

Dear Neighbor,

Nothing is more important to me than working to keep our neighborhoods safe. That includes taking steps to protect ourselves and our belongings. This brochure contains tips to help reduce the risk of becoming a target of crime. I hope you find it helpful.

For more information, contact your local police department or visit the New York State Division of Police website at [troopers.ny.gov/prevention-and-preparedness](https://troopers.ny.gov/prevention-and-preparedness). You can also contact my district office if you have any questions or concerns about this or any other matter.

Sincerely,



Carl E. Heastie  
Speaker of the Assembly

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# Crime Watch

Taking action to reduce crime risk



**Important information from**

**Speaker of the Assembly  
Carl E. Heastie**

## Reduce your risk of becoming a crime victim.

Simple steps you can take to help prevent crime from happening.



### Around your home

- ✓ Make sure doors and windows have secure locks, and use them when you leave home, even for a short time. Keep the front door locked, day or night.
- ✓ Leave spare keys with a trusted person, not in a place like the mailbox or under the doormat.
- ✓ Don't open your door to a stranger. Consider installing a security camera or doorbell that lets you see activity outside your home without opening the door.
- ✓ Trim shrubs and landscaping below window height and light-up places like stairwells, alleys, hallways, and entryways. Intruders don't want to be seen and are more likely to avoid places where they would be easily visible.
- ✓ Trim any branches that someone could climb to reach upper-floor windows.
- ✓ Don't leave tools or ladders outside or in an unlocked shed; a burglar could use them to enter your home.
- ✓ Be sure exterior doors use secure hinges so someone can't easily remove them from the outside.
- ✓ If you live alone, consider listing only your last name and first initial on mailboxes or in directories.
- ✓ Set up a buddy system or neighborhood watch in your community. Report unusual or strange activity in the neighborhood.

# Smart security measures to protect yourself and your belongings

- ✓ Close and lock all garage doors.
- ✓ Report broken streetlights.
- ✓ Keep emergency numbers programmed in your mobile phone and next to any landline.
- ✓ If you come home and find your home has been burglarized, don't touch anything! Immediately go to a neighbor's home and call 911.
- ✓ Permanently mark valuable personal items and electronics with your name or other identifying inscription, or note the serial number. It helps to identify something as your property and deters thieves who could have trouble selling items that appear stolen.



## While you're away

Mail piling up, an unmowed lawn or a dark house can advertise your absence. If you will be out of town or away for an extended period, use these tips to help your home appear occupied:

- ✓ Set up timers for your lights or television to turn on and off.
- ✓ Cancel newspapers and other deliveries while you are away and have the Postal Service temporarily hold your mail. Or, ask a trusted neighbor to retrieve and keep your things until you return.
- ✓ Arrange for someone to mow the lawn, shovel the sidewalk, bring in garbage cans or handle any other obvious sign of absence.
- ✓ Don't announce travel plans on social networks or post in real-time when you're on vacation. Avoid sharing anything that lets people know exactly when you will be away or that you are currently gone.

Ask trusted neighbors to keep an eye out for unknown people around your home while you're out of town or away for an extended period. Your local police department may also offer Dark House services, in which they regularly check on your home during your time away.

## Your car

When you leave your vehicle unattended, don't create an easy opportunity for theft:

- ✓ Always lock your car and take the keys with you, even if you'll only be gone for a short time.
- ✓ Park in well-lit areas when possible
- ✓ Fully close all windows, including any sunroof or moonroof.
- ✓ Put valuables out of sight or lock them in the trunk. Thieves will target visible items like loose change, shopping bags, electronic devices and charging cords.

If you believe someone is following your car or threatening you, drive to a police station. If you can't easily do that, drive to a gas station, shopping center or other well-lit, populated area and call 911.

## Out and about

Pay attention to your surroundings and always trust your instincts:

- ✓ Avoid poorly lit streets and deserted areas when walking. Stick to well-lit, well-traveled streets and walk in a group when possible.



- ✓ Carry bags close to the front of your body or hold them tightly under an arm while walking.
- ✓ If you're carrying a wallet, keep it inside your coat or front pants pocket, not in a back pocket where it's an easier target for pickpockets.
- ✓ Don't leave your bag hanging on the back of a chair or on the floor when seated in public.
- ✓ Use direct deposit for paychecks or government checks, and only carry the cash or credit cards necessary to make your daily purchases.
- ✓ If you suspect someone is following you, head for areas with people or to the nearest open store.

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