

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE A CRIME VICTIM

911 SYSTEM

The 911 telephone system is standard nationwide to enable callers to reach emergency services by phone with a minimum of difficulty. If you have an emergency involving the safety of life or property, you are encouraged to make use of the system. In most areas, you may dial 911 from a pay phone without the need for coins.

If your area has enhanced 911 with automatic number identification and automatic location identification, your name, address and telephone number will be displayed on a screen at the 911 operator's position when the connection is made. Help can be dispatched to your location even if you don't get a chance to say a word!

BURGLARY

If you arrive at your home or business and feel that it has been burglarized, **DO NOT ENTER**, but go to another location and call the police. Let the police search the property to make sure that no suspect is still present. Upon entering your home or business, do not touch things unnecessarily as you may disturb or destroy fingerprint and other evidence. Inform the police of anything that has been moved from its original position so that it can be checked for prints. Notify the police if you find anything that is not yours that may have been left behind by the burglar such as tools, clothing, etc. (Driver's licenses and other identification have been left behind by burglars before!)

Be prepared to provide the police with serial numbers and a complete description of all missing property. Tell the police if you have engraved any of the items with your driver's license or other personalized number.

ROBBERY

You've heard it before and now here it is again: Never resist if you are the victim of a robbery. Do exactly as you are told to do in order to minimize your chances of being injured and to speed the departure of your assailant before he gets other ideas. The assailant, in most cases, doesn't want to hang around much longer than you want him to.

Your money and other valuables can hopefully be replaced. If they can't be replaced don't let that thought cause you to hesitate. You certainly cannot be replaced. Try to obtain a good description of the suspect(s) and the direction and mode (on foot, vehicle) of escape.

It's always a good idea to have a second billfold with a few dollars and a few important looking cards in it to give to an attacker should the need arise. Keep your real cash and cards in an interior pocket not easily accessible by the robber. Do not resist any attempt the attacker may make to search your pockets, however.

CON GAMES

The object of any con game is to cause you to part with your money or other thing of value. Most con games are initiated by people who approach you on the street or call on you at your home. Be

suspicious of ANY plan, idea, scheme, business deal or whatever that requires you to part with your money on short notice.

If you feel you have been the victim of a con game or an illegal business practice, notify the police. Do not be embarrassed or hesitant to tell the authorities for fear of ridicule. The sooner you notify the police the greater your chances of recovering your property. You may not be the only victim of whatever group is operating, and your statements and those of other victims may help in apprehending the suspects.

HIT AND RUN ACCIDENT

If you are involved in a traffic accident and the other driver leaves the scene, immediately try to see and remember or record the license plate number and description of the vehicle and the driver. You may only have a few seconds to do this. Also try to notice where the damage is located on his vehicle. If you can SAFELY do so, and your vehicle is not disabled, and no one can do it for you, follow the suspect for a short distance to get the license plate number if you were not able to get it at the scene. The suspect will probably be exceeding the speed limit so do not get involved in anything resembling a pursuit. Don't compound the problem by committing traffic violations and causing another accident for which you may be held responsible. If you cannot get the information in a short distance, return to the scene and notify the police. If other motorists are nearby, try to find a volunteer to follow the suspect to get the license number.

Ask witnesses to remain or at least to leave their name and address and a written description of the suspect vehicle and driver.

Be suspicious of drivers who do stop following the accident but ask you or offer you money not to call the police. This should alert you to immediately start recording license plate and other information. These drivers may decide to leave quickly.

Contact a crime prevention specialist at your local law enforcement agency. They will provide you with the latest information on crime prevention. Ask about an on-site crime prevention survey of your home or business. Also ask if your agency has a program to loan out engraving tools. If so, borrow one and mark your valuables with your driver's license number or whatever number your agency recommends.