



## **KEEPING SAFE**

### **Laying a Foundation for Crime Prevention: Risk Control**

In addition to enabling crime reporting through a safe means, Crime Stoppers Dominica also provides the public with the information and tools to guard themselves against crime. Preventing crime plays a major part in helping to reduce crime. We all know that taking a few precautions as part of our daily lives will reduce the possibility of our businesses, homes and families becoming a target for criminals. Here are some of our tips on measures you can incorporate into your lives to improve safety and give you some peace of mind.

### **PERSONAL SAFETY**

- Do not give personal information to unknown persons on the phone.
- Be alert for suspicious behaviors from prowlers
- Be mindful of your manner of dress, so that it does not attract criminals to you
- If possible, do not carry more money or valuables than necessary
- Exercise caution when using ATM machines. If possible, avoid using ATM machines at night. In the event you have to, screen the surroundings making sure there is no one who behaves suspiciously
- Be careful of strangers who approach you soliciting favours
- When you walk ensure that you carry your purse towards your front. While walking, stay close to buildings and areas that are well lit. Avoid shortcuts!
- Walk confidently and at a steady pace. Rapists look for someone who appears vulnerable.
- Avoid bushes and alleys where rapists can hide.

### **For Vehicle Owners**

- Ensure that your windows are rolled up completely and always lock your doors even if you are going to be away for a short while
- Vehicle alarms are very useful!
- Don't attract thieves! Secure your valuables or purse in your car away from the view of passersby. Place valuables under your seat or other secure spot where it cannot be seen to serve as a temptation.

### **For Your Home**

Always ensure that your home is secure and will not attract burglars. The responsibility rests on you to ensure that your property, home and family are safe. Most home burglaries occur while the occupants are not at home, or at nights when you are asleep. Here are some useful tips to help you protect your possessions:

- Keep your surroundings free from excessive shrubs/trees that may serve as a hiding place for those attempting to break into your house
- Signs such as *'Property Protected'*, *'No Trespassing'*, *'Dangerous Dog'*, etc. in conspicuous places can sometimes serve as a deterrent.
- Ensure that your house is always well secured, especially when going to bed at night. Make sure that doors are locked and have your mobile phone ready at all times.
- Install a peephole-viewer in your door.
- Purchase superior quality exterior doors. Light plywood flush doors are not suitable for external use. Ideally, exterior doors should be solid wood or constructed with metal overlay about 1 1/2" to 1 3/4" thick.
- Use good quality deadbolt locks on all exterior doors for added security.
- Ensure that door moldings fit tightly.
- Consider changing your locks when moving into a new house or apartment.
- Use exterior lighting around your home.
- Don't give a burglar the resources to enter your home. Burglars know where to find "secret" hiding places, so NEVER hide keys outside such as under a mat or flowerpot. It's much better to leave a key with a trusted neighbour.

### **For Children**

- Instruct your child against giving personal information about himself or his parents to strangers.
- Your child should check in with you or a neighbour when he is alone after arriving from school.
- Children should never accept gifts or lifts from people that he/she is not familiar with.
- Teach your child to say, "Mum is not available to answer the phone right now." Your child should never let a telephone caller know that he/she is home alone.
- Your child should keep a house key instead of leaving keys under a mat or somewhere around the house. You never know who is looking and thieves often know where to search.
- Parents should monitor their children's online activities.
- Know the three "W's": **Where** your kids are, **What** they're doing, and **Who** they're with.
- Never go anywhere with someone you and your parents don't know and trust.
- If someone tries to abuse you, say no, get away, and tell a trusted adult. Remember, it's not the victim's fault.

### **For Elders**

Swindlers target the elderly therefore:

- Seniors should go with a trusted companion whenever possible.
- Avoid going for walks after dark.
- Ensure that your doors are secure and locked when you are home alone
- When someone knocks at your door, don't open it unless you know your visitor
- Beware with strangers offering to help with your bags. All that glitters is not gold!
- Make sure someone knows where you are going and when you expect to return

- Do not walk with large sums of cash and avoid keeping large amounts of cash in the home. It is best to keep large sum of cash at the bank
- Avoid placing your purse in shopping carts or counters where they can be easily snatched. Be aware that most purse snatching occurs at bus stops and crowded areas.
- Be alert of suspicious behavior or even those that may be seemingly smartly-dressed and confident. Do not allow anyone into the house with whom you are not familiar.
- If you live alone, arrange for a member of your family or friend to contact you every day.

## **BUSINESS SECURITY**

Review your business layout and security. Is the layout vulnerable to burglary? What security system is in place? Don't invite crime into a business!

### **Burglary/Robbery Prevention**

- Provide training about security procedures for all employees—including cleaning staff -- so they are familiar with safety measures and know your expectations.
- Invest in a safe and ensure it is fireproof and properly bolted. Remember to change the combination codes when an employee who has had access to it leaves your business.
- Install an up to date alarm system.
- Protect your business by installing and using good lighting
- To reduce losses, avoid leaving large amounts of cash in the register.
- Deposit cash in the bank regularly and during business hours. Do not establish a pattern; take different routes every time you go to the bank.
- If you or your employees are confronted by a robber, cooperate. Merchandise and cash can always be replaced—people can't!
- Invest in quality deadbolt locks. If you use padlocks, they should be made of steel and kept locked at all times. Remember to remove serial numbers from your locks, to prevent unauthorized duplication. Metal crossbars provide added security.
- Windows should have secure locks and burglar-resistant glass.
- Before investing in an alarm system, check with several companies and decide what level of security fits your needs. Learn how to use your system properly and check the system daily. Also it is important that you run period tests.
- Check the parking lot for good lighting and unobstructed views.

### **Employee Theft Prevention**

Employee theft accounts for a large amount of business losses.

- *Receipt fraud* is common in the business world and is often committed by a company's employees. It could happen when employees steal incoming cash or cheques, or when the records of the amounts owed by customers are adjusted in return for cash rewards or other incentives. So as to avoid this, employers should introduce appropriate supervisory and monitoring controls. Where possible, divide duties between staff so any irregularities will be spotted.
- Guard your business against theft. Ensure that audits are performed on a yearly basis. In the interim, do impromptu stock counts/inventory of supplies and equipment. Random spot checks are effective in preventing theft.

- In retail, it is important to keep tight control over cash receipts to prevent theft. Ensure that your point of sales systems provide audit trails so you can trace any irregularities.
- To prevent unauthorised use, exercise access control to keys, the safe, alarm codes, documents and computers. Change locks and access codes when an employee is terminated.
- Establish a written policy that outlines employee responsibilities, standards of honesty, and general security procedures and consequences for not following them. Make sure new employees read it, understand it, and sign it as a condition of employment.

### **Petty thievery/Shoplifting Prevention**

- Maintain a tidy and orderly store. Use mirrors so you could see "blind spots" where shoplifters might hide. Merchandise should be kept away from store exits to prevent grab-and-run situations. Small items that can easily be snatched should be left at the cashier.
- Keep displays full and orderly so employees can see at a glance if something is missing. Keep expensive merchandise in locked cases.
- Design store exits so all persons must pass by security personnel or store employees. You may want to use an electronic article surveillance system or other inventory control devices.
- Dressing rooms should be monitored at all times. Keep dressing rooms locked and limit the number of items taken in.

### **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

- Pay attention to your surroundings and observe heavily tinted vehicles, dark areas or suspicious persons especially those who appear to be conducting business from a parked car.
- Good neighbours should look out for each other and communicate regularly. If possible, get to know your neighbours and establish some degree of trust. They can report suspicious activity while you are away.
- Communicate with trusted neighbours on matters such as travel plans, expected visitors and potential threats to the neighbourhood.

Be alert to any of the following situations that may indicate trouble for the neighbourhood:

- A stranger entering your neighbour's yard or apartment when it is unoccupied.
- Anyone removing car accessories, license plates or gasoline.
- Anyone peering into parked cars.
- Persons loitering around in the street, at schools or secluded areas.
- Any vehicle moving slowly and without lights or one following an apparently aimless course.
- Vehicles being loaded with valuables (electronic gear, appliances, etc.) in front of an unoccupied house or apartment.

- Sounds of breaking glass or loud explosive noises.
- Someone loitering in front of a house when no one is home.
- Broken windows or open doors at an unoccupied house.
- Vagrants or individuals going from door-to-door