
The Belleville Beat

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From the Desk of Sgt. Don Sax

December 2004; this issue of *The Belleville Beat* focuses on safety both inside and outside the home.

How Afraid Are You of Being Attacked or Robbed?

The results are very disturbing. Many Americans said they lived in fear of becoming a violent crime victim. Society appears to be headed down the road of self-destruction. Crime seems to be everywhere. There are ways we can stand up and fight back. By taking a few simple steps, it is possible to protect yourself, your children, and your property from becoming another crime statistic.

Personal Self-Defense

In response to a recent survey, almost half the people questioned said there was a place near their home where they were afraid to walk alone at night. But now is not the time to lock ourselves in our homes and surrender ourselves to criminals. By taking a few simple steps we can make ourselves safer.

- ❖ Always keep your head up and your eyes open. The best protection is to always stay alert and be aware of your surroundings.
- ❖ Stay out of empty parks, vacant lots, and poorly lighted alleys and streets.
- ❖ If a motorist pulls over and asks for information, stay away from his/her car.
- ❖ When approaching your own car, do so with your keys in your hand.
- ❖ If you see a suspicious person in a parking lot near your car, do not go near the vehicle until the person has left the area.
- ❖ Before entering your car, look inside to make sure that no one is hiding in the back seat.
- ❖ Carjackings are on the rise. To avoid becoming a victim of a carjacking, park close to the door at shopping centers. Always keep your doors locked and your windows rolled up.
- ❖ Plan a course of preventative action for future protection.
- ❖ If you are attacked, do not just scream. Yell "help" or "fire" instead.

Home Protection

Perfect or absolute security can never be attained. However, there are a few simple things that you can do to make your property unattractive to a burglar. To deter and prevent a criminal from targeting your property:

- ❖ Doors are the primary point of entry for most burglars. A visit to your local hardware store and the purchase of a dead bolt lock with harden cylinder guard and/or a double lock swing lock can take care of this problem area.
- ❖ Keep your doors and windows locked at all times.
- ❖ Good exterior lighting of a home is an excellent way to deter burglars.
- ❖ Keep shrubbery away from windows or any other point of entry that might provide a burglar with a place to hide during his/her attempt to get inside.
- ❖ A wooden broomstick handle placed in the bottom track of a sliding glass door frame will help stop the door from being forced open.
- ❖ Install a peep hole in your front door to provide a view of anyone standing outside.
- ❖ Try to make your home looked lived in, even when you are away. Use automatic timers on some of your lights.
- ❖ A dog makes a fine companion and a first rate burglar system.

Get a Jump on Carjackers

Carjacking - stealing a car by force - has captured headlines across the country. Statistically, your chances of being a carjacking victim are very slim and preventative action can reduce the risk even more.

Windows of opportunities that carjackers look for:

- ❖ Intersections controlled by stop lights or signs
- ❖ Garages and parking lots for mass transits, shopping malls, and grocery stores
- ❖ Self-serve gas stations and car washes
- ❖ ATMs (automatic teller machines)
- ❖ Residential driveways and streets as people get into and out of cars
- ❖ Highway exit and entry ramps, or anyplace else that drivers slow down or stop

Reducing your risk:

- ❖ Walk with purpose, hold your head up, and stay alert.
- ❖ Approach your car with key in hand. Look around and inside the car before getting in.
- ❖ Be wary of people asking directions or handing out flyers. Trust your instincts - if something makes you uneasy, get into the car quickly, lock the doors, and drive away.

If it happens to you:

- ❖ If the carjacker threatens you with a gun or other weapon, give up your car. Don't argue. Your life is worth more than a car.
- ❖ Get away from the area as quickly as possible.
- ❖ Try to remember what the carjacker looked like - sex, age, race, hair and eye color, special features, etc.