

# Crime Prevention Tips for People With Disabilities

Having a disability - impaired vision, hearing, intellectual, or mobility - doesn't prevent you from being a victim of crime. Common sense actions can reduce your risk.

- Stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings.
- Send a message that you're calm, confident, and know where you're going.
- Be realistic about your limitations. Avoid places or situations that put you at risk.
- Know the neighborhood where you live and work. Check out the locations of police and fire station public telephones, hospitals, restaurants, or stores that are open and accessible.
- Avoid establishing predictable activity patterns. Most of us have daily routines, but never varying them may increase your vulnerability to crime.

## **At Home**

- Put good locks on all your doors.
- Install peepholes on front and back doors at your eye level. This is especially important if you use a wheelchair.
- Get to know your neighbors. Watchful neighbors who look out for you as well as themselves are a frontline defense against crime.
- If you have difficulty speaking, have a friend record a message (giving your name, address, and type of disability) to use in emergencies. Keep the tape in a recorder next to your phone.
- Ask your police department to conduct a free home security survey to help identify your individual needs.

## **Out and About**

- If possible, go with a friend.
  - Stick to well-lighted, well-traveled streets.
  - Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.

- Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket. If you use a wheelchair, keep your purse or wallet tucked snugly between you and the inside of the chair.
- Always carry your medical information, in case of an emergency.
- Consider keeping a cellular phone or installing a CB radio in your vehicle.
- On public transportation use well-lighted, busy stops. Stay near other passengers.
- Stay alert-don't doze or daydream.
- If someone harasses you, make a loud noise or say "leave me alone". If that doesn't work, hit the emergency signal on the bus or train.

### **Take a Stand!**

- Join, or help organize a Neighborhood Watch group. Make sure their meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. For example, do they need a sign language interpreter? Can individuals who use walkers, crutches or wheelchairs enter the meeting place?
- Work with local law enforcement to improve responses to all victims or witnesses of crime. Role-play how people with disabilities can handle threatening situations.
- Work with a rehabilitation center or advocacy group to offer a presentation to schools and other community organizations on the needs and concerns of individuals with disabilities.

### **Don't Let a Con Artist Rip You Off**

Many con artists prey on people's desires to find miracle cures for chronic conditions and fatal diseases. To outsmart these con artists, remember these tips:

- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Don't let greed or desperation overcome common sense.
- Get a second opinion.
- Be wary of high-pressure tactics, need for quick decisions, demands for cash only, or high yield, low-risk investments.

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