



Wichita Police Department Personal Safety

AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINES (ATM)

Be aware of your surroundings, especially between dusk and dawn. If you notice anything suspicious, a security light out or someone loitering nearby, consider coming back later or using an ATM inside an open business. When using an ATM at night, take someone with you. Park in well-lit areas close to the ATM. While using a drive-through ATM, be sure car doors are locked and the passenger windows are rolled up. Never leave your receipt at the ATM.

PARKING LOTS

When parking your car, always try to park in well-lit areas. When returning to your car, have your keys in hand before entering the lot. Be attentive and aware of your surroundings on the way to your vehicle. As you approach, check underneath your car and look inside before opening the door. If you notice something suspicious, go back inside and get help.

WALKING/JOGGING

Avoid jogging or walking alone. Remember there is safety in numbers. Avoid dark streets, vacant lots, and unpopulated areas. Stick to well-traveled, populated areas. Avoid wearing headphones; your hearing could alert you to potential danger. Appear assertive and know where you are going. Never allow anyone to distract you by asking for directions or for assistance. If you think someone is following you, change direction and get to a safe place. Carry a cellular phone with you while you walk.

WEAPONS

If you are going to use a weapon, you should be familiar with its effect and use whether it is a gun, stun gun, mace, pepper spray or any other type of weapon. Weapons involve reaction time and location. Where is it when you need it? Is it legal for you to possess? Call your local law enforcement agency with questions concerning the possession of weapons. You must remember that the weapon can be taken away from you and used against you.

ASSERTIVENESS

Assertive behavior can help reduce your vulnerability to an assault. Make eye contact with people you meet. Eye contact is a powerful way to say, "I am in control of myself and my environment. Do not violate my space." Trust your instincts. Do not discredit them by thinking "I'm just being paranoid." If you feel someone can't be trusted or you are in danger, you probably have good reason.

Doors

There are many sizes, shapes and types of exterior doors. The security of any door depends on its construction.

The Hollow Core Door is the most commonly used. It is also the least secure. It consists of a wood frame covered with a thin veneer; it is supported by cardboard arranged in a honeycomb fashion, to keep the veneer from collapsing. This type of door should be used as an interior door only.

The Solid Wood Door provides good security. It is constructed entirely of heavy wood. Some doors have decorative wooden panel inserts that greatly reduce its security.

The Solid Core Door provides good security. It is constructed much the same way as the hollow core door; however, the center is filled with compressed particle-type material that provides strength.

The Metal Door is becoming a favorite exterior door and it provides good security. It consists of a frame covered in a 16 to 20 gauge steel covering. The center of the door is filled with compressed hard foam.

Strike Plates

The weakest area of many doors and locking devices is the strike plate. High security strike plates mounted with three-inch screws will strengthen the doorframe where the throw of the dead bolt meets. The three-inch screws will extend through the doorframe and secure into the stud or existing frame structure of the home. With shorter screws, the strike plate is only secured into the doorframe, which is usually constructed of soft wood that splinters easily.

Sliding Glass Doors

Sliding glass doors can be an easy target for a burglar to enter if no remedial action is taken. Often, the door panels can simply be lifted out of the tracks. To deal with this problem, open the active door and install a number of wood screws in the track, allowing the screw to project down 3/8" to 1/2" or so. Slide the door closed, making sure the extended screws pass freely over the top rail of the door. Now try to lift the door from the track; the screws should stop upward movement before the door can clear the bottom track.

Once the door has been secured from lifting, an auxiliary lock is needed because more than likely, the standard lock supplied with the door is nothing more than a small hook bolt that can easily be forced open. Locking bars (commonly called "Charlie Bar") are ideal for this purpose; but a length of dowel (an old broom or mop handle, for example) can also be placed in the bottom track to keep the door from being pushed open. The dowel should be cut to a length so it fits snugly in the track between the wall and the doorframe. If ventilation is needed, another dowel could be cut a few inches shorter to permit the sliding door to be opened no greater than six (6) inches. There are also a number of commercially produced locking devices for sliding glass doors.

Keys

Proper monitoring and control of keys can help prevent passkey burglary. The following are suggestions to better insure keys are properly controlled:

- When someone moves into a previously occupied home, all exterior doors should be re-keyed. Avoid hiding a key outside. Burglars often know all the hiding places. Place a key in a secure key lock box outside for emergencies.

Deadbolt Locks

The Spring Latch, key in the knob lockset, offers zero security. Known as the "credit card" or "ten second" model, is found on many homes. On exterior doors, this lock set should be an addition to the deadbolt lock. Doors leading into the home from an attached garage or from the basement should be considered an exterior door.

A Single Cylinder Deadbolt lock functions with a key from the outside and thumb turn from the inside. Single cylinder deadbolts are intended for use on solid doors with no glass within 40 inches of the lock.

A Double Cylinder Deadbolt lock functions with a key from the outside and inside. It is intended for use on doors with glass within 40 inches of the lock. The use of a double cylinder deadbolt lock presents a life safety hazard due to the need to have a key for exit. The 1997 Uniform Building Code states; *Regardless of the occupant load served, exit doors shall be open-able from the inside without the use of a key or any special knowledge or effort.*

What to look for when purchasing Deadbolt locks:

- Minimum 1/4" interlocking bolts to hold the cylinder halves together.
- Tapered cylinder guard.
- Hardened steel bolt with a 1" throw and a saw-resistant feature.
- Bolt encased in single piece housing.
- Bolt constructed so as to limit internal movement or "play" when the bolt is fully extended.

Not all deadbolts are created equal. They appear similar on the exterior, but the internal components are critical to the overall integrity of the lock. Inquire whether the deadbolt meets or exceeds ANSI grade 2. **All exterior doors should be equipped with a deadbolt lock.**

Lighting

It is a recognized fact that good lighting is a deterrent to crime. Effective lighting allows the homeowner see the pathway they take from their vehicle to the house. It permits them to see as they stop at the door to use their house keys. Effective lighting also forces the intruder to work in an area where he may be exposed and reported to the police.

- **Around the House**- security lighting should be located high out of reach and vandal resistant to protect all sides of the home. The best possible location for exterior residential lighting is under the eaves of the house. Such lighting should ideally be controlled by photoelectric cells that will activate them during times of darkness.
- **Over Entry Doors**- Each door should be equipped with a light that provides quality illumination in the vicinity of the door, including both sides of the door and porch.
- **Carports and Garages**- Lighting in carports and garages is critical. For garages, an automatic garage door opener is the best choice. Almost every garage door opener made today has a light that comes on when the opener is activated, lighting the interior of

the garage. In carports, it is recommended either to leave the light on, or have a light connected to a motion sensor or photoelectric cell.

- **Motion Lighting-** Motion detection lighting is strongly encouraged, particularly in areas where lighting may be considered intrusive to neighbors. Costing less than \$50.00, such units are often direct replacements for existing fixtures and can be selectively aimed to detect motion of an approaching intruder and cause the light to activate.

Landscaping

Bushes, trees and shrubbery can conceal an intruder attempting entry into a window or door; or worse yet, waiting in hiding for the homeowner! A few alterations to the home's landscaping can be enough to discourage intruders. To avoid being seen or caught, intruders look for property they can get enter and exit quickly. The ideal target is a home surrounded by large hedges or shrubs, which hamper visibility from the street and neighboring homes.

Trim shrubbery and trees so doors and windows are visible to neighbors and from the street. Trimmed landscaping should not provide concealment for criminals. If the home has a second floor, prune trees so they can't help a thief climb in second floor windows. Place trellises where they can't be used as ladders to gain entry to upper floors.

- Ground plants (shrubbery and bushes) within four (4) feet of any sidewalks, driveways, doors or gates, should be maintained at a height of not more than two (2) feet.
- Ground plants between four (4) feet and eight (8) feet of any sidewalks, driveways, doors or gates, should be maintained at a height of not more than four (4) feet.
- Ground plants under windows should be maintained at a height that is below the windowsill.
- Trees should be trimmed so that the lower branches are more than six (6) feet off the ground.
- Place large gauge gravel on the ground near windows. The noise caused by an intruder walking on it can be a psychological barrier. Do not place large rocks or other items near glass windows or doors. These could provide the burglar with his tools.

Plant spiny (thorny) plants along fences and under windows. Such plants will discourage the possible burglar. Protecting with spiny plants can be almost as effective as using barbed wire, and a lot more attractive.

Neighborhood Watch Program

The Neighborhood Watch Program is a partnership between law enforcement and the community to reduce and prevent crime through neighborhood empowerment. It is a citizen involved, neighborhood and community-based effort, designed to help citizens and the police or sheriff's department in preventing primarily residential burglaries. In harmony with the philosophy of Community Policing, Neighborhood Watch encourages strong working relationships between officers and citizens. Neighborhood Watch is one of the most effective and least costly methods to prevent crime.

How Do I Start a Neighborhood Watch?

Residents, businesses and law enforcement agencies can initiate the effort to organize a Neighborhood Watch. The first step is to find out the initial interest level on your block. Any attempt at starting an organized watch program will not be successful unless a certain level of community interest exists. Neighborhood Watch Program success is hinged on achieving and sustaining an appropriate level of community involvement to a point at which the neighborhood realizes a reduction and/or achieves prevention of residential burglaries and other neighborhood crimes. Once neighbor or block interest is obtained, enlist your neighbors to help you form a planning committee to discuss concerns, and the focus of your Neighborhood Watch. The following tips are suggested to encourage the neighbors to join you:

- Ask your neighbors when they are available. (Meetings are generally conducted in the evenings, Monday through Thursday)
- Select a close meeting place in your neighborhood. (Local churches or schools are usually very cooperative)
- Contact the Wichita Police Department Neighborhood Watch Coordinator at **268-4101** or the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Crime Prevention Unit at **383-7184** to schedule an officer to attend the meeting.
- Advertising is very important! Let neighbors know when and where the meeting will be held. Neighborhood Watch pamphlets are available from the police and sheriff's department. Distribute the fliers, in person, at least two weeks prior. Ask other neighbors to help.

