



AFP
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

HOME AND PERSONAL SAFETY GUIDE

ACT Policing



Images produced by Tuggeranong Arts Centre

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SAFETY AND SECURITY AT HOME

You don't need to spend lots of money on security. Simple and inexpensive changes can deter intruders.

Outside security

- Make sure your house number is easy to see from the street both day and night so that emergency services can easily locate your house.
- Trim bushes and trees that obscure windows and could be used as hiding places by intruders.
- Have your outside lights and window and door locks checked regularly to ensure they are operating correctly. Consider having sensor lights installed that turn on with movement.
- Never leave keys hidden outside your home; leave them with a trusted neighbour or friend.
- Red Cross and hardware shops have a key holder that can be bolted outside and only opened by a number code.
- Your meter box can be secured with a padlock which can be purchased from ACTEWAGL shopfronts.
- Don't leave garden tools lying around, always keep all garden tools in a locked shed or garage.
- A peephole in your door and a light outside enables you to see who is there day and night without having to open the door.
- Keep security doors locked at all times.

SAFETY AND SECURITY AT HOME

- A bolt or a snug-fitting block of wood placed in the lower sliding door channel can make it difficult for intruders to open the door.
- If you have a back gate, consider putting a padlock on it.
- Secure your letterbox with a padlock.
- When you buy new electrical goods, don't leave the packaging outside so burglars know you have new products.
- Get to know your neighbours and who is supposed to live there, and look out for each other.



Being safe at home

- Keep police, ambulance, relatives and doctor's telephone numbers written down next to your phone or programmed into your phone. If possible, have a phone extension in your bedroom or keep your mobile phone with you at all times.
- If you have deadlocks on your doors you need to be able to easily open the door from the inside. Make sure you have these keys readily available. If possible have door locks keyed alike so one key unlocks all doors.
- Keep cash and valuables out of sight, adjust your blinds or curtains so you can't see what is inside.
- If you hang your key near a door with glass panels, make sure it is out of reach of anyone who could smash a pane.
- Smoke alarms should be installed near bedrooms and checked regularly.
- Don't keep large amounts of cash in your home unless it's in a good quality safe. Keep valuables in a safe spot and photograph items such as jewellery. Record the serial numbers, makes, models, colour and size of your specific items.
- Another identification method gaining popularity is the use of microdots. These are manufactured computer dots the size of a pin hole that are encrypted in a glue containing an ultra violet trace for detection purposes. This technology is available by searching online for a supplier.
- Keep the inventory in a safe place, keep another copy away from home and update the inventory when you get new property.
- Plan at least two escape routes so you can leave your home quickly in an emergency.

SAFETY AND SECURITY AT HOME

- If you are at home and suspect you have an intruder, if possible go to the nearest telephone and quietly call the police emergency number **Triple Zero (000)**.
- Switch on lights and make a lot of noise moving about but don't confront the intruder.
- If the intruder confronts you, try to stay calm but find a way to alert others especially if you believe the noise might be heard by a neighbour.
- If you arrive home and suspect an intruder is inside, don't enter the house, go to a safe place and call police making sure you keep out of sight and a safe distance from the house.
- If you see anyone leaving, without putting yourself in any danger, try to get a description of what they are wearing, hair colour, complexion, which direction they leave and if they are in a vehicle or walking.
- Curtains or blinds may be drawn for added security.

PERSONAL SAFETY

- Before leaving your home, take the time to lock up carefully.
- Take only what you need; do you really need to take your handbag or could you take your purse and some identification and put it in your pocket?
- If you are an older person try to arrange for family or friends to go with you, or let someone know where you will be going and when you expect to be home.
- Where possible walk in well lit areas and where other people can see you. Walk confidently and make eye contact with people, let them know that you have noticed their presence.
- Be aware of your surroundings and avoid using personal radios, MP3 players or iPods, so you can hear who is approaching you.
- Avoid shortcuts through parks or vacant land. If possible avoid walking on your own at night and always be observant about your surroundings. If it is necessary to use poorly lit streets, walk as far from doorways as possible.
- Consider having a personal alarm or whistle with you but make sure you have it where you can access it quickly. These devices make a loud noise and may deter criminals and attract the attention of people nearby.
- If you think you are being followed cross the street and go to the nearest populated place. Try to get the attention of people nearby, shout as loudly as possible, help, fire!
- Learn where the Safety Houses are in your area and if you feel you are in danger, be aware that you can use them. Just remember the residents may not always be at home. Safety Houses are indicated by a yellow triangular safety house symbol located on the letterbox or the front door of a shop or business.

PERSONAL SAFETY

- Carry your bag/wallet in a front pocket or close to your body, not behind you.
- If you are confronted by someone who is trying to take your bag/wallet, give it to them. This may go against all your instincts but remember that no amount of money or inconvenience is worth you being seriously hurt.
- If possible take note of what the offender looks like. If a vehicle is involved try and make a note of the colour, registration number and number of occupants.
- Always carry some form of identification with you that has details of a person to contact in the event of an emergency and any medical condition and medication you are on. It can be programmed into your phone under ICE (in case of emergency) or simply on a piece of paper.

When using public transport

- When using the bus, to reduce waiting times know the bus timetables. When waiting at the bus stop, if possible stand with other people and avoid isolated bus stops. If the bus is empty or nearly empty, sit near the bus driver.
- Do not open your purse or wallet while boarding the bus; have your money/pass already in your hand or separately in a pocket.
- If someone bothers you, change seats and tell the driver. Keep your purse/packages close by your side.
- If you see any suspicious activity, inform the driver.



When shopping

- Don't have all your cards in one wallet, it's better to keep them in another part of your handbag – or just bring the cards you will need.
- Put your money in different parts of your handbag or pockets so it's not all in one place.
- Carry only the money you need and pay large bills by cheque, online, BPAY or have them debited from your account, or by telephone using a credit card.

PERSONAL SAFETY

- Keep your handbag with you at all times, never let it out of your sight. Avoid leaving your bag at your feet in a public place or on the hook of a door in a public toilet or change room.
- Don't let your purse out of your sight, it's very easy for someone to take your purse out of your handbag/nappy bag if it is left in a trolley or hanging on a stroller and you turn away to get something from a shelf.
- When loading the car after shopping, lock your bag in the car first.

When using an ATM

- Whenever possible use an automatic teller machine (ATM) inside the bank or shopping centre during banking or shopping hours. If you need to use an ATM out of hours avoid machines in dark, isolated or obscured areas. Try to use an ATM where you can be seen by other people, i.e. supermarkets, shopping centres and garages.
- Glance around and check your surroundings while waiting for your money.
- Use your hand to protect your pin number.
- After using the machine immediately place all your cash in your wallet/pocket. Never count it in front of the ATM and don't let people see where you put the cash in your bag or wallet.
- Never carry your personal identification numbers with your card or in your handbag or wallet even if it is disguised or in code. Never give your pin number to anyone else. Keep a list of your card numbers in a safe place, not in your wallet or purse.

WHEN A VISITOR KNOCKS ON YOUR DOOR



WHEN A VISITOR, TRADESPERSON OR CHARITY WORKER KNOCKS ON YOUR DOOR

- Always check the credentials of charity workers and don't let them into your home. Charity workers should have identification clearly visible.
- Always check the credentials of service repair people and sales people. Talk to these people through a locked security door. If you are unsure about a person's motives, ask for the name of their company and their identification card, then telephone the company to check their credentials.

WHEN A VISITOR KNOCKS ON YOUR DOOR

- Use the phone book to find the number rather than relying on the number the person gives you.
- Telephone the police assistance line on **131 444** if their actions seem unusual.
- If someone is at the door and you are alone and feeling insecure pretend that there is someone else in the house and call out to them, you could also consider leaving a pair of men's shoes at the front door.
- If a stranger knocks on your door asking to use your telephone, direct them to the nearest public phone or make the call for them while keeping your security door locked. If their behaviour seems unusual contact police immediately.
- Never be rushed or pressured by sales/trades people who come to your door saying your roof needs fixing, your house needs repainting or offering to do maintenance. Always ask for time to think it over. Never be rushed into signing a contract or paying money. Always get a family member or friend to read over it as well.
- Door-to-door sellers can only call between 9am-8pm on weekdays and 9am-5pm on weekends unless a prior appointment is arranged. No calls are permitted on Christmas Day, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

If people come to your door offering to perform work, they must provide:

- A written contract if the value of the work is more than \$50.
- A 10-day cooling off period during which they cannot demand or accept money or commence work for all door to door transactions. A 10-day cooling-off period does not apply to goods or services less than \$50.
- During the cooling-off period no goods or services should be delivered or commenced and no money should change hands.

For more information telephone the Office of Regulatory Services on **6207 0400** or visit their website **www.ors.act.gov.au**.



TELEPHONE AND INTERNET SAFETY

- Women living alone may consider having a male relative/friend put a message on their answering machine.
- If you live alone, it is better not to indicate this in directories, name plates or the phone book; just use initials and surname only.
- Avoid giving personal information over the phone, by mail or on the internet. Make sure you know who you're dealing with before you give out personal information.
- Never give your name, phone number, address or details of who lives in your home to unknown telephone callers or by internet. No bank or financial institution will ever email you or telephone you and ask for your personal or credit details.

TELEPHONE AND INTERNET SAFETY

- If your children are at home without an adult present let the answering machine or message bank take the call as callers can glean information about your whereabouts.
- The text of fraudulent emails or telephone calls may vary, but they usually ask you to provide bank account or personal details in order to receive a fictitious financial windfall.

Examples include:

- “Get-rich-quick” schemes.
- Miracle health products.
- Uninvited offers, prizes and lottery tickets.
- Competitions and Spanish lotteries.
- Pyramid selling schemes.
- Nigerian loan or investment scams.
- Work-at-home schemes.
- Taxation department contacting you and asking for your banking details.
- Investment seminars and dubious real estate offers.

Preventative measures

- If you receive a suspect email, delete or ignore it, without replying or clicking on a link to unsubscribe. The message with scam emails is Delete! Delete! Delete!
- Common sense goes a long way in guarding yourself against scams. If the offer or deal seems too good to be true, it probably is.
- The Scamwatch website **www.scamwatch.com.au** or telephone **1300 303 609** has further information about different types of scams and what to watch out for.

WHEN YOU GO ON HOLIDAY

- In the case of nuisance phone calls don't say anything simply hang up. If the calls persist contact your phone company and seek their advice. If the calls are threatening contact police immediately.
- You can list your home and mobile numbers on the "Do Not Call" register on **1300 792 958** or **www.donotcall.gov.au**. This will go some way to reduce the number of telemarketing calls you receive.

WHEN YOU GO ON HOLIDAY

- It's a good idea to leave your house looking "lived in".
- If possible get a trusted friend or relative to house-sit for you while you are away.
- Make sure all windows and doors are locked in your home/garage/shed.
- Have your mail collected by a friend or neighbour, or have it held or redirected by the post office.
- Don't leave a message on your answering machine, or a note on the door that tells callers you are away.
- Turn down your the volume on your phone so it can't be heard ringing unanswered.
- Ask a neighbour/friend to put your rubbish bins out as usual.
- Consider using automatic timers to turn on a light, television or radio at different times.
- Leave a key with a trusted neighbour or friend and ask them to rearrange blinds etc to make your house look "lived in".
- Lock away tools, ladders and anything that could be used to get into your house, garage or shed.

WHEN YOU GO ON HOLIDAY

- Ask a neighbour to park their car in your driveway occasionally to give the impression that someone is coming and going.
- Disconnect the electrical supply on radio-controlled or electronic garage doors and use good quality locks.
- Make sure all your valuables are stored securely.
- Close curtains and blinds.
- Have your lawn mowed while you are away.



VEHICLE SECURITY

- Never leave your keys in the ignition when your car is unattended. Always make sure the windows and doors are locked when leaving your vehicle. Lock your car when paying for fuel.
- Make sure your car is roadworthy and you have sufficient fuel for your journey.
- Make sure you know the location and condition of your spare tyre, where the jacking points are on your car, and how to change a tyre.
- Consider carrying a torch in your car for emergencies.
- Don't leave valuable items in view including your GPS. Remove your GPS and wipe the marks off the window and take out your home destination. If you do need to leave valuables in your car, place them out of sight, under the seat or in the boot and if possible do this before you reach your destination.
- Don't leave registration papers, driver's licences or other papers in an unattended car. This could advise a thief of your home address and that there is no-one at home.
- Consider being a member of the NRMA and always carry a mobile phone with their number pre-programmed into your phone. For more information visit www.nrma.com.au.
- Never pick up a hitch hiker.
- Where possible park your car in well lit areas; if possible choose a carpark that is well lit and has a boom gate. Have your keys ready before you walk to your car.
- Don't leave loose change or CDs in view. Thieves will break a window to steal these items.
- To reduce the chance of your number plate being stolen you can replace screws on each plate with a one-way screw. This type of screws can only be removed with a special tool and are available from hardware and automotive stores.

VEHICLE SECURITY

- Throughout the year the AFP in conjunction with community groups organise Safe Plate Days where you can have your number plate secured with these screws.
- Do not have your personal address on tags attached to car keys.
- If you own a vehicle that is pre-2001 manufacture you may qualify for a subsidy for the installation of an engine immobiliser. Contact Canberra Connect on **132 281** for more details.
- When your car is in the garage make sure both the car and the garage are locked.





COMMUNITY SECURITY

- Get to know your neighbours so you can tell if there is something unusual happening.
- Call police on **131 444** or Crime Stoppers on **1800 333 000** if you see anything that doesn't look right.
- Look after your community including schools and local buildings. Report any damage or vandalism as soon as possible, particularly during school holidays.
- Think about joining Neighbourhood Watch and/or becoming a Safety House.
- Say hello to your local police the next time you pass them at the shops.

CONTACTING EMERGENCY SERVICES

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In an emergency call Triple Zero (000)

When you call **Triple Zero (000)** you will be connected to an operator who will ask which service you need - police, fire or ambulance. You will then be asked by another operator for:

- Your street name, telephone number or location. (When telephoning on a landline your home address will come up on the operator's screen.)
- What has happened.
- Any other information that will help such as the type of problem or how many people are involved.
- Be ready to explain the situation and provide as much information as you can, such as if the offender is still in the house.
- The operator may ask if you want them to stay on the line and talk to you until police arrive.

Tips for emergency calls from mobiles

If you call **Triple Zero (000)** on your mobile it may be answered by an operator in another state. When telling the operator where you are make sure you tell them what city and state you are in. This will ensure that the emergency call is connected to the appropriate call centre. If you are not at home, try to have a look at a street name, house number, school building or some landmark that will enable police to find you.

An alternative number which can be dialled on a mobile phone if you are out of your mobile service provider's area is **112**.

CONTACTING EMERGENCY SERVICES

For police attendance call 131 444

Call **131 444**, 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week:

- If you are a witness to a crime or the victim of a crime or require police attendance.
- Your house has been broken into, your motor vehicle stolen, lost or stolen property or have experienced property damage.

If you would like police to attend a community event, requests can be emailed to **communityrequests@afp.gov.au**.

For ACT Policing switchboard call 6256 7777

Police station locations:

- Belconnen - Lathlain Street, Belconnen
- Canberra City - London Circuit, Civic
- Gungahlin - Gozzard Street, Gungahlin
- Tuggeranong - Cnr Soward Way and Anketell Street, Greenway
- Woden - Callam Street, Phillip

To report a crime call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000

- Crime Stoppers is a free call Australia wide to provide information about criminal activity or persons involved in a crime.
- Crime Stoppers can be completely anonymous.
- Crime Stoppers information is recorded and can assist police in putting together a bigger picture of possible criminal activity in different areas.

Information can also be provided via the website **www.act.crimestoppers.com.au**.

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS



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- ACT Ambulance Service (non emergency) **6207 9900**
- ACTEW AGL (electricity emergency) **131 093**
- ACTEW AGL (gas emergency) **131 909**
- ACT Fire Brigade (non emergency) **6207 8333**
- Health First (24-hours-a-day) **6207 7777**
- Neighbourhood Watch **0414 628 686**
Email: **president@nhwact.com.au** or website
www.nhwact.com.au
- Safety House applications and general inquiries (ACT) **0432 499 554**
Email: **president@safetyhouse.org.au**
- State Emergency Service (floods and storms) **132 500**



ACT POLICING 131 444

police.act.gov.au