



CRIME PREVENTION BULLETIN

CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR SENIORS

Purpose

Persons more than 60 years of age are commonly referred to as *Senior Citizens*. We know that life expectancy for men and women have increased over the years. Between 1930 and 2010, life expectancy of men has gone from age 58, to age 75. At the same time, the life expectancy of women has gone from age 62, to age 83. In the United States, senior's represent the most rapidly growing segment of the population. According to the American Crime Prevention Institute, statistically seniors are one of the group segments least likely to become a victim of crime. Yet that same group has a higher propensity to feel concerned or afraid that they might become a crime victim. Some seniors are targeted by criminals for specific reasons. We want to help this great generation by providing some specific information to help reduce victimization, and empower those individuals with strategies and tools for success.

Why Seniors?

Seniors can become targets of unscrupulous criminals because it is perceived that their financial assets are vulnerable. Seniors are often hesitant to report their victimization to authorities or family members, and offenders know this. Some seniors fear losing the control they once had if they report their victimization. Seniors may not be fully aware of today's technology which is often exploited to assist in the commission of crimes. Those who live alone can be drawn to individuals just for the sake of having someone to speak with. Criminal use this tactic in an effort to gain trust for dishonorable reasons.

Elder Abuse

Elder abuse is a term used to describe physical, sexual, psychological, or financial abuse, or neglect, by a family member or other person known to the older person. It can occur to Senior's who live at home, some of whom receive in-home care by a professional home health care provider. It can also occur while a senior is staying in a nursing home.

Our goal is for the prevention, detection, and intervention of Elder Abuse in order to improve the quality of life for older adults and senior citizens. Law Enforcement's role is to protect victims, prevent and stop abuse and exploitation, enforce the law, arrest offenders, and provide referrals to other local agencies or resources that can adequately address non-police related needs that must be met.

Door-to-door sales tactics

Seniors are favorite targets of unscrupulous door-to-door salespeople. Citizens who live alone may have a difficult time knowing how to react when faced with a high-pressure door-to-door salesperson or contractor.

To avoid some of these scams, we suggest the following...

- Do not do business with door-to-door sales people unless you verify they have a local office.
- Contractors should be able to prove they have a contractor's license and that they are insured.
- Get references that are over a month old and contact those references to verify their work.
- You should NEVER feel pressured to have something done that day. Take the time to reflect on the idea and ask someone you trust about what they think.
- If you are told this is a "One Day Only" offer, or that they have "just enough left over material to do a job for you", be very suspicious. This is a common tactic used by many offenders.
- Get a second opinion if you are told you need work done, especially when someone else initiates the action. Your situation may not be as bad as the salesperson would like you to believe.

If any offer appears too good to be true, be alert for possible fraud.

Telemarketers

Telemarketing fraud is defined as using a telephone in a scheme to cheat someone out of their assets by deception and illegal means. This is often done by obtaining someone's personal information (birth date or social security number) or by obtaining someone's banking or financial information (account numbers, or credit card numbers) Here is what we suggest....

- **Never give personal information to someone over the phone**, unless you initiate the call and know exactly the person or business you are speaking to.
- If someone tells you they want to give you something for free, then you should not have to pay for it. Scams will attempt this tactic however, and ask you to pay fraudulent fees or services.
- So-called "Limited Time" offers should not require an immediate decision. Do not be in a hurry.
- Ask the telemarketer to mail you their information so you can carefully consider your options.
- Tell the telemarketer that you will call them back by using your own local phonebook, or prior statements, to ensure you know who you are speaking with.
- Know that many telemarketing scams originate out-of state, and even from other countries. It is virtually impossible for local Law Enforcement to pursue criminal prosecution in these cases.

***If you suspect any type of elder abuse or have any questions about a suspicious contact,
please call the Lafayette Police Department at 765-807-1200***

The Lafayette Police Department's Crime Prevention efforts are meant to strengthen the partnership between our members, and the community that we serve. We hope that together, we can make our community safer.

