

Personal Safety

Crime prevention is everyone's responsibility. It involves using **instinct, common sense** and **action** to eliminate or greatly reduce the criminal's opportunity. There are three elements the criminal must possess for a crime to occur:

- Desire
- Ability
- Opportunity

Eliminate just one of these elements and no crime will take place. You have no control over the first two elements. However, you can tremendously impact the third element – opportunity – by practicing the following tips:

- Trim the shrubbery around your doors and windows so criminals do not have a place to hide.
- Do not give out personal information over the phone, through mail, or over the internet unless you have initiated the contact or know the party with whom you are dealing.
- If you notice someone following you when you are driving, drive to the nearest busy, brightly lighted area and call 911.
- Always lock car doors and take your keys when you leave your vehicle. Do not leave your vehicle running, even if you are gone for just a minute.
- Do not leave valuables in view in your car. Leave them in the trunk or take them home immediately.
- As you walk down the street or through a parking lot, walk alert and assertively. Also, do not weigh yourself down with too many items.
- If you carry a purse, hold it close to your body.
- Do not display cash or other inviting items such as cell phones, hand-held electronic games, or expensive clothing or jewelry.
- Make sure your home is secure when traveling. Make sure all deadbolts are locked, lights left on timers, newspapers stopped, and mail held at the post office or collected by a trusted neighbor who has your schedule.
- Make sure you have sturdy metal or solid wood doors at all entries into your home and that sliding glass doors are properly secured.

For more information on crime prevention, visit the Texas Crime Prevention Association's web site at www.tcpa.org or the National Crime Prevention Council at www.ncpc.org.

