



Fire,
Security,
Electronic
Surveillance

"QUALITY AND PEACE OF MIND SINCE 1969"

(410) 766-8336

THE ADVISOR

*A Quarterly Security Guide Especially
Prepared for the Clients and Friends of A.A.S.C.O.*

Post Office Box 159 • Pasadena, MD 21123-0159 • www.okaasco.com

Rule No. 1—Don't make yourself an easy target. Don't leave doors or windows unlocked or open when you're not home. Don't put cartons for expensive electronics or other valuable purchases out at the curb for trash collection—it advertises that you have *stuff-worth-stealing* in your home. Be very careful about who is around—and might be listening—when you're telling friends and relatives how you're about to leave on the vacation of a lifetime.

Rule No. 2—Your home's security system is smaller, smarter and less visible than ever before. Be sure to arm it when you go to bed and every time you leave your home. If you don't activate your system, it can't provide you with the protection you and your family are counting on.

Rule No. 3—Test your system regularly to make certain it's in good working order and that all system components are functioning properly.

Just a few short years ago, burglary protection was considered a necessity only by those who were *well-to-do*. Today, unfortunately, virtually every

SIMPLE RULES FOR SAFER LIVING



household in North America contains expensive *valuables* that can be easily stolen and sold for a profit.

Today, computers, flat-screen televisions, digital cameras and camcorders head the list of the electronic and electrical devices that today's burglars can count on finding in almost every home—replacing the silverware and jewels, furs and cash that thieves might have targeted years ago.

Your home is probably a treasure trove of easy-to-carry and easily *fenced* goodies. Now, here's the good news. Your odds of becoming a burglary victim are reduced practically to zero as long as you follow these few simple, common-sense rules. ♦

MAIL FRAUD

Mail fraud is still alive and thriving. Here are the top five scams that are still catching people off-guard ... and taking their dollars while delivering nothing but grief:

- "You are a guaranteed winner of one of five valuable prizes!"
- "This chain letter is perfectly legal!"
- "Work at home and earn BIG \$\$\$!"
- "Your humble assistance is highly solicited in transferring millions of dollars, available from the Nigerian National Petroleum Company, to share with your good self. All we need is your bank account number!"
- "You've been selected to receive your choice of a fabulous vacation or a luxury car!" ♦

What's Inside:

- ◆ Shopping Mall Safety
- ◆ If It Sounds Too Good To Be True
- ◆ Privacy Protection
- ◆ Security-Based Home Automation



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Shopping Mall Safety

A trip to the shopping mall should be a safe item on your list of things to do. However, you need to know that crime rates at mall complexes are on the rise and that there are some very simple things that you and your family can do to increase your level of safety at the mall, such as:

- Avoid stairwells that are away from the main mall area, especially those that don't have surveillance cameras or panic buttons.
- Use only those stairwells, elevators and escalators that are in the main mall area or within department stores.
- Stay away from unsecured utility corridors and storage areas.
- Public rest rooms are often located down long, isolated corridors. Avoid them entirely if at all possible.
- Underground parking garages may be too large to be adequately protected by surveillance cameras and security guards. If you park in these areas, be on your guard and lock your doors immediately once you get into your vehicle.
- Large parking lots outdoors are no less safe than underground garages. Always park as close to the mall as possible in a location that is brightly lighted.
- If you are at all uneasy about walking to your vehicle, ask a security guard to accompany you. ❖



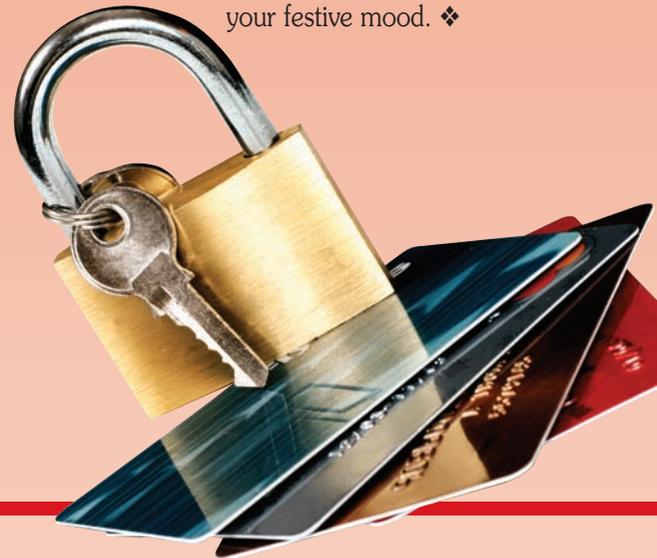
If It Sounds Too Good To Be True

Unfortunately, this time of year seems to bring *con artists* out of the woodwork the same way that spring brings swarms of flying ants. Many people recognize the simplest of the greed-based con games, such as: You and a stranger simultaneously find an envelope apparently bulging with cash—all you have to do to get a share of the *found* money is put up some of your own cash as good faith money—only to discover later that the envelope you're left with is filled with slips of blank paper.

Today's con artists keep getting more and more sophisticated. Their schemes range from *bad credit repair* hoaxes to *fraudulent investment* opportunities, and luxury gift *sweepstakes* to phony *charitable contribution* scams. They don't simply rely on the mail or the telephone, either. During the holidays, consumer complaints and street crime statistics reach their annual peak.

Beware of curbside rip-offs. If there's one thing you can count on at holiday time it's sidewalk street vendors or those hawking their wares from trucks in parking lots. What do the experts recommend? Save your money! Many times the merchandise may be broken, of inferior quality or stolen. Even designer items are likely to have labels that are fakes. By the time you realize that you've been scammed, the vendor has disappeared forever.

While there's no surefire way to avoid every single con game around, watching out for these common ones—and anything else that sounds too good to be true—can help you keep the joy in your festive mood. ❖

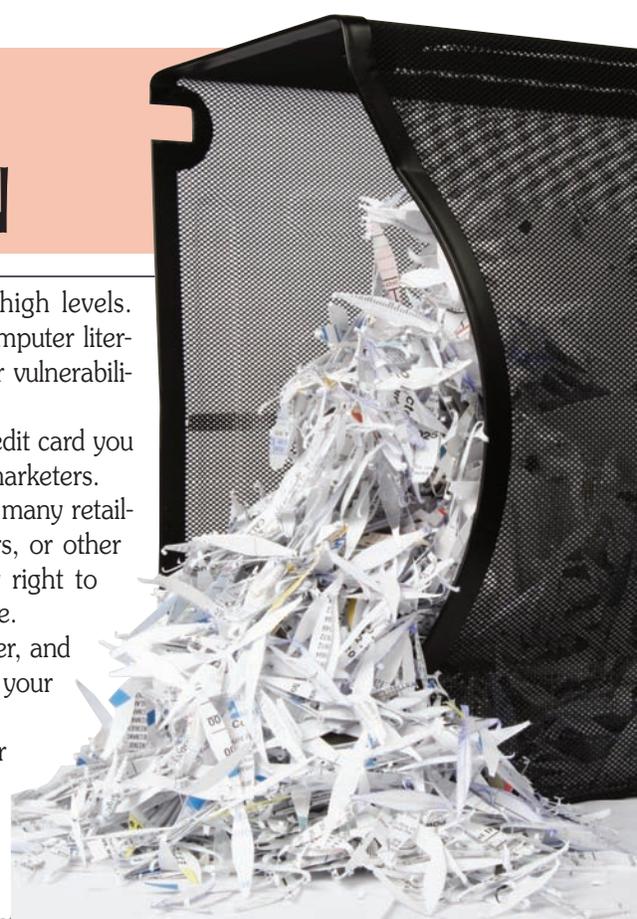


PRIVACY PROTECTION

Identity theft and the misuse of personal data are at all time record high levels. Consider for a moment the private, personal information accessible to any computer literate hacker and you'll begin to understand why it is expedient to minimize your vulnerability.

- *Plastic-trails.* Every time you hand a clerk your bank debit card or credit card you are leaving a detailed account of your buying habits that may be sold to other marketers.
- *Just say, "No!"* In order to track sales and marketing demographics, many retailers have gotten into the habit of asking all customers for their phone numbers, or other personal information, at the checkout counter. Remember, you have every right to refuse to divulge personal information, no matter how insistent the clerk may be.
- *Use the tools to protect yourself.* To block potential telephone, pager, and cellular intruders, request security codes (either a number or a password) for your accounts and do not reveal them to anyone.
- Whenever you fill out any application or questionnaire, always look for a checkbox which states that you do not want any of the information on the application to be disclosed to a third-party. If there isn't a specific area to indicate your desire for confidentiality, write it boldly on the application, initial it and date it.

Preserving your privacy, and protecting your identity and accumulated assets, has taken on a new urgency since the onset of the age of instantaneous electronic profiling. Every little step you take today to preserve your privacy will be to your advantage in the future. ❖



DON'T BE A MOVING TARGET

With alarming regularity—particularly when economic conditions are difficult for many—muggings and other street crimes are prone to dramatic increases. In order to avoid becoming a victim, keep these simple guidelines in mind and you are less likely to become a moving target:

- Never overload your arms with packages.
- Walk facing oncoming traffic so a car can't approach you from behind.
- Walk in the center of the sidewalk, away from the curb and doorways.
- Don't get too close to a car to give directions and never lean into it.
- Look alert. Criminals tend to prey on people who appear distracted or disoriented. Always trust your instincts. If you sense danger get to a populated area as fast as possible.
- Project confident body language. Criminals most always choose "easy" victims. Walk confidently, with your head up, like you know where you're going and can take care of yourself if confronted.
- Dress smart. Tight skirts

and high heels can inhibit your ability to get away quickly.

- Don't invite disaster. Wearing flashy, obviously expensive jewelry or watches in public is an open invitation to a would-be mugger.
- Get "crazy". Practice screaming so you can do it in an emergency. If assaulted, don't hesitate act crazy or pretend you're going to throw up. All are good ways to scare off a criminal.
- Minimize potential loses. Don't carry all of your money in one place. Keep some cash in your wallet, some in your pockets. Carry only the essentials. If you're not driving, don't carry your driver's license or vehicle registration. If you're not shopping, don't carry your credit cards.
- Consider a fanny pack. Wearing one keeps both your hands free in difficult situations and is difficult to snatch.
- Watch your handbag. In restaurants, don't leave it under or on the back of your chair. In public restrooms, don't leave it unattended on a counter. ❖



Dear Friends and Clients,

Welcome to our winter newsletter. During this busy holiday season, please take the time to secure your home and businesses against criminals. Be sure to lock your doors and windows as well as arming your security system each time you leave your home, and at the end of your business day.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE:

There is a two call back policy that has been implemented in many municipalities. Please evaluate your contact list and advise your people that this procedure is in effect. If you wish to make changes to your contact list please fax to (410) 255-8980, include your name, address, signature, and new information.

To our clients with VOIP or FIOS. If you have changed or are considering changing to VOIP or FIOS for your telephone service, please see our website www.okaasco.com, Our Company tab, News drop down. The article: **Are You considering FIOS or VOIP?** has some interesting information and important concerns to contemplate when shopping telephone services. Be sure to test your system into the Central Station after any changes. Please call Ronnie (410) 766-8336 ex-21 if you have any procedural questions.

We wish you a very Happy New Year, and a prosperous 2012.

Sincerely,

Get The Latest Security Advantage For Your Security System With Back-up Cellular Monitoring

Please call for details

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Your Best Defense Against Vehicle Theft

The good news is that modern anti-theft devices are making vehicles more difficult to steal. The bad news is that criminals are now more likely to try to steal your car while you're still in it. Here are some ways to help you protect yourself.

- Whenever possible, ask a security officer to walk you to your vehicle if the shopping center or parking lot is dark or deserted.
- As you approach your vehicle, look underneath it to be sure no one is hiding there to grab your ankles or legs.
- Always have your car keys in-hand before you get to your vehicle. Look in the back seat before getting in. Once inside, immediately lock all of your vehicle's doors.
- Never leave anything of value in plain view inside your vehicle. It can tempt a criminal to wait for you to return.
- Don't assume you're safe from carjacking just because you drive an older or less expensive car. The average value of a stolen car is \$4,000 and almost half are valued at less than \$2,499.
- Beware of the *bump-and-rob* scam. This involves another vehicle bumping yours from

behind. Your first impulse will be to get out and see if there was any damage. Don't do it! Stay inside your vehicle, lock your doors, and insist on moving to a public area to exchange information.

- Keep your windows closed and the doors locked at all times to prevent criminals from reaching through an open window or jumping into the vehicle when you are stopped at a traffic light.
- Always choose well lit, active areas whenever you park your car, stop to use a phone, get gas, or ask directions.
- Carry a large flashlight with you if you must park in an area that may be dark or deserted when you return. It can double as a weapon.

If your vehicle breaks down, turn on the emergency flashers, raise the hood, place a white cloth in the window or put up a "Call Police" sign. Then, stay inside the car with the doors locked. If anyone stops to help, stay in your locked vehicle and ask him or her to call the police. ❖