investment, the opportunity to contribute your funds will still be there tomorrow – after you have had time to consider it.

## *In stores*

- Don't display large sums of cash.
- Never leave your purse unattended.
- Use checks where possible.

## *In your car*

- Always keep your car doors locked, whether you are in or out of your car.
- At stop signs and traffic lights, keep the car in gear.
- Travel well-lit and busy streets. Plan your route.
- Don't leave your purse on the seat beside you; put it on the floor, where it is more difficult for someone to grab it.
- Lock bundles or bags in the trunk. If interesting packages are out of sight, a thief will be less tempted to break in to steal them.
- When returning to your car, check the front seat, back seat, and floor before entering.
- Never pick up hitchhikers.

# ME prevention program

## *At your door/home*

- **Never open your door automatically.** Use an optical viewer (peephole).
- At night, **draw your blinds.**
- **Lock your doors and windows.** (Three quarters of the burglaries involving older persons involved unlocked doors and windows; and, less than one half of these robberies are reported.) **Keep your garage doors locked.**
- **Vary your daily routine.**
- Use **“Neighbor Watch”** to keep an eye on your neighborhood. A concerned neighbor is often the best protection against crime because suspicious persons and activities are noticed and reported to police promptly.
- **Leave lights on** when going out at night; use a timer to turn lights on and off when you are away for an extended period.
- **Don’t leave notes on the door** when going out.
- **Don’t place keys under mats,** in mailboxes, or other receptacles outside your door.
- **Notify neighbors and the police when going away on a trip.** Cancel deliveries such as newspapers and arrange for someone - a neighbor’s child, perhaps - to mow the lawn if need be. Arrange for your mail to be held by the Post Office, or ask a neighbor to collect it for you.
- **Be wary of unsolicited offers** to make repairs to your home. Deal only with reputable businesses.
- **Keep an inventory** with serial numbers and photographs of appliances, antiques and furniture. Leave copies in a safe place.
- **Don’t hesitate to report crime or suspicious activities.**

## *Avoid Identity Theft*

- Never give out, by phone, E-mail or in person, personal information such as: date of birth, social security number, driver’s license number, passport number, names of companies where you have credit, banks where you have accounts, mother’s maiden name and any other personal data.
- Avoid leaving mail in your mailbox; pick-up promptly. Do not place outgoing mail in your mailbox, take to a post office mailbox.
- Review your bank and credit card statements often.
- Order your free Credit Report once a year without it affecting your credit rating score.
- Shred all bank and credit card statements and cancelled checks before discarding.

# *Common sense crime prevention for the elderly*

Crime and the fear of crime

create special problems

for you as an older person.

Although you may not be a

victim of a crime any more

often than someone younger,

here are some simple steps to

follow that may help you feel

more secure, be safe, protect

your identity and avoid

criminal victimization.

## *Walking*

- **Always plan your route** and stay alert to your surroundings. Walk confidently.
- **Have a companion** accompany you.
- **Walk in well-lit areas.**
- **Have your key ready** when approaching your front door.
- **Don't dangle your purse** away from your body. (Twelve percent of all crimes against the elderly are purse snatchings and street robberies.)
- **Don't carry large, bulky shoulder bags;** carry only what you need.

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## *Important numbers* *State Attorney's Office*

Main Office . . . . .	(305) 547-0100
Helpline . . . . .	(305) 545-HELP (4357)
County Court Division . . . . .	(305) 324-2900
Criminal Intake Division . . . . .	(305) 547-0250
Domestic Crimes Unit . . . . .	(305) 547-0150
Domestic Violence Misdemeanor . . . . .	(305) 349-5830
Identity Theft . . . . .	(305) 547-0724
Juvenile Division . . . . .	(305) 637-1300
Sexual Battery/ Children's & Special Needs Center . . . . .	(305) 547-0115
VAN	
(Victim Access Network) . . . . .	(305) 273-HELP (4357)
Report Public Corruption . . . . .	(305) 547-3300
Community Outreach . . . . .	(305) 547-0724

## *Community Resources*

Victims' Compensation Bureau . . . . .	1-800-226-6667
Domestic Violence Advocacy Program . .	(305) 349-5677
Miami-Dade Advocates for Victims	
North Dade . . . . .	(305) 758-2546
South Dade . . . . .	(305) 247-4249
Family and Victim Services . . . . .	(305) 571-7750
Rape Treatment Center . . . . .	(305) 585-RAPE (7273)
Switchboard of Miami . . . . .	(305) 358-HELP (4357)
Elder Helpline . . . . .	(305) 670-4357
Report Abuse (Elder and Child) . . .	1-800-96-ABUSE