KERN COUNTY ELDER NEWS

Monthly Information Article | Kern County DEAR/EDRT TEAM*
*(Dependent/Elder Abuse Review) Team/EDRT (Elder Death Review Team)

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CRIME PREVENTION TIPS FOR SENIORS

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Always Be Aware

Crime in America seems to be dramatically increasing in the last few years. Every day the news reports stolen cars, shootings, assaults, robberies, property crimes and more.

Lots of things have affected this increase. Politics, lighter sentences, understaffed law enforcement agencies, prison, and jail overcrowding. Understanding how to prevent or mitigate being a victim of a crime is the biggest tool in the toolbox.

The number one rule is to always be alert of your surroundings. If at all possible, when going out and about, whether just for a walk or to the store, have a friend go with you. Two is always better than one.

Stay in well-lit and well-traveled areas with a planned route. Keep keys out and ready to use when approaching your entry way. Observe all pedestrian safety rules such as crossing in the cross walk and waiting for the signal to walk. Before you cross, always look both ways. Pedestrians usually have the right of way, especially in a crosswalk, but the extra caution is well worth it. Always be aware of your surroundings.

Be smart with your purse. Don't be careless by leaving your purse in a shopping cart. Avoid large bulky purses when going out or traveling. Take only what is needed and don't display large amounts of cash. The best kind of purse is a crossbody with a long strap that goes over your shoulder and stays close to your body. A fanny pack works well too. And yes, fanny packs are back in style!

When traveling by car, always keep car doors locked both inside and outside the vehicle. Get in the habit of locking the car immediately after getting in the vehicle. Keep the car in gear when stopped at traffic signals and stop signs. Packages should be kept in the trunk or covered in the rear of an SUV. Nothing to see, nothing to steal.

Make certain your vehicle is in good running condition and tires are properly inflated. Tire pressure can fluctuate when weather changes.

Agency Partners

- Bakersfield Police Department
- California Dept. of Insurance
- CSUB
- Dept. of Social Services Licensing
- GBLA
- Independent Living Center of KC
- Kaiser Permanente
- Kern Co. Aging & Adult
- Kern Co. BHRS
- Kern Co. Coroner
- Kern Co. District Attorney
- Kern Co. DA Victim Services
- Kern Co. Family Law Facilitator
- Kern Co. Public Health
- Kern Regional Center
- Kern Co. Sheriff's Office
- Kern Co. Veterans Service Dept.
- Social Security Admin.
- Strata Credit Union

Always keep your gas tank half full. Be cognizant of your surroundings getting in and out of your vehicle. If something doesn't seem right, take advantage of that instinct and walk away to get assistance. Never leave your car running and unattended. Take valuables with you to avoid a car break in.

When at home, always keep doors and windows locked. Remember to lock garage doors including the rear, side yard entry door from the garage to the dwelling. Do not open the door automatically when someone knocks. Have a peephole installed and don't open the door to anyone you don't know.

Leave several lights on when not at home or use a timer for a few lights around the home. Don't leave keys or a "hide-a-key" box in planters, above the door, under a mat or anywhere else. When going on a longer trip, use a house sitter or have a trusted neighbor collect your mail and turn lights on and off. Don't let grass get overgrown while you are away. It is a telltale sign the home is unoccupied and an invitation to burglars. Keep the outside of your home, especially the entrance, well lit. Motion detection lights are also good to have on your home along with surveillance cameras if your budget allows.

Know what possessions you own. For insurance purposes, in the event of a burglary, you want proof you owned what was taken. Keep an inventory of valuables with pictures, serial numbers and receipts for replacements should you experience a burglary.

Never hesitate to report

persons or activities to your local law enforcement agency. Start a Neighborhood Watch in your neighborhood through your local law enforcement agency.

Neighborhood Watch was established in the early 1970's. It is a program used to bring together law enforcement and the community to improve communities and reduce crime by having extra eyes and ears. Neighbors helping neighbors and looking out for each other is a core fundamental of the program. Over the years Neighborhood Watch has greatly expanded to include neighborhood disaster preparation, community clean ups and other activities that unite a community and its members. Apartment and Condos also utilize Neighborhood Watch.

Key take away points to keep yourself safe include:

1. Always be aware of your surroundings.

2. Lock doors and windows in your home and your vehicle.

3. Use the "Buddy System" and go out with at least one friend or companion.

4. Report suspicious activities, persons, and vehicles to local law enforcement.

5. Get to know your neighbors. Start or maintain a Neighborhood Watch Program.

Emergency – 9-1-1

Bear Valley Police Department 661-821-3239
Bakersfield Police Department 661-327-7111
California City Police Department 760-373-8606
Delano Police Department 661-721-3377
Kern County Sheriff's Office 661-831-3110
McFarland Police Department 661-792-2121
Ridgecrest Police Department 760-499-5100
Shafter Police Department 661-746-8500
Taft Police Department 661-763-3101
Tehachapi Police Department 661-822-2222

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