

Definition of Crime Prevention

According to the Community Crime Prevention Guide, in its purest form, crime prevention looks at people who are not involved in criminal activity and asks, "What can we do to make sure they never come into conflict with the law?"

Crime prevention also looks at places and situations which are not yet troubled by much criminal activity and asks, "How can we make sure crime never becomes a significant problem here?"

Definition of Crime Reduction

The perspective or starting point for crime reduction is people, places or situations already known for criminal activity. This can be a group of offenders who have racked up a long record of assaults and robbery. It might be a residential neighborhood that has been plagued by break-ins. It could be a situation, such as out-of-control house parties where the peace is disturbed and underage drinking and sexual exploitation may take place. Crime reduction starts with assessing the current problem and developing strategies to decrease the amount of criminal activity, or minimize the harm it causes.

The definition of crime reduction is the attempt to reduce victimization and to deter crime and criminals. It is applied specifically to efforts made by the police and/or citizens to reduce crime, enforce the law, and maintain criminal justice. Simply stated, an individual, by avoiding areas that are well known for high criminal activity is reducing their chances for victimization and, in turn, is taking an active role in crime reduction.

It is important to be aware a crime can occur anywhere at any time. Therefore, this crime prevention manual is provided in order to assist our citizenry to become more aware of many common sense techniques that may help reduce crime in Canton's neighborhoods. Furthermore, the use of instinct, knowledge, common sense, and awareness can make you a tough target.



Three Basic Rules

1. Stay alert.
2. Keep your mind on your surroundings, "who's in front of you and who's behind you."
3. Don't get distracted. Walk purposefully, stand tall, and make eye contact with people around you. **TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS.** If you feel uncomfortable in a situation, leave.

Personal Protection.

- ✓ Make yourself a "tough target." Don't think that it can't happen to you. Should you resist? Everyone and every situation is different. Always be aware of your surroundings. If being followed or stalked, call 911 or drive directly to a police station.
- ✓ If you're attacked, keep your head. Stay as calm as possible and evaluate your options and resources. It may be more advisable to submit than to resist and risk severe injury or death. You will have to make this decision based on the circumstances. But, don't resist if the attacker has a weapon.
- ✓ Keep assessing the situation as it is happening. If one strategy doesn't work, try another. Possible options include negotiating, stalling for time, distracting the assailant and fleeing to a safe place, verbal assertiveness, screaming, and physical resistance. You may be able to turn the attacker off with unusual behavior such as throwing up, acting crazy, or stating you have a sexually transmitted disease.
- ✓ After a Sexual Assault, Go to a safe place and call the police. The sooner you report the crime, the greater the chances your attacker will be caught.
- ✓ DO NOT shower, bathe, douche, or destroy any clothing you were wearing. Do not disturb any physical evidence. Go to a hospital emergency room for medical care. Call someone to be with you. You should not be alone. Contact a rape treatment or crisis center to help you deal with the consequences of the assault.

While Driving.

- ✓ Keep your car in good condition with the gas tank at least half full.
- ✓ Park in well-lighted areas and lock your doors, no matter how long you'll be gone.
- ✓ Put valuables out of sight or in the trunk.
- ✓ Check front and rear seats and floorboards before entering your car.
- ✓ Drive with all doors locked and windows rolled up.
- ✓ Never pick up hitchhikers.
- ✓ If your car breaks down, put the hood up, lock the doors, turn on the flashers, and move to the passenger seat. Do not leave your car. If someone stops to help, roll down the window slightly and ask them to call the police or a tow truck.
- ✓ Avoid underground and enclosed parking garages if possible.
- ✓ When parking or returning to your vehicle, carry your keys and be aware of your surroundings.
- ✓ Consider investing in a cellular telephone.

Public Transportation.

- ✓ Try to use well-lighted and frequently used stops.
- ✓ Try to sit near the driver or conductor.
- ✓ Avoid sitting near exits. An attacker can reach in and grab a purse or jewelry as the bus or subway pulls away.
- ✓ Be alert to who gets off the bus or subway with you.
- ✓ If you feel uncomfortable, walk directly to a place where there are other people.

In Elevators.

- ✓ Look in the elevator before getting in.
- ✓ Stand near the controls.
- ✓ Get off if someone suspicious enters.
- ✓ If you're worried about someone who is waiting for the elevator with you, pretend you forgot something and don't get on.
- ✓ If you're attacked, hit the alarm and as many floor buttons as possible.



Home and Neighborhood.

- ✓ Good locks, simple precautions, neighborhood awareness, and common sense can help prevent most property crimes.
- ✓ **Lock Doors, and Windows.** (about half of all burglars enter through unlocked doors and windows).
- ✓ Secure sliding glass doors with locks or a rigid wooden dowel wedged in the track.
- ✓ Lock double-hung windows by sliding a bolt or nail into a hole drilled at a downward angle through the top of each sash and into the frame.

Outside.

- ✓ Trim back shrubbery hiding doors or windows.
- ✓ Cut back tree limbs that could help a thief climb to second story windows.
- ✓ Make sure all porches, entrances, and yards are well lighted.
- ✓ Maintain the neighborhood. Dark alleys, litter, and rundown areas attract criminals.

Key Sense.

- ✓ Do not hide house keys in mail boxes, planters, or under doormats.
- ✓ Do not put personal identification on key rings.
- ✓ Leave only your ignition key with mechanics or parking attendants.
- ✓ If you lose the keys to your home or move into a new home, change the locks immediately.

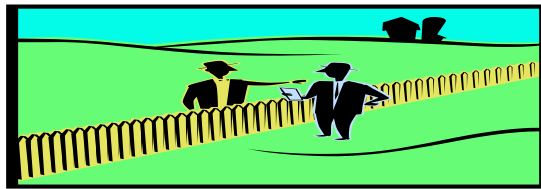
Answering the Door.

- ✓ Install a peephole or viewer in all entry doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door.
- ✓ Do not trust door chains. They can be easily broken.
- ✓ Don't open the door to anyone you don't know.
- ✓ Insist service personnel verify their identity before allowing them in.



Answering the Telephone.

- ✓ Don't give any information to "wrong number" callers.
 - ✓ Check references of any person calling about a survey or credit check before offering information.
 - ✓ Hang up immediately on threatening or harassing calls.
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Things You and Your Neighbors Can Do

- ✓ Work with public agencies and other neighborhood-based or community-wide organizations, on solving common problems. Don't be shy about letting them know what your community needs.
- ✓ Make sure that all the youth in the neighborhood have positive ways to spend their spare time, through organized recreation, tutoring programs, part-time work, and volunteer opportunities.
- ✓ Set up a Neighborhood Watch or a community patrol working with police. Build a partnership with police, focused on solving problems instead of reacting to crises. Make it possible for neighbors to report suspicious activity or crimes without fear of retaliation. Take advantage of "safety in numbers" to hold rallies, marches, and other group activities to show you're determined to drive out crime and drugs.
- ✓ Make sure your streets and homes are well lighted.
- ✓ Involve everyone; teens, children, senior citizens. Graffiti, litter, abandoned cars, and run-down buildings tell criminals that you don't care about where you live or each other. Call the city public works department and ask for help in cleaning up.
- ✓ Ask local officials to use new ways to get criminals out of your building or neighborhood. These include enforcing anti-noise laws, housing codes, health and fire codes, anti-nuisance laws, and drug-free clauses in rental leases.
- ✓ Form a Court Watch to help support victims and witnesses and to see that criminals get fairly punished.
- ✓ Work with schools to establish drug-free, gun-free zones; work with recreation officials to do the same for parks.
- ✓ Develop and share a phone list of local organizations that can provide counseling, job training, guidance, and other services that neighbors might need.
- ✓ Help clean up the neighborhood!



GUN SAFETY

- ✓ Gun Safety is the responsibility of every adult, whether or not you own a firearm.
- ✓ If you own a firearm and obtain a concealed weapons permit, you are required by Ohio law to know that there are "Pistol Free" zones in Ohio. It is illegal to carry a pistol on school property, into public or private day care centers, sports arenas, churches, hospitals, casinos, a dormitory, or classroom of a college or university, an entertainment facility that seats 2,500 people or more, and a dining room, lounge, or bar area of a premise licensed under the Liquor Control Commission.
- ✓ As an adult, you are responsible for properly securing your firearm. If another person is injured as a result of your negligence in properly securing a gun, you can be charged with a crime or be held civilly liable. If convicted, you could be fined or sentenced to time in prison.

What Your Children Need to Know

- ✓ Children should know that guns are not toys, that guns are dangerous and can hurt people.
- ✓ If they see or find a gun (even if they think the gun looks like a toy), they should follow these three steps to safety:
 1. They should not touch or handle the gun.
 2. They should get away from the gun quickly, leave the area.
 3. They should immediately tell a trusted adult (parent, guardian, teacher or police officer) about the gun.
- ✓ It is illegal to bring weapons to school, onto school property, or into vehicles used by a school to transport students to and from school property. Ohio law requires schools to expel students who bring weapons onto school grounds or to school events





Home Security Checklist

Use this as a guide as you check your home for safety measures. These are just some steps that you can take to decrease the likelihood that you or your home is targeted for a crime.

Exterior Doors:

- ✓ All doors are locked at night and every time we leave the house - even if it's just for a few minutes.
- ✓ Doors are solid hardwood or metal-clad.
- ✓ Doors feature wide-angle peepholes at heights everyone can use.
- ✓ If there are glass panels in or near our doors, they are reinforced in some way so that they cannot be shattered.
- ✓ All entryways have a working, keyed entry lock and sturdy deadbolt lock installed into the frame of the door.
- ✓ Spare keys are kept with a trusted neighbor, not under a doormat or planter, on a ledge, or in the mailbox.

Garage and Sliding Door:

- ✓ The door leading into the home from the garage is solid wood or metal-clad and protected with a quality keyed door lock and deadbolt.
- ✓ The overhead garage door has a lock so that we do not rely solely on the automatic garage door opener to provide security.
- ✓ Garage doors are all locked when leaving the house.
- ✓ The sliding glass door has a strong, working key lock. A dowel or a pin to secure the sliding glass door has been installed to prevent the door from being shoved aside or lifted off the track.
- ✓ The sliding glass door is locked every night and each time you leave the house.

Protecting Windows:

- ✓ Every window in the home has a working lock or is securely pinned.
- ✓ Windows are always locked, even when they are opened a few inches for ventilation.

Outdoor Security:

- ✓ Shrubs / bushes are trimmed to so there is no place for someone to hide.
- ✓ There are no dark areas around our house, garage, or yard at night that would hide prowlers.

- ✓ Every outside door has a bright, working light to illuminate visitors.
- ✓ Floodlights are used appropriately to ensure effective illumination.
- ✓ Outdoor lights are on in the evening whether someone is at home or not; or a photocell or motion-sensitive lighting system has been installed.
- ✓ House numbers should be clearly displayed so police and other emergency vehicles can find the house quickly.

Security When Away From Home:

- ✓ At least two light timers have been set to turn the lights on and off in a logical sequence when you are away from home for an extended time period.
- ✓ The motion detector or other alarm system (if you have one) has been activated when leaving home.
- ✓ Mail and newspaper deliveries have been stopped or arrangements for a neighbor/friend to pick them up have been made when going away from home for an extended period of time.
- ✓ A neighbor has been asked to tend the yard and watch the home when you are away.

Outdoor Valuables and Personal Property:

- ✓ Gate latches, garage doors, and shed doors are all locked with high-security, laminated padlocks.
 - ✓ Gate latches, garage doors, and shed doors are locked after every use.
 - ✓ Grills, lawn mowers, and other valuables are stored in a locked garage or shed, or if left out in the open, are hidden from view with a tarp and securely locked to a stationary point.
 - ✓ Every bicycle is secured with a U-bar lock or quality padlock and chain. Bikes are always locked, even if left for just a minute.
 - ✓ Firearms are stored unloaded and locked in storage boxes and secured with trigger guard locks.
 - ✓ Valuable items, such as television, stereos, and computers have been inscribed with identifying number approved by local police.
 - ✓ A home inventory is up-to-date and includes pictures. A complete copy is kept somewhere out of the house.
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Don't Make It Easy For a Thief to Steal Your Wheels

One vehicle is stolen every 20 seconds in the United States. Stolen cars, vans, trucks, and motorcycles cost victims time and money - and increase everyone's insurance premiums. They're also often used to commit other crimes.

The Basic Prevention Policy

- ✓ Never leave your car running or the keys in the ignition when you're away from it, even for "just a minute".
- ✓ Always roll up the windows and lock the car, even if it's in front of your home.
- ✓ Never leave valuables in plain view, even if your car is locked. Put them in the trunk or at least out of sight.
- ✓ Buy radios, tape and CD players that can be removed and locked in the trunk.
- ✓ Park in busy, well-lighted areas.
- ✓ Carry the registration and insurance card with you.
- ✓ Don't leave personal identification documents or credit cards in your vehicle.
- ✓ When you pay to park in a lot or garage, leave just the ignition key with the attendant. Make sure no personal information is attached. Do the same when you take your car for repairs.



Add Extra Protection

- ✓ Etch the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) on the windows, doors, fenders, and trunk lid. This helps discourage professional thieves who have to either remove or replace etched parts before selling the car.
- ✓ Copy the VIN and your tag number on a card and keep it in a safe place. If your vehicle is stolen, the police need this information.
- ✓ Install a mechanical locking device - commonly called clubs, collars, or j-bars - that locks to the steering wheel, column, or brake to prevent the wheel from being turned more than a few degrees.
- ✓ Investigate security systems if you live in a high-theft area or drive an automobile that's an attractive target for thieves. You may get a discount on your auto insurance.
- ✓ Look into CAT (Combat Auto Theft) and HEAT (Help Eliminate Auto Theft) partnership programs where individuals voluntarily register their cars with the police, and allow the police to stop by during certain hours when they normally would not be driving (such as midnight to 5a.m.). All participants display decals in a designated area on their vehicles.

What About Carjacking?

Carjacking - stealing a car by force - has captured headlines in the last few years. Statistically, your chances of being a carjacking victim are very slim and preventative actions can reduce the risk even more.

- ✓ Approach your car with the key in hand.
- ✓ Look around and inside before getting in.
- ✓ When driving, keep your car doors locked and windows rolled up at all times.
- ✓ Be especially alert at intersections, gas stations, ATMs, shopping malls, convenience and grocery stores - all are windows of opportunity for carjackers.
- ✓ Park in well-lighted areas with good visibility, close to walkways, stores, and people.
- ✓ If the carjacker has a weapon, give up the car with no questions asked. Your life is worth more than a car.

Beware of the "Bump and Rob"

It works like this. A car, usually with a driver and at least one passenger, rear-ends or "bumps" you in traffic. You get out to check the damage. The driver or one of the passengers jumps in your car and drives off.

- ✓ If you're bumped by another car, look around before you get out.
- ✓ Make sure there are other cars around; check out the car that's rear-ended you and who's in it.
- ✓ If the situation makes you uneasy, stay in the car and insist on moving to a police station or busy, well-lighted area to exchange information.

Be on the Lookout

- ✓ If your car's stolen, report it to the police immediately. Also, report abandoned cars to the local agency that handles their removal.
 - ✓ When buying a used car from an individual or a dealer, make sure you have the proper Title, and that the VIN number is intact, and the "federal sticker" is on the inside of the driver's door. That sticker should match the VIN.
 - ✓ Suggest that any dealer, rental car agency, or auto repair shop you use offer auto theft prevention information in the waiting rooms.
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At Home Alone: A Parent's Guide

Your ten-year-old comes home from school at 3:00, but you don't get home from work until 5:00. He's at home alone for those two hours every weekday. What does he do until you arrive? Most likely, he gets a snack or talks on the phone. Maybe he watched TV. But since you're not there, you worry. Just like the majority of American parents who work and have to leave their children on their own after school every day, you are anxious about your child's safety.

By following the safeguards listed below, you can help ease some of this worry and take measures that will protect your kids even when you're not around.

What You Can Do

- ✓ Make sure your children are old enough and mature enough to care for themselves. Teach them the basic safety rules. **Know the three "W's":**
 - **Where your kids are,**
 - **What they're doing, and**
 - **Who they're with.**
- ✓ Can your children be trusted to go straight home after school?
- ✓ Easily use the telephone, locks, and kitchen appliances?
- ✓ Following rules and instructions well?
- ✓ Handle unexpected situations without panicking?
- ✓ Stay alone without being afraid?
- ✓ Are there things you don't want your children to get into? Take the time to talk to them about the deadly consequences of guns, medicines, power tools, drugs, alcohol, cleaning products, and inhalants. Make sure you keep these items in a secure place out of sight and locked up, if possible.

Children who stay "home alone" should be able to perform the following:

- ✓ To check in with you or a neighbor immediately after arriving home.
- ✓ How to call 9-1-1, or your area's emergency number, or call the operator.
- ✓ How to give directions to your home, in case of emergency.
- ✓ To never accept gifts or rides from people they don't know well.
- ✓ How to use the door and window locks, and the alarm system if you have one.
- ✓ To never let anyone into your home without asking your permission.
- ✓ To never let a caller at the door or on the phone know that they're alone. Teach them to say "Dad can't come to the phone (or door) right now."

- ✓ To carry a house key with them in a safe place (inside a shirt pocket or sock). Don't leave it under the mat or on a ledge outside the house.
- ✓ How to escape in case of fire.
- ✓ To not go into an empty house or apartment if things don't look right (a broken window, ripped screen, or opened door).
- ✓ To let you know about anything that frightens them or makes them feel uncomfortable.

Take a Stand

- ✓ Work with schools, religious institutions, libraries, recreational and community center, and local youth organizations to create program that give children ages 10 and older a place to go and something to do after school, a "homework haven", with sports, crafts, classes and tutoring.
 - ✓ Don't forget that kids of this age can also get involved in their communities.
 - ✓ Help them design and carry out an improvement project!
 - ✓ Ask your workplace to sponsor a Survival Skills class for employees' children. You can kick it off with a parent breakfast or lunch.
 - ✓ Ask your community to develop a homework hotline latchkey kids can call for help or just to talk.
 - ✓ Join or start a McGruff House or other block parent program in your community to offer children help in emergencies or frightening situations.
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Safer Seniors

As people grow older, their chances of being victims of crime decrease dramatically. But a lifetime of experience coupled with the physical problems associated with aging often makes older Americans fearful and trapped in their own homes. Though they're on the lookout constantly for physical attack and burglary, they're not as alert to frauds and con games. In reality, the greatest crime threat to seniors' well being and trust.

Want to conquer fear and prevent crime? Take these common-sense precautions.

Be Alert When Out and About

- ✓ Go with friends or family, not alone.
- ✓ Carry your purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps.
- ✓ Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket.
- ✓ Don't carry credit cards you don't need or large amounts of cash.
- ✓ Use direct deposit for Social Security and other regular checks.
- ✓ Keep car doors locked, whether you're a passenger or driver.
- ✓ Be particularly alert in parking lots and garages.
- ✓ Park near an entrance.
- ✓ Sit close to the driver or near the exit while riding the bus, train, or subway.
- ✓ If someone or something makes you uneasy, trust your instincts and leave.

Make Your Home Safe and Secure

- ✓ Install good locks on doors and windows and use them.
- ✓ Don't hide keys in mailboxes and planters or under doormats. Instead, leave an extra set of keys with a neighbor or friend.
- ✓ Ask for photo identification from service or delivery people before letting them in the door.
- ✓ If you are the least bit worried, call the company to verify.
- ✓ Be sure your street address number is large, clear of obstruction, and well-lighted so police and other emergency personnel can find your home quickly.
- ✓ Consider a home alarm system that provides emergency monitoring for burglary, fire, and medical emergencies.

Watch Out for Con Artists

- ✓ Don't fall for anything that sounds too good to be true — a free vacation; sweepstakes prizes; cures for cancer and arthritis; a low-risk, high-yield investment scheme.
- ✓ Never give your credit card, phone card, Social Security, or bank account number to anyone over the phone. It's illegal for telemarketers to ask for these numbers to verify a prize or gift.
- ✓ Don't let anyone rush you into signing anything — an insurance policy, a sales agreement, a contract. Read it carefully and have someone you trust check it over.

- ✓ Beware of individuals claiming to represent companies, consumer organizations, or government agencies that offer to recover lost money from fraudulent telemarketers for a fee.
- ✓ If you're suspicious, check it out with the police, the Better Business Bureau, or your local consumer protection office.
- ✓ You can also call the National Consumers League Fraud Information Center at 800-876-7060.

Get Involved in the Community

- ✓ Report any crime or suspicious activities to law enforcement.
 - ✓ Join a Neighborhood Watch to look out for each other and help the police.
 - ✓ Work to help improve your neighborhood. Volunteer as a citizen patroller, tutor for children, office aide in the police or fire department, mentor for teens, or escort for individuals with disabilities.
 - ✓ Does your community have a Triad program? It's sponsored on a national level by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and the National Sheriffs' Association. Triad promotes partnerships between senior citizens and the law enforcement community, both to prevent crime against the elderly and to help law enforcement benefit from the talents of older people. If you're interested, contact your chief of police, sheriff, or AARP chapter, or call Triad at NSA at 800-424-7827.
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You Are Going On Vacation!

An empty house is a tempting target for a burglar. Use this checklist of tips to help safeguard your home while you're away.

- ✓ Have good locks on all doors and windows and **USE THEM!**
- ✓ Ask a neighbor to watch the house while you're away. It's a good idea to leave your vacation address and telephone number with a neighbor so you can be reached in case of an emergency. Never leave your house key hidden outside your home.
- ✓ Stop all deliveries, or arrange for a neighbor to pick up your mail, newspapers and packages. Arrange for someone to mow your lawn, rake leaves and maintain the yard to give the home a lived-in look. Plug in timers to turn lights, a radio or television on and off at appropriate times. This helps to disguise the fact that you are away.
- ✓ Turn the bell or ringer on your telephone down low. If a burglar is around, he won't be alerted to your absence by a ringing phone.
- ✓ Don't announce your absence on answering machine messages.
- ✓ Leave your blinds, shades and curtains in a normal position. Don't close them unless that is what you do when you are home.
- ✓ Close and lock garage doors and windows.
- ✓ Ask a neighbor to occasionally park in your driveway. If you leave your car at home, park it as you normally would. Vehicles parked outside should be moved occasionally to appear that they are being used.
- ✓ Secure storage sheds, attic entrances and gates.
- ✓ Tell your local police you plan to be away. Patrol officers may have the opportunity to periodically check your home.
- ✓ Engrave your valuables as recommended in Operation I.D. This simple step will allow your stolen property to be identified and returned to you if recovered by the police.
- ✓ Travel Safely! At home or away, staying alert can save the day! If you are driving, make sure your vehicle has been properly serviced and is in suitable condition for the journey. Try to have specific directions and routes to your destination. If you get lost, call the local police for directions or assistance.
- ✓ Always keep your vehicle doors and windows locked.
- ✓ At stop lights and other traffic delays, leave enough space in front of your vehicle so that you have an escape option in case of an emergency.
- ✓ Let someone know the route you intend to travel and your itinerary. This will help authorities in locating you if there is a need to do so. Plan your trip carefully and allow for factors such as weather, fatigue, facilities for lodging, food and fuel.
- ✓ Be sure you have sufficient finances, either cash, travelers checks or credit cards. Ask the hotel or motel staff about their security measures so you know what to expect. Use the hotel safe to store your valuables during your stay.
- ✓ Staying alert to safety may make your vacation much more pleasant and enjoyable. Being a victim of a crime is no fun. **RELAX, have FUN, and be SAFE!**