

# Culver City Police Department



## Community Watch Handbook

**Neighborhood, Apartment  
&  
Business**

**2003**

# Avoiding Danger

The Following information is very important for you, your family members, friends and peers. The below guidelines will hopefully make you appear to be a more difficult target so that you do not become a victim of a crime.

## 1. When Walking:

- a. Avoid walking alone. Try to walk with someone or a group.
- b. Display confidence when you walk. Keep your head up.  
Walk near the curb, away from doorways, shrubs, & areas where an ambusher could hide.



- c. Walk on occupied streets.
- d. Carry a whistle on your key chain.
- e. Avoid talking to strangers and transients.
- f. Be aware of your general surroundings.
- g. Do not hitchhike
- h. Don't display money, credit cards or valuables in public.
- i. Keep only enough money, credit cards, or important papers with

you that you will need for the day. Never carry excessive amounts of money or valuables.

- j. Be careful when wearing gold chains, expensive watches or rings. They are an advertisement for a criminal. Avoid shortcuts such as alleys and unfamiliar streets.
- k. If you suspect someone is following you, change direction, walk into a business & notify someone.
- l. Keep a pencil and paper with you. It could assist you if the need arises to write down important information for the police.



## 2. When Driving:

- a. When possible, travel on well lit, busy streets.
- b. Keep your doors and windows closed.
- c. Keep your valuables (including purse or briefcase) behind the driver or passenger's seat.
- d. Briefly check under, around and inside of your vehicle before entering it.
- e. If you are being followed, don't drive home. Go to a police, sheriff, or fire station, or any well-lit business.
- f. Know where the police, sheriff, or fire stations are located between your home and work. Write that information down and keep it in you car.



- g. Keep coins in your car for a phone call, or get a cellular telephone.
- h. Do not pick up hitchhikers.
- i. Do not stop to help a stalled motorist. Go to a safe location and send help to their location.
- j. Park in well lit areas such as parking lots in front of open businesses.

- k. If you are stranded and unable to get to a telephone, lock yourself inside of your vehicle with the windows closed. If a stranger offers help, you should refuse (using common sense) and say help is on the way or ask them to call again for you. If they persist or get aggressive, sound the horn. Write down their description and vehicle license number. Wait in your car for a law enforcement vehicle to arrive.

### 3. Gas Station Tips

- a. Try to purchase gasoline during daylight hours.
- b. Never leave your car unlocked when unattended.
- c. When pumping gas, always look around you and be aware.
- d. Try to have exact change to avoid traveling back and forth to the cashier.
- e. Protect your PIN number when using an automated payment device.
- f. Know where the pay phone is located in case of emergency.



### 4. Bus Stop Safety



- a. Always keep a bus schedule with you.
- b. Stand against a wall while waiting.
- c. Know where the nearest pay phone is located.
- d. While on the bus try to sit directly behind the driver.
- e. Report problems to the driver.
- f. Keep an eye on your personal belongings and packages.
- g. Don't put valuables under the seat.

### 5. Automated Teller Machines

- a. Look at the general area before using the machine. If you were a criminal, where would you hide?
- b. Avoid using an ATM at night if possible.
- c. If you must go at night, park your vehicle near the ATM in a well-lit area.
- d. Have your card out of your wallet and ready.
- e. Do not set valuables or your wallet down next to you while using the machine.
- f. Have any paperwork completed before approaching the ATM
- g. Protect your PIN number and bank information. Don't let anyone look over your shoulder.
- h. Place any withdrawn money into your wallet or purse before you leave.



### 6. Underground Garages & Parking Lots

- a. Know where your car is parked so you can return directly to it.
- b. Know where the nearest payphone is located.

- c. Know what time co-workers and friends arrive at work and leave to go home.
- d. Avoid walking alone to your vehicle, especially at night. Walk with a group or a security guard.
- e. Carry something with you, such as a whistle, umbrella, tear gas/pepper spray, pencil or pen.
- f. Have your car keys in your hand, ready to open your car.
- g. Don't go through personal property as you walk, such as your wallet or purse.
- h. Report lighting outages, and unlocked doors that should be secured.



- i. As you approach your car, look around and listen. Check inside your car visually before entering. Lock your doors when you get inside, place your valuables in a safe place. Stay alert as your car warms up.
- j. If you are working late, notify a friend, relative or security guard discreetly.
- k. If you use an elevator in a garage, stand to the rear. Do not get on, or remain in the elevator with anyone who makes you feel uncomfortable or threatened.
- l. In stairwells, know where doors lead. Listen as you enter. Know that doors exiting the stairwell are unlocked. Avoid non-lit areas.
- m. Don't wait for anyone in a garage by yourself.
- n. Think about scenarios that could happen and have a plan. Use Common Sense.

## 7. Mall Tips

- a. Never leave clothes, packages, purses, briefcases, cell phones, etc in your parked vehicle where they can be seen by passersby.
- b. Watch for people watching you as you place items into the trunk of your vehicle.
- c. At night park your vehicle in a well-lit area.
- d. Do not allow your checkbook or wallet to hang out of your back pocket. You may become a victim of a pickpocket.
- e. If going to an indoor mall theatre, park nearest the theatre exit.
- f. Inside a mall, do not leave valuables unattended in a stroller or shopping cart.



## 8. At Home

- a. Arriving home, have your house keys ready. If dropped off by a friend, have them wait until you are inside.
- b. If you have a hide-a-key, never advertise where it is located. Do not place it in a common place such as a mailbox, windowsill, or under the mat.
- c. Re-key locks on new dwellings.

- d. List only your last name on your mailbox.
- e. Use a wide-angle door viewer of at least 190 degrees. Know who is at the door before you open it!
- f. Teach young children never to answer the door.
- g. Don't allow a stranger to use your phone in an emergency. Call for them.
- h. Verify the identity of any company repairman.
- i. Don't give wrong number callers any information. Simply tell them they have dialed incorrectly.



- j. If you receive continual prank calls notify the phone company, and local law enforcement.
- k. In apartment complexes avoid empty laundry rooms.
- l. Keep all house and garage doors locked. Don't leave the car keys in an obvious place.
- m. Use multiple timers with random settings for radios, televisions and lights.
- n. Have a smoke alarm installed. Discuss an escape route with your family in case of fire.
- o. If you are interested in a burglar alarm system, call a professional company.

## 9. Vacation Tips

- a. Notify your local law enforcement agency and request extra patrol.
- b. Notify the Post Office to stop your mail.
- c. Stop newspaper delivery.
- d. Trim shrubbery down.
- e. Set your random timers.
- f. Ask neighbors to keep an eye on your house.
- g. Leave a contact number.
- h. Notify the Trash Company.
- i. Relax and enjoy yourself



## Crime Prevention

There are simple steps you can take to lessen the chances you will become a victim of a property crime, or that items taken from you can be recovered.

### Preventing Theft of your Car, or Items Placed in it.

Just as it is important to keep your car locked, it is equally important to keep valuables inside hidden from view. Wealth and its symbols attract thieves.

- 1. Keep your car locked when you are driving and when you are parked, even at home.
  - a. Lock your valuables in the trunk, or under a privacy screen in SUVs.
  - b. Do not transfer valuables to the trunk in public places where a thief may be watching.

2. Keep your garage locked with a strong locking device.
  - a. Park under streetlights or near busy corners.
  - b. Engrave auto accessories such as car stereos and custom wheels with your California drivers license number preceded by the letters "CA."
  - c. Invest in a high quality alarm system. Recognize these systems are not foolproof and may be subject to false alarms, circumvention, or just ignored by others.



### Reporting a Stolen Automobile

1. If your car is stolen or broken into, report the crime immediately
2. Copy your license plate number and Vehicle Identification Number on a slip of paper and keep this in your home or wallet. This will provide rapid information describing your car to the police.
3. Stolen vehicles are often used to commit other crimes, and frequently abandoned shortly afterwards. Should you locate your car before the police do, **DO NOT ENTER THE CAR or TOUCH ANYTHING**. You may destroy valuable evidence, or risk confrontation with the thief. Notify the Police for that jurisdiction immediately.
4. If your car is broken into, do not enter it or touch and inside surfaces. Doing so may destroy and fingerprints or other evidence the thief may have left behind.

### Protecting Recreational Vehicles, Motorcycles and Bicycles

1. Recreational vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles are often targets of theft and burglary. Owners tend to use them less often, and they remain in the same places for extended periods where thief have the opportunity to size them up and choose the best time to attack.
  - a. Keep them in a safe place, out of sight, such as a locked yard or garage.
  - b. Do not leave RVs or boats on the street. RVs left on trailers can easily be towed away.
  - c. Keep complete records of all identification numbers on RV's and Trailers. Properly register vehicles as required with the State.
2. Motorcycles must be secured to fixed objects whenever possible. Use a 3/8" hardened steel alloy chain
  - b. Use a padlock of equal strength.
3. Bicycle theft is a multi-million dollar business.
  - a. A bicycle chain or lock should be at least 5/16" hardened steel alloy.
  - b. Chain links should be of a continuous welded construction.



- c. Chain your bike through the front rim and frame to secure racks or other solid objects.
- d. At home, sink a large eye screw into a beam or solid object and store your bike secured to it.
- e. Store bikes in garages or otherwise out of sight.
- f. Register your bike where possible, otherwise record all ID numbers or engrave your CDL number on the bike. It is easy for a thief to repaint a bicycle. Take a photograph.



### Reporting a Crime

If you are a witness to a crime, report it to the police as soon as possible. Take a mental picture of suspects and remember distinguishing features. Put yourself in the shoes of the police and try to remember what would make a better identification of the suspect.

Write down suspect and vehicle descriptions as soon as possible to maintain accuracy. The following is a sample description form that shows the types of information that is helpful when reporting an incident to the police.



### Vehicle Description

- License Plate Number/State
- Make
- Model
- Body Style (convertible, 2 door, etc)
- Color
- Identifying marks body damage or scratches

The police can use the answers to the following questions. Wrong information is worse than no information at all. Answer only questions you are reasonably sure of.

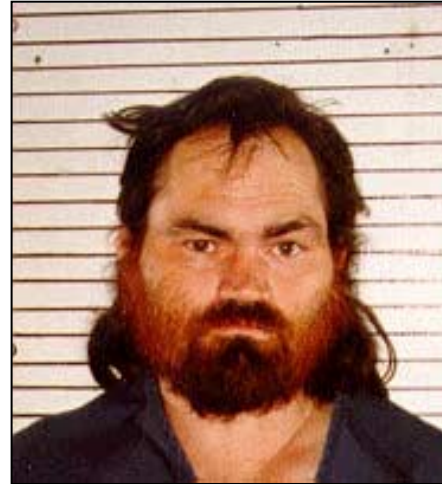
1. How many suspects were there
2. What did they do
3. What did they say
4. What did they take
5. Which way did they go
6. Were there any other witnesses
7. Is there any other information you feel is important

### Suspect Description

- Sex
- Race
- Age



- Height
- Weight
- Hair (color, length, style)
- Teeth Missing
- Glasses
- Facial hair
- Complexion
- Tattoos or Amputations
- Scars or Marks
- Speech Impediments or Accents
- Distinguishing Walk or Limp
- Rings, Bracelets, Necklaces or Earrings



### Phone Lists



Emergency	911
Culver City Police - non emergency	310-837-1221
Police Front Desk	310-253-6208
Traffic Division	310-253-6250
Detective Division	310-253-6300
Narcotics/Vice	310-253-6121
Community Relations	310-253-6258
Watch Commander's Office	310-253-6202
Fire Department	310-253-5900
City Sanitation	310-253-6400
City Housing	310-253-5780
Animal Control	310-523-9566
Public Works	310-253-5635
Brotman Hospital	310-836-7000