

Dear Friend,

In our ever-changing society, it is more important than ever to be aware of personal safety issues and make necessary adjustments to protect yourself. This brochure was created to serve as a guide to seniors, with helpful tips and suggestions on how you can create a safer environment for yourself.

Safety is not about fear; it is about being proactive. By being proactive you can protect yourself and your home, and decrease your chances of being a victim of a crime. It is disappointing that our communities are not as safe as they once were. But by working together as a community and sharing knowledge with one another we can do our part to create a safe environment to enjoy.

I hope that the information in this brochure provides you with some helpful insight on safety. Please feel free to contact my office with any questions you have, or safety suggestions of your own.

Sincerely,



James N. Tedisco
49th Senate District



New York State Senator
JAMES N. TEDISCO
49th Senate District

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**KEEPING
YOURSELF
SAFE**

A Guide for Seniors

Protecting Yourself at Home

- ✓ Always make your home appear to be occupied, by using timer lights and a radio if necessary.
- ✓ Never let strangers into your home, and always check ID even when you are expecting a repairman, delivery man or a police officer.
- ✓ Protect your home from intruders by using dead bolts on all doors, including sliding glass doors. Keep all doors and windows locked even when you are home.
- ✓ Install a peephole or other viewer in your door so that you can see anyone who comes to your door.
- ✓ Take extra care to protect vulnerable areas of your home like the basement and garage. Make sure they are well lit and protected with the same security as the rest of your home.
- ✓ If you live alone, use your first and middle initials on mailboxes, directories and in the telephone book.
- ✓ Never divulge your credit card, bank account or Social Security numbers to someone who contacts you by telephone or the internet.
- ✓ Get to know your neighbors and make sure to have their information on hand for emergencies. You can also set up a system where you check on each other periodically.
- ✓ Do not hide extra house keys outside of your house in obvious locations, such as under the mat or in a planter on your porch.
- ✓ Make sure the outside of your home is well lit and there is a clear path to your entrance and to your car.
- ✓ Keep all valuables in a safe deposit box.
- ✓ Consider a home alarm system, especially if you live alone.
- ✓ Consider getting a dog for safety as well as companionship.
- ✓ If someone comes to your home asking to use your phone for assistance, offer to make the call yourself without letting the person in.
- ✓ Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home.
- ✓ Make sure your home address is visible from the street in case of emergency.

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Protecting Yourself in Public

- ✓ Try not to go out alone if possible. If you do go out alone, tell someone where you are going.
- ✓ Don't carry large sums of cash if not necessary. Do carry spare change for emergency phone calls.
- ✓ Always keep car doors locked, and park in a well lit area, preferably next to an entrance.
- ✓ Never leave the car running with the keys in the ignition, even for only a short while.
- ✓ If you are out alone at night ask security personnel to walk you to your car.
- ✓ Take your keys out in advance whether you are walking toward your car or your home.
- ✓ Do not carry your wallet or loose money in your back pocket.
- ✓ If you are uneasy about the situation you are in, trust your instincts and leave.

Resource Guide

New York State offers numerous programs and services designed to enhance the lives of seniors and their families. The New York State Office for the Aging has prepared a comprehensive guide to help families navigate and access available resources. The following is a partial listing. For more information, call the toll-free Senior Citizens' Help Line at 1-800-342-9871 (weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.) or visit <http://www.aging.ny.gov> and click on the icon for resource guide.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

This program receives, investigates and resolves complaints and concerns regarding skilled nursing and long term care facilities, such as adult homes. Call 1-800-342-9871.

Elder Abuse Prevention

Sadly, many seniors become victims of physical, emotional or sexual abuse; financial exploitation; neglect or abandonment. However, there is help to both prevent and assist the victim should it occur. For more information or to report an incident of elder abuse, call 1-800-342-3009 (press option 6).

EPIC

EPIC helps many seniors cope with the high cost of prescription drugs. For more information, call 1-800-332-3742.

Protecting Yourself While Traveling

- ✓ The safest way to travel is with a friend or group.
- ✓ Always remember to secure your home while you are away. Designate a trusted friend or neighbor to keep an eye on your home while you are away and consider giving that person a key to your home for emergencies.
- ✓ If you are going to be away for an extended period, discontinue scheduled deliveries and subscriptions or assign a friend to be on hand to accept deliveries and check your mail.
- ✓ If you return home and you think your home might have been burglarized, go to a friend or neighbor's home and phone the police immediately.
- ✓ Always use caution when traveling by public transportation. If traveling by bus or train, sit near the driver and be aware of other passengers around you.
- ✓ If you are traveling by car, make sure to have the car serviced shortly before your trip.
- ✓ Never pick up hitchhikers.
- ✓ Carry safety items in your car, such as flashlights, a fire extinguisher, spare tires and jack, tool kit, first aid kit, jumper cables, flares and a blanket.
- ✓ When staying in a hotel or resort, make sure you are aware of the emergency exits near your room in case of fire or other emergency.
- ✓ Do not leave valuables behind in your hotel room. Either bring them with you or leave them in a hotel safe if one is available to you.
- ✓ Arrange your belongings in your hotel room in such a way that you will notice if anything is missing.

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