

Sheriff's Points

By Sheriff Byron Nogelmeier

Protect your self while on vacation.

Are you planning a vacation trip this summer or maybe a winter get away later this year. You should take steps to protect yourself and your home while you are away.

TRAVEL Safety: *FACTS*

Proper planning reduces the risk of assault. Being educated about personal safety decreases your risk. Women are particularly vulnerable especially when traveling alone. Every 22 seconds a violent crime is committed in the USA.

Be aware of your surroundings. Minimize the appearance of vulnerability or insecurity. Avoid isolated areas. Do not leave your purse exposed. Know exactly where you are going and let others know your route of travel. If you have an accident, especially at night, drive to a safe location before exiting car. Be sure you tell the Officer that you drove to that location for safety reasons.

ALWAYS let someone know your itinerary to include route of travel and hotels. Carry sufficient ID and insurance information. Have an up to date map to unfamiliar destinations.

DO NOT put your full name and address on luggage tags.

Thoroughly check the condition of the car's tires, windows, wipers and lights prior to setting out. Make sure you have at least a half tank of gas. Make sure your car is tuned up and in proper working order. Keep the vehicle doors locked even when driving. When parking your vehicle, always lock the doors. Upon approaching your vehicle, have keys ready in hand. Make a visual inspection of the back seat area of the vehicle. Once inside the vehicle-lock all doors immediately. When asking for directions, keep your window rolled up to within one inch of the doorframe.

If you rent a vehicle make sure window stickers or license plates do not identify the vehicle as a rental vehicle. Make sure you have proper directions to your destination. If you become lost, do not stop in an isolated location to check your directions. Contact local police for directions if necessary. Carry a portable phone for emergency needs if possible.

If you have car trouble *STAY* in the car. Have a "CALL POLICE" sign in the glove box. Use a handkerchief or flag and fit it into a tightly closed window. Preprogram phone to dial 9-1-1 and other emergency numbers. *DON'T* raise the hood of your car as a distress signal.

Make sure all doors are locked and windows rolled up. *STAY* in your vehicle. If you need to talk with a stranger roll a car window down *ONLY* one inch. If a stranger offers to help, only accept their offer to contact authorities. Do not get out of the vehicle with a stranger present-- male or female. Verify police identity with a second piece of identification.

When parking your vehicle always lock your car. Upon exiting your vehicle, walk

confidently to the nearest garage exit. Upon returning to your vehicle, have your driver's key exposed and ready. Go directly to the car and enter as quickly as possible. Do not walk around vehicle for inspection purposes. Once your vehicle is started proceed immediately to the garage exit.

When arriving at a Hotel use valet parking if it's available, especially after dark. Allow the bellman to escort you to your room. Have the bellman check hidden areas of the hotel room. Confirm the working order of the hotel room phone *ASAP*. Verify any strangers knocking on your hotel room door with the front desk. *NEVER* open your hotel room door to strangers. Notify hotel security immediately. Consider a portable door alarm for added hotel room security.

Always try to have a friend or family member look after your property while you are gone. Have them turn lights on in the evening and pick up your newspaper. Sometimes the little things will keep you from being a victim of a crime.

For more information you can go to www.crimeprevent.com

Remember, you are responsible for your personal safety!

I want to remind everyone that residents in the county are being called wanting them to give information about their bank accounts. DO NOT GIVE ANYONE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF. IF THEY CALL THEM THEY ARE FROM YOUR BANK HANG UP AND CALL YOUR BANK AND ASK THEM IF THERE IS PROBLEM WITH YOUR ACCOUNT OR IF THEY NEED ANY INFORMATION FROM YOU.