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"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](http://www.okaasco.com)**



## Burglary Basics: *Modus Operandi*

Most burglars prefer to enter an empty house. They want to get in and out quickly. The first thing they look for is anything that indicates *no one* is home. Dead giveaways include: open garage doors, no cars and no noise. Even if you don't have a garage, the absence of vehicles and silence can be signs that no one is home.

Many burglars walk straight up to the front door and knock or ring the doorbell. Again, if there's no answer and no noise inside, the better the target house becomes. Next, they often walk around to the back of the house checking all of the doors and windows as they go, looking for an unlocked entry point. That is exactly the *modus operandi* in the majority of home burglaries. They don't sneak or peek around corners or do anything else that would look suspicious. In fact, they generally walk confidently and behave as if they have a legitimate reason for being there so as not to raise suspicions if neighbors spot them.

Knowing how burglars operate gives you the power to defeat them. First, if you haven't done so already, make sure that you display our alarm system warning decals prominently at all major points of entry. Window decals and yard signs are a proven deterrent.

Next, always give your home an *occupied* appearance. Don't leave garage doors open. Don't leave first floor doors or windows open or unlocked! And, if you're going out place a battery-powered radio near your front door and play it loud enough to be heard outside.

These simple precautions are more than enough to convince the average burglar to look elsewhere for an easier target. ❖

## What To Do If You Suspect a Break-In

It's every homeowner's nightmare—but, do you know what to do if it happens to you? Just suppose that you return home and you suspect that someone has broken in. Perhaps your security alarm is sounding, or that door you are certain was locked is open, or the door frame is "chewed-up" with pry marks. What do you do?

Get away from the house at once.

Immediately call the police. Be prepared to describe what aroused your suspicion, as well as any vehicles you may have seen near your home. Let them know exactly where you are and then stay there until they arrive on the scene, even if it takes what will seem like "forever" for them to get there.

Never return to your home before the police arrive. ❖

### What's Inside:

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- ◆ Crime Prevention Pop Quiz
- ◆ It's That Time of Year
- ◆ Vehicle Thefts At An All-Time High



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## We Are Our Brother's Keeper

If you listen to the evening news you might be convinced that eminent danger is lurking around every corner and hidden in every shadow. On the other hand, while the media focus on crime and chaos does present a skewed image of the state of our nation, it is true that bad things do happen to good people, occasionally. Each of us needs to develop the knack of keeping our eyes and ears attuned to suspicious behavior around us.

What should you do if you see a stranger or suspicious behavior in your neighborhood? The first inclination for many people is to personally confront the individual or individuals. This is a bad idea.

Experts on criminal and terroristic behavior all agree on one thing: *Never, ever* confront a suspected criminal by yourself. A surprise confrontation dramatically increases your odds of being injured or worse. Rather than putting yourself at risk, experts unanimously agree that your only course of action should be to promptly alert your local law enforcement authorities, then wait and watch.

While you're watching, write down all of the details while they're fresh in your mind. Note the physical description of the suspicious individual: age, race, estimated height and weight, hair color and length, facial features, and clothing details, including his or her shoes. If you observe the person getting out of or into a vehicle, make a note of the make, model, color, license-plate number, the direction it was traveling and how many individuals were in the vehicle.

Always use extreme caution. Obtaining useful information for the police is never worth putting yourself in danger.

This is particularly true in the case of a burglary or attempted burglary, especially if it's your own home an intruder has targeted. If you are returning home and see something suspicious, use your cell phone or go to a neighbor's house to notify police. If you are in your home and hear someone trying to break-in, get out of the house any way you can and go to a neighbor's house to summon help. ❖



## CRIME PREVENTION POP QUIZ



Being able to anticipate, recognize and appraise a crime risk situation can significantly reduce your level of risk. Test your crime prevention knowledge in these common situations:

Burglars most frequently enter a residence by:

- Picking a lock
- Breaking a window
- Removing hinge pins
- Using an unlocked door or window.

Sliding glass patio doors are best secured by the use of:

- A wooden dowel or broom handle in the track
- A key operated lock
- A glass break detector
- All of the above.

A purse is best protected from purse snatchers by being:

- Tightly gripped
- Casually gripped
- Strap around wrist
- Strap over shoulder and purse under arm.

The best type of lighting for home protection is:

- Motion-sensing exterior lights
- Normal interior lights
- Timer-operated lights
- All of the above.

Answers: Most burglars enter residential homes through an unlocked door or window. Sliding glass patio doors are best protected by using all of the devices listed. A purse is best protected by wearing the strap over the shoulder—or over one shoulder and across the chest—and carrying the purse high-up, under the arm. The best lighting for home protection consists of a balance of normal interior lights, timer-operated lights and exterior motion-sensing lights placed at entranceways. ❖



This is a very active time of the year for con men and scam artists. There seems to be no limit to the creative ways they devise to prey on the unsuspecting. If you think all scam artists look and sound sleazy, you might want to reconsider that line of thinking. The bad guys will present such a friendly, warm and generous image that it will be very difficult to discern their real mission—separating you from your money. Here are some things that you should keep in mind whenever you're dealing with strangers:

- *Be wary.* Con artists depend upon your good nature. Whether it's a friendly passerby who distracts you from your gardening while an accomplice quietly slips inside your house, or a sincere voice on the telephone offering you the deal-of-the-century, the first rule is be skeptical!
- *Be skeptical.* If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Always refuse prizes that require you to make a purchase before you can claim them.
- *Be reserved.* Never give private information to strangers. All a crook needs to make unauthorized purchases

## It's That Time of Year

es is your credit card number and expiration date. Be careful about giving out your credit card, bank account or Social Security numbers to strangers who telephone or come to your door.

- *Be sensible.* Never invest in anything that requires you to act immediately or that requires you give the person cash.
- *Be cautious.* Anyone who comes to your door unannounced has no right to expect an invitation into your home. The best advice is to turn all unsolicited salespeople away. In the case of utility workers, have them wait outside while you look up the telephone number for the utility (don't call the number they give you) and call to make certain the company has dispatched an employee to your area.
- *Be responsible.* Con men and scam artists rely on you feeling too dumb or ashamed to file a police complaint. Prove them wrong! If you suspect you're the victim of a scam, call the police at once, so that you can help eliminate a criminal from your community and possibly save many others from becoming victims too. ❖

# VEHICLE THEFTS AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH

If you drive a sports car, an SUV or a luxury vehicle, it's probably high on the list of "most likely to be stolen" according to statistics from the Highway Loss Data Institute. A recent study gauged the potential for vehicle theft by looking at those vehicles with the highest frequency of theft claims. The top 10 models on that list were all sport utility vehicles, seven of which were equipped with soft tops.

It's estimated that nearly 2 million vehicles are reported stolen each year in North America. Certain other vehicles are also favorites of car thieves. For example, Toyota Camry, Honda Accord and Ford Taurus models rank high on the list of most frequently targeted

passenger cars.

If your vehicle or vehicles fall into one of the high-risk categories, you may want to consider having a theft deterrent device or system added to your vehicle, if one wasn't factory installed when you purchased it. You can further protect your vehicle by always locking it and taking the keys with you—even when it's parked in your own driveway. ❖



Dear Valued Customer,

Welcome to our Winter 2013–2014 newsletter. With frosty weather arriving, and the continued threat of winter storms, it is time to secure your home and property from the elements. Take a moment to check that all windows and doors are locked and secured for the Winter season.

As the reliability issues of telephone technology change, we want you to know that there are cellular back up options for your security system. Please call Ronnie, (410) 766-8336 ex. 21 for the products available in your area.

**Tech Tip:** When you re-style a room in your home. Please be mindful of the location of your motion detectors. A new window treatment or high piece of furniture may block or compromise the effectiveness of your motion detectors.

Also, please remember to test your alarm system.

All of us at AASCO wish you a very

**Happy New Year!**

Sincerely,



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## STALKING:

### What to Watch for—What to Do

You don't have to be a movie star, or wealthy, or extraordinary in any way to become the target of a stalker. There is no way to predict who will become the focal point of a stalker's obsessive-compulsive behavior, but there are ways to recognize the signals of a potential stalker's behavior.

- His or her level of persistence is inappropriate to the relationship.
- He or she is overly attached to symbols of the relationship (mementos, photos).
- He or she is violent or abusive during the relationship
- He or she is uncontrollably jealous or possessive after the relationship is over.
- He or she demonstrates obsessive behavior, such as making increasingly demanding or threatening phone calls, or show up unexpectedly at places you frequent.

Any or all of these are signals that you may be dealing with a person capable of becoming a stalker. Your relationship with that person may have nothing to do with a romantic relationship.

What can you do to protect yourself if you are stalked? Here's what the experts recommend:

1. Contact local authorities and ask for a restraining order.
2. Make sure the harassment is officially noted in police records.
3. Keep detailed records of all incidents.
4. Whenever possible, record, videotape or photograph encounters.
5. Warn family, neighbors and co-workers not to give out personal information about you to anyone.
6. At work, have visitors and calls screened. Tell building security about your situation.
7. Secure your home and make certain your security system is always armed.
8. Vary your daily routine and don't walk alone.
9. Don't post your personal information or any plans on a social network site.

Being stalked can be a terrifying experience. Your local police and social service agencies should be able to direct you to additional sources of help should it ever happen to you or someone you care for. ❖