



San Leandro Police Department Crime Prevention News & Tips



NEW CHILD SAFETY SEAT LAW IN 2012

WINTER, 2012

The California Office of Traffic Safety is reminding parents, caregivers, and drivers to take note of a new law that took effect January 1, 2012 aimed at saving more lives and preventing more injuries to children. Children under the age of eight must be properly buckled into a car seat or booster seat and in the back seat. Previously, the law required that children remain in a booster seat until the age of six or they weighed sixty pounds.

The ticket price for violating this law is significant. For each child under 16 who is not properly secured, parents (if in the car) or the driver, can be ticketed for more than \$475 and receive a violation point on their driving record.

Most children impacted by the new law can remain in the booster seat they already have. A booster simply "boosts" the child up in order to make the adult-sized belt safely fit a child-sized body. If the belt crosses the child's stomach instead of the hip bones, the child can be severely injured by the belt itself if involved in a collision.

A child fits an adult seat belt when:

- He/she can sit against the vehicle seat back with their knees bent without slouching and can comfortably stay in this position throughout the trip.
- The lap belt is low in the hips touching the upper thighs and
- The shoulder belt crosses the chest, but is not on the face or neck.
- Never let your child put the shoulder belt behind his/her arms or back. In a crash, the child could sustain major injuries including head and spinal cord injuries. If the child is putting the shoulder belt behind them, this is a sign that they still need a booster.

Information in this article provided by the California Office of Traffic Safety. More information can be found at www.ots.ca.gov.



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Safety for Seniors at Home

When people think about personal security, they often focus on safety tips while in public places. This is extremely important, but it is also essential to consider safety measures around the home. There are several things seniors can do to make their house a secure haven.

Create a Safe Home

Many years ago, people left their doors unlocked and windows down, but in most places, those days are long gone. Crime rates are higher than ever, so homeowners should make their house as secure as possible.

Start by installing durable locks on all your doors and windows. Burglars are interested in finding the easiest opportunity, so if your home is strongly fortified they will be likely to move on. Never leave spare keys under your doormat or in any other conspicuous place. Criminals know the most common hiding spots for keys; so don't give them easy access. Install a security alarm in your home, or if that's too expensive, place a sign in your yard. Again, a law breaker will be looking for the easiest opportunity and will very likely pass up your home if they even believe you have a system in place.

If an unexpected visitor shows up at your home, identify them before you open the door. Use a peephole or window to visually assess who they are, and don't be afraid to call the police if the person won't go away.

Is Someone Watching You?

Many criminals will watch a home before they break in. They look for regular routines so they know when you are least likely to be home, and pick out the easiest way to get inside. Varying your personal routine can discourage a predator, because they won't be certain when your home will be vacant.

Keep an eye out for people who appear to be watching your home. Work with the people who live nearby to form a Neighborhood Watch so you can look out for each other. If you notice suspicious characters who appear to be spending time driving up and down your block or hanging out in front of your house, call the police immediately.

While on Vacation

Your home may be in jeopardy if you are gone for several days, so it's up to you to fortify the place properly. Start by temporarily canceling the mail and any newspaper subscription.

Nothing provides a more surefire signal that you are away than a stack of papers on the lawn, or envelopes flowing out of the mailbox.

Hide any valuables you leave behind in a well-constructed or even a diversion safe. These are safes that are cleverly disguised as normal household items, such as a can of soda or a book. You can keep a fake safe where you would keep the real thing, and you'll be hiding your cherished goods in a place where criminals won't find them — right in plain sight.

Before you leave, tell a trusted neighbor that you'll be out of town. Ask them to keep an eye on your house and report any suspicious behavior. Give them a number to reach you in case of an emergency.

Securing your home should be high on the list of every senior safety plan. Make your house a place unappealing to criminals to protect your belongings, yourself and your loved ones.

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INTERNET CRIME COMPLAINT CENTER

The Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) was established as a partnership between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the National White Collar Crime Center to serve as a means to receive Internet-related criminal complaints. The IC3 gives the victims of cyber crime a convenient and easy-to-use reporting mechanism that alerts authorities of suspected criminal or civil violations. The IC3 lists a number of Internet crime schemes and crime prevention tips on its website (<http://www.ic3.gov>) including:

AUCTION FRAUD

Auction fraud involves fraud attributable to the misrepresentation of a product advertised for sale through an Internet auction site or the non-delivery of products purchased through an Internet auction site.

Consumers are strongly cautioned against entering into Internet transactions with subjects exhibiting the following behavior:

- ♦ The seller posts the auction as if he resides in the United States, then responds to victims with a congratulatory email stating he is outside the United States for business reasons, family emergency, etc. Similarly, beware of sellers who post the auction under one name, and ask for the funds to be transferred to another individual.
- ♦ The subject requests funds to be wired directly to him/her via Western Union, MoneyGram, or bank-to-bank wire transfer. By using these services, the money is virtually unrecoverable with no recourse for the victim.

- ♦ Sellers acting as authorized dealers or factory representatives in countries where there would be no such dealers should be avoided.
- ♦ Buyers who ask for the purchase to be shipped using a certain method to avoid customs or taxes inside another country should be avoided.
- ♦ Be suspect of any credit card purchases where the address of the cardholder does not match the shipping address. Always receive the cardholder's authorization before shipping any products.

Before entering into transactions on the Internet here are a few tips to consider:

- ♦ Before you bid, contact the seller with any questions you have.
- ♦ Review the seller's feedback.
- ♦ Be cautious when dealing with individuals outside of our own country.
- ♦ Ensure you understand refund, return, and warranty policies.
- ♦ Determine the shipping charges before you buy.
- ♦ Be wary if the seller only accepts wire transfers or cash.
- ♦ If an escrow service is used, ensure it is legitimate.
- ♦ Consider insuring your item.
- ♦ Be cautious of unsolicited offers.

If you believe you may have fallen victim to this type of scam, please file a complaint with the Internet Crime Complaint Center (<http://www.ic3.gov>).

SCAM ALERT

Business owners in San Leandro who rent out space to private events should be aware of promoters who lie about the type of event they are holding. Although the promoter may say that the event is a birthday party or other celebration, the truth may be that it is actually an event where admission is charged and liquor is available. Here are some tips to assist in identifying an illegal event:

- ♦ Ask promoters to include references and check them.
- ♦ Demand a signed contract accompanied by a significant deposit.
- ♦ Do not accept cash as a payment method.
- ♦ Demand that security be named and provided.
- ♦ Only allow promoters who use licensed, bonded security companies.
- ♦ Require the promoter obtain all necessary City of San Leandro permits or a letter from the City stating that permits are not necessary.
- ♦ If you notice that the promoter is charging admission or using metal detectors, notify the San Leandro Police Department immediately.

Numbers to know:

- Anonymous Crime Tips 577-3278
- Non-emergency 577-2740
- General Business 577-2740
- Records Section 577-3217
- Traffic Division 577-3208
- Animal Control 577-3206
- Community Compliance 577-3260
- Abandoned Vehicles 577-3260
- Recruiting 577-3247
- Neighborhood Watch 577-3248
- Crime Free Multi-Housing 577-3252

ATM SAFETY TIPS

Information in this article provided by the American Bankers Association.

The automated teller machine (ATM) has made banking more convenient today than ever before. With the touch of a few buttons, you can withdraw cash, make deposits and transfer funds virtually anywhere an ATM is located.

THE BANK'S ROLE

To ensure customer safety at ATMs, banks are putting ATMs in areas that are visible by passersby, trimming landscape to prevent potential criminals from hiding, and installing or upgrading lighting that is bright enough for use at night.

Some banks also have installed cameras, rear-view mirrors, panic buttons and special signs. Also, most banks limit the amount of cash that can be withdrawn on a daily basis.

THE CUSTOMER'S ROLE

Bank customers should always use common sense when using an ATM. These tips are a start, but the best advice is simply not to use an ATM if you feel at all uncomfortable doing so. ATMs provide convenience, but they have not replaced the bank teller. If you prefer, conduct your business in the bank lobby.

Exercise care when using an ATM, and follow these general tips:

Protecting Your ATM Card

- ◆ Always protect your ATM card and keep it in a safe place, just like you would cash, credit cards or checks.
- ◆ Do not leave your ATM card lying around the house or on your desk at work. No one should have access to the card but you. Immediately notify your bank if it is lost or stolen.
- ◆ Keep your Personal Identification Number (PIN) a secret. Never write it down anywhere, especially on your ATM card.
- ◆ Never give any information about your ATM card or PIN over the telephone. For example, if you receive a call, supposedly from your bank or possibly the police wanting to verify your PIN, do not give that information. Notify your bank immediately.

Using an ATM

- ◆ Be aware of your surroundings, particularly at night. If



you observe or sense suspicious persons or circumstances, do not use the machine at that time.

- ◆ Have your ATM card ready and in your hand as you approach the ATM. Don't wait to get to the ATM and then take your card out of your wallet or purse.
- ◆ Be careful that no one can see you enter your PIN at the ATM. Use your body to "shield" the ATM keyboard as you enter your PIN into the ATM.
 - ◆ To keep your account information confidential, always take your receipts or transaction records with you.
 - ◆ Do not count or visually display any money you received from the ATM. Immediately put your money into your pocket or purse and count it later.
- ◆ If you using a drive-up ATM, be sure passenger windows are rolled up and all doors are locked. If you leave your car and walk to the ATM, lock your car.

Special precautions for using an ATM at night

- ◆ Park close to the ATM in a well-lit area.
- ◆ Take another person with you, if at all possible.
- ◆ If the lights at the ATM are not working, do not use it.
- ◆ If shrubbery has overgrown or a tree blocks the view, select another ATM and notify your bank.

These tips are meant to increase your awareness regarding ATM crimes.