

PART FIVE

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COMMON SENSE SELF DEFENSE

AWARENESS IS THE KEY

Most crimes can be prevented if there is careful consideration given to measures proven to reduce the likelihood of criminal activity. It is important to assess the types of crimes that have occurred on the property, as well as crimes that have been committed on similar properties. To discount the possibility of crime because "It has never happened before" is not using good sense.

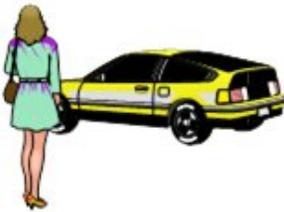


It is imperative to understand the potential for many crimes exists and that steps to prevent those crimes should be taken before they occur. Many times, crime prevention involves keen awareness of the surrounding area, and that doesn't cost a lot of money. Using a buddy system after hours is one inexpensive way to reduce the likelihood of an attack.

WORKING AFTER DARK

When working late, it is a good idea to have another person in the office or nearby. A person walking to a car alone is much more likely to be attacked than a person who is walking with somebody else. There is strength in numbers!

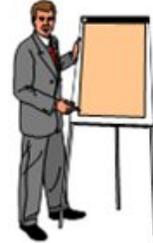
If a person must walk out to their car alone, it is a good idea to have the car as close to the office as possible, reducing the walking distance. Whenever possible, employees (especially employees who may leave after dark) should be given assigned parking spaces closest to the office area, or be allowed to move their vehicles closer before it gets dark.



If this is not possible, assign an area as close as possible which has excellent security lighting that cannot be easily disabled. It is also essential, when trimming bushes or trees, to keep in mind the casual observers who may live or be visiting in the general area. Keeping bushes and trees trimmed and/or removing any objects that may block surveillance of the area or offer a hiding place for an attacker will also allow the casual observer an open field of vision into the area.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Employees should receive training to prepare themselves for all types of crime situations. Typically, police departments will offer free classes that deal with common sense self defense. There are also private firms that can take the training one step further, even offering chemical sprays or other devices to discourage an attack.



When working alone in an office an employee should be certain that all doors and windows have been secured. It is a good practice to notify another person when working late as well. There should be a telephone nearby, should they need to call the police or another person for assistance.

STAY IN TOUCH

Cellular telephones and two-way radios are another good way to stay in touch, not only when someone is in the office, but when they have to step out for a moment as well. Pagers are another good way to summon help from maintenance people or grounds keepers. Many property managers have established special codes that can be entered into digital pagers to quickly identify problem situations that may occur.



ARMED ROBBERY PREVENTION



Armed robbery is a serious concern not often recognized by property managers or leasing staff. It is not uncommon for managers to collect thousands of dollars during the first part of the month. Keep in mind, an armed robber will kill a convenience store clerk for \$50.00 in cash. Many property managers keep much more than this available in the form of petty cash alone.

Earlier, we addressed Risk Management and the option of Risk Acceptance, or accepting the risk. In this case, Risk Transference would involve transferring that risk by purchasing a good safe with a special courier service.

Risk Spreading is a third option in risk management. This involves keeping money in different locations, so even if one safe area is found, the money in other safe areas may go undetected. Another way to spread the risk is to make frequent deposits with smaller amounts per deposit.

Risk Avoidance is a fourth option. Make a "ANo Cash Accepted" policy in the office. This can also help to prevent internal theft and embezzlement, by avoiding a situation entirely.

At the very least, property managers should place signs in highly visible areas that say the management will not accept cash and they keep no cash on the premises. Recommended areas are at the front door and at reception or desk areas.

The potential for an armed robbery is not only in the office, but at the night drop as well and everywhere in between. The potential for the money to be left behind, dropped or stolen is considerably high. The risk to employees who carry the money may be even higher.



(See below for an example.)

All applicants shall be **required to show a state issued or military photo identification card**. This card shall be photocopied and placed in a secure place while the applicant looks at the unit. The identification will be returned immediately afterwards.

- Property managers and agents shall require the applicant to **complete a Guest Information Card** in the applicant's own handwriting. This should include their current address and phone number. (This policy should be posted as well.)
- Property managers and agents shall **notify another person about the showing** before you go and tell them what time you expect to return. If, for whatever reason, you feel in danger, do not take any risks! Trust your instincts! Reschedule the showing for another time when you are more comfortable.

- When showing an apartment to a prospective resident, allow them to enter first. **Position yourself by the nearest exit.** Leave the door open wide until you leave, but be aware for suspicious people lurking outside the unit. NEVER follow the prospect into another room. **If you feel threatened, leave immediately** and call for help.
- Always **keep vacant apartments or model units well secured.** When entering vacant units by yourself, lock the door behind you. It is a good idea to carry a radio or cellular phone with you. If possible, have a staff member accompany you when you make your appointed rounds.
- At the very least, agents should **consider carrying a whistle, personal alarm or self-defense spray**, and know the hazards and limitations of whichever method they choose. Self-defense classes may be another option to consider.
- **Report all suspicious activity** to police and management immediately!

(It is a good idea to have a written policy posted where all applicants will see it.)