

Senior Safety

We all have the right to feel safe at all times – this is an important part of our peace of mind at any age. Canberra is a very safe city, but it is always good to take some basic safety precautions.

You can increase your feeling of confidence in your security by reducing the opportunities for crime. Being aware of some safety measures you can take in your home and while out and about can greatly increase your feelings of personal safety.

At Home

Improve your physical security at home with door and window locks. Your home should be clearly visible to the street, neighbours and passers-by. Bushes and trees that obstruct a clear view of windows or doors provide perfect cover for intruders so keep these trimmed back.

External doors should be fitted with **deadlocks**. When going out, certain deadlocks can be locked in such a way that they can only be unlocked with a key from either side. This prevents burglars getting into your home and being able to open the door to remove your property. When at home you can lock your deadlock so that it needs a key to open it from the outside, but can be opened with a lever or knob from the inside. (Remember, when you're at home it's important to be able to get out without a key so you can leave quickly in an emergency such as a fire – don't deadlock your doors when you're inside).

A door viewer (**peephole**) gives you a good view of the person on the other side of the door. Remember, do not open the door to a stranger no matter how urgent it sounds. **CHECK FIRST** and ask for identification before opening the door. If someone is seeking help leave that person outside while you make the emergency call.

Have quality **keyed locks on all windows**, unless the windows are grilled. Have all locks "keyed alike" so that one key will open all doors and one key opens all windows. Do not hide keys under flower pots or door mats. Don't give keys to anyone you do not know – if you're having your car serviced for example, just hand over the car key and keep your house keys with you.

Identify your property by marking it with an engraver, remember marked property is a deterrent against theft.

If going out, even for a short period, make your home look "lived in" by having the radio or lights on. There are many security products on the market to help you feel secure. Once you have purchased or installed a security product, always use it.

Out and About

Personal safety is not new or mysterious, it is mostly common sense: **Look, Listen and Think**. We all have the right to feel safe and the responsibility to ensure others feel safe as well. Don't let the fear of crime hold you back. Quite often the fear is much greater than the reality.

From a personal perspective always be prepared and aware of other people and your immediate surroundings. Be aware of locations and situations that could make you vulnerable to crime such as lane ways, isolated parks and buildings, back streets and

poorly lit parking lots. When making your way to your car, have your car keys ready before you get to your car.

Don't carry large sums of **money**. Pay your bills by cheque, credit card or over the phone and internet. Put your money away before moving away from at teller or automatic teller machine. If you carry a handbag, hold it under your arm or in front of you and never leave it unattended. If you use a wallet, put it inside your jacket or a front pocket.

When using **public transport** always use a well lit shelter near other commuters and choose a timetable that will minimise your waiting times. Don't sit alone, sit where the driver or other passengers can see you.

We are very lucky to live in a city as safe as Canberra, but making use of some basic safety strategies will help keep you more secure.

If you would like more information about personal safety, see ACT Policing's website at www.afp.gov.au/act or contact the Attorney Generals Department to obtain a copy of *Crime Prevention for seniors: A guide to personal and financial safety*.

Source: ACT Policing