

Police Department



JOSEPH R. BENEFICO
CHIEF OF POLICE



VILLAGE OF PELHAM
34 FIFTH AVENUE - TOWN HALL
PELHAM, NEW YORK 10803



(914) 738-2000

GENERAL TIPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BURGLARS

- ❑ Get new locks or have your tumblers reset when you move into a home that has been formerly occupied by other residents. There is no way to tell how many others might have keys to your door.
- ❑ Don't hide keys for the door anywhere outside the house - under mats, flowerpots, over moldings, under rocks or bricks, etc. If you can find a place to hide a key, a burglar can find it. If there is a need to have a key for easy access nearby, leave one with a neighbor that you trust. Do not pass out extra keys to trades people and workers. Make sure every family member has his or her own key.
- ❑ Have good safe locks on all doors with access to the outside. Use auxiliary deadbolt locks on all of the exterior doors. Then make sure to lock all doors when you go out- even if it is just for a minute. Make sure locks are engaged, when you are home, but remember that chain locks do not stop anyone. Make sure that doors and windows can be opened quickly in case of a fire.
- ❑ Install an alarm that is able to detect an intrusion or smoke. Advertise the presence of the alarm by placing signs in doors and/or windows. File your alarm with the Pelham Police Department by attaching the form provided.

- ❑ Don't let strangers into your home. If possible use a peephole or talk through device. Do not open the door for strangers, unexpected repair people or deliveries. **Always** ask strangers for identification. If someone is at your residence on legitimate business they will be glad to show identification. Call to verify if you are at all suspicious.
- ❑ Report broken streetlights in your neighborhood to the Pelham Police Department. Areas that are well lit will discourage burglars from staying in the vicinity because their hiding spots will be taken away.
- ❑ Use metal grillwork on entrance doors and on decorative side glass to prevent burglars from breaking the glass and reaching in and opening the door.
- ❑ Report to the police any strangers that might be loitering in the neighborhood. Also report any people that might be asking any unusual questions about your neighbors and their whereabouts. Make friends with the people in your neighborhood. Set-up a neighborhood watch program. Watch the apartments and houses of other neighbors. Let your neighbors know if you see anything that is at all suspicious. Offer your phone to neighbors in an emergency and use theirs if necessary. It is important to stay in contact with your neighbors. Contact the Pelham Police Department Community Policing Unit to speak at community meetings in regards to suspicious activity in your area.
- ❑ If you think that someone is in your home, do not go in. Call the police from a nearby phone at another location.
- ❑ Do not leave house and car keys together on the same key ring when leaving your car with an attendant in a public parking lot. Your house keys can be duplicated quickly and your address can be acquired from having access to the license plate number.
- ❑ When you receive an unwanted call, don't give out personal information, such as your name and address. When the call is a wrong number, do not tell the caller your number. Use your answering machine to screen calls. Notify the police and the phone company about repeatedly receiving wrong numbers, or any harassing or threatening phone calls.

TIPS TO KEEP HOMEOWNERS SAFE FROM BURGLARS

- ❑ Store any ladders inside the house or in a locked garage. Do not leave them lying anywhere outside. If it is impossible to put them inside, make sure that they are securely locked up and for added security make sure that your neighbors follow the same advice.
- ❑ Make sure that articles that belong to you are put away and not left out on the sidewalks, on lawns, on the porch or in any other areas where it would be effortless for someone to carry them off.
- ❑ Be vigilant about watching for unusual activities in your neighborhood. If you see a stranger lingering in your neighbor's yard, do not be apprehensive about calling that neighbor to check on the stranger's identity.
- ❑ Make sure that garage doors are closed at all times, whether you are home or not. When a garage is opened and empty that is often a signal that no one is home and allows for easy access to a cellar or a door into the house that is unobserved from the street.
- ❑ When you are working in a remote part of the house, in an attic, cellar, or anyplace that is not near the main part of the house, make sure that the house is locked up.
- ❑ At night before going to sleep and whenever you are leaving to go out make sure all entrances are locked. This includes cellar doors, windows, garage doors, sundeck and porch doors and any other entrance that might allow access to the house.
- ❑ Secure any patio sliders. They should lock from the inside but for added security a piece of wood placed into the inside track of the door will prevent the door from being opened from the outside.

- ❑ Use lighting as effectively as possible to deter burglars. Leave several lights burning in different parts of the house when you go out. The outside, when well lit, will eliminate shadows and possible hiding places around the house. Immediately replace any burned out bulbs.
- ❑ Make sure that there are effective and functioning window locks. If there is a lock that is questionable, a safe and simple lock can be made by drilling through the top of the bottom window sash and the bottom of the top sash and inserting a small nail into the hole.
- ❑ Vary your routine. If you follow the same routine consistently a potential burglar could watch your actions and know when your house is liable to be empty.

TIPS TO KEEP APARTMENT DWELLERS SAFE FROM BURGLARS

- ❑ Never get into an elevator alone with a stranger. Always get on with a group. If you feel at all uncomfortable with a stranger, get off immediately. Stand away from the door of the elevator while waiting to get on, if you are alone. Once in the elevator, stand near the control panel in case it is necessary to hit the alarm or floor buttons.
- ❑ Single women should never place their full name on the mailbox. The first and middle initials only should be used rather than “Miss”, “Ms”, or “Mrs.”.
- ❑ Keep outer main doors locked at all times. Collaborate with others neighbors and make sure that everyone is vigilant about not letting strangers in, unless you are sure about the identity of the person that is requesting entrance into the building.
- ❑ Change locks on the doors when you move into an apartment. There may be many copies of the keys to the old locks and you

can never be sure who has them. Never give keys to repairmen, etc.

- ❑ Never allow a stranger into your apartment. Keep the door locks on and direct any salesmen, solicitors and information seekers to the building superintendent.
- ❑ Form a buddy system with your neighbors. Make sure that every one is on the look out for strangers that might be suspicious, either in appearance or actions. Report these and any other questionable noises or actions immediately to the building super.
- ❑ Place supplemental locks on any windows that open onto fire escapes or doors that open out onto terraces or balconies.
- ❑ Keep as few valuables in your apartment as possible. Money, jewelry, furs, etc., are safer if they are kept in a vault or safe deposit box.
- ❑ Make arrangements if you are going to be away to have someone, a neighbor or super to empty your mailbox.
- ❑ Leave a light burning or a radio playing softly when you go out for an evening, to give the impression that there is an occupant in the apartment.
- ❑ Check the references of any people that may have to enter your apartment when you cannot be present, such as maids, cleaning women, etc.

SOME TIPS TO KEEP VACATIONERS SAFE FROM BURGLARS

- ❑ Call the Pelham Police Department to have your house placed on the Dark House List, thus having your house checked daily by a policeman, for open doors, open windows and any other suspicious activity.
- ❑ Have lawns mowed and yard work kept up; in the winter make sure sidewalks are shoveled and kept clear.
- ❑ Put all outside lawn furniture away. Make sure that all bicycles are put away before leaving. Any items that are left outside can be very easily stolen.
- ❑ Stop all deliveries or make sure that someone will pick up daily deliveries. Notify police and a reliable neighbor the length of your absence, when you are leaving and the date of your return.
- ❑ Do not discuss your vacation in public or give any details of your trip to the newspaper, any details that need to be given out can wait for your return.
- ❑ Make sure that any valuables inside the house that might have the potential to be viewed from outside the house are moved to a place where they will not be detected. Just in case, have a list of small appliances and valuables.
- ❑ If you are going to be gone for more than a few days, devise a plan with a trusted neighbor to inspect your house, to make sure that nothing has been disturbed.
- ❑ Don't take any course of action that is out of the ordinary, such as pulling down shades. This will advertise the fact that the house is unoccupied.
- ❑ Use a clock-timer to turn lights on and off at specific times so that the house looks lived in. Arrange to have a neighbor alter the light pattern of your house by changing the times on timer-controlled lights throughout the house during part of your absence.

- In case of a break-in, a neighbor should know where to reach you and your insurance agent. This information should then be relayed to the police when a suspected burglary is reported.

PERSONAL AND FAMILY SAFETY- TAKING THE STEPS TO PROTECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

- Stay alert, use common sense, and trust your instincts. If you suspect something is wrong, or that a situation seems dangerous, you may be right. Don't dismiss suspicious people, cars or situations. Report any of these things to the Pelham Police Department immediately. Do not investigate anything on your own.

- Avoid dangerous situations. Don't invite trouble. Use your best judgment about where you go and what you do. Take precautions at home, in the car and in the street. Don't take chances with your personal safety.

- Work with the police and the courts. People working together can prevent crime. Report any attempted crime or harm to you and your children. Don't be afraid to report your suspicions.

TO PROTECT YOURSELF ON THE STREET

- ❑ Avoid wearing clothes that draw attention such as furs and jewelry. Dress so that you can move quickly in case of an attack.
- ❑ Walk with someone. Stay alert to those around you. If you must walk alone, walk with confidence. If you need directions stop and ask in a public place.
- ❑ Avoid isolated areas, such as parks and parking lots. Shortcuts should be avoided; they may expose you to danger. Stay off dark and secluded streets and alleys.
- ❑ Protect your valuables. Carry only what you need with you. Carry those things close to your body. Do not set them down. Carry your wallet in a front or inside pocket, instead of in a purse. If you carry a purse hold it close to your body.

IF YOU ARE BEING FOLLOWED

- ❑ Act suspicious. Turn to look at the person that is following you. This will give you time to develop a plan; it also lets the person know that they have lost the element of surprise.
- ❑ If someone is following you on foot, cross the street and vary your pace. If the person is in a car cross the street and walk in the opposite direction. Go into a store or other public place where there are other people. If the person follows you in, ask to use the phone and call the police.
- ❑ Warn your children, (in terms that they will understand), about child molesters and sex offenders. Know where your children are, what they are doing and whom they are with.

PROTECT YOURSELF WHEN YOU ARE TRAVELLING

- When you are in a car keep all doors locked and the windows rolled up, especially when sitting in traffic and at stoplights. If you are harassed at an intersection do not respond, drive away.
- Always lock your car when leaving it. Keep all your valuables out of sight and in the trunk. Never leave anything of value on the seat or in the glove box. Mount tape decks, CB radios, and cellular phones out of sight if possible.
- Park near your destination. Park in areas away from shrubs and wooded areas that will be well lit if you are returning after dark. **Never** park near a van. Be especially alert in parking garages, regardless of the time of day. Make a mental note of where you park so, you can find your car quickly. Have your keys out as you approach your car. Watch out for anyone hiding behind nearby cars. Upon returning immediately check the back seat to make sure that no one is hiding there. Once inside your car lock the doors immediately.
- Keep your eye on the gas gauge. Stop and get gas if you are running low. Maintain your car to reduce the chance that it might break down. If you have car trouble and your car breaks down, raise the hood, put emergency flashers on and tie a white cloth to the antenna or outside mirror. Carry a “Call Police” or “Get Help” sign in your car. **STAY INSIDE THE CAR** and make sure that all the doors are locked. Ask anyone who stops to call the police and/or the nearest service station. Wait for the police.
- Never pick up a stranger no matter how harmless they may look. Never hitchhike yourself.
- If you are on public transportation. Make sure that you are waiting in the safest place possible. For subways and trains,

wait in well lit areas, and near other people. Stay alert to the others around you. If you are bothered by anyone, make noise so that other people know that you are being bothered. If you are waiting for a bus make sure that you wait near others. Once on the bus, sit in an aisle seat, as close to the driver as possible. Notice who gets off with you. if you sense danger, walk or run toward people. If you are traveling by taxi make sure that the driver does not leave until you are safely inside your destination.

- Use caution in airports and bus terminals. Keep your luggage locked and watch it carefully. Leave identification inside your luggage. Carry Travelers checks and credit cards instead of cash.
- If you are staying in hotels or motels, leave any valuables in a safe at the desk and not in your room or in your luggage. Always keep your room key with you at all times. Double lock the door when you are inside. Tell the clerk not to give out your room number.

HOW TO REACT IF YOU ARE ATTACKED

- ❑ In any attack situation, your goal is to get away safely.
- ❑ Evaluate the situation. Is there anyone or anything that can help you? Determine the state of mind that your attacker is in.
- ❑ Stay alert. Listen and observe carefully so that you can provide important information and evidence later.
- ❑ Decide which way is the best way to respond. Only you can decide how to respond. Every situation is different. No one strategy will work in every case. Be realistic about how you can protect yourself. Size up the situation and ask yourself these questions; is help nearby? What state of mind is the attacker in? Does the person have a weapon? Is the attacker interested only on money and valuables? Screaming, hitting, or biting may give you an opportunity to escape but in some situations these actions can expose you to greater harm.
- ❑ Give up your valuables if your attacker wants them. These things can be replaced but your life cannot.
- ❑ For any assault or any type of physical actions follow your instincts. Attract attention any way you can by blowing a whistle or screaming. Run, hit bite or use self-defense (if you are trained). Do whatever comes naturally and do it right away, do not hesitate.
- ❑ Your goal is to escape and survive. Escaping and surviving an attack are the most important considerations. Keep those in mind as you act and react. Remember each emergency is different and only you can decide what action is best for you to take.

WORK WITH THE POLICE

- ❑ Keep emergency numbers (Fire Dept-914-738-2600) and Police Dept-914-738-2000) handy, near the phone and in a wallet or purse.
- ❑ Store the Pelham Police Department phone number (914)-738-2000 in your cellular phone speed dial .
- ❑ Notify the police of suspicious activities, report cars, people, or deliveries that seem out of place.
- ❑ Stay alert. If you see anything out of the ordinary make sure to remember these things: the time, the person's appearance (height, weight, clothing, scars, hair, or anything else that might be unusual), the car's make, color, and especially the license number. Write down the information as soon as possible.
- ❑ Press charges if you are the victim of any crime. Help the police in prosecuting the criminal.

SELF PROTECTION FOR WOMEN

- Take the steps to protect yourself from violent crime. Remember that every woman is a potential victim. Understand the risks and learn how to reduce them. Make yourself a less likely target for crime.
- Know what to do after a crime also. Get help if you are attacked. This may include calling the police, getting medical attention or talking to a counselor. Take charge of your personal safety.
- Violent crime can happen to any woman, at any time of the day, and it can take place anywhere. Victims come from all economic classes and cultural backgrounds. Many crimes occur in broad daylight. Women are often attacked in places that seem safe, such as in the home, the office or in the car. Safety depends less on where you are and more on what precautions you have taken. There is a great deal you can do to reduce your risks.
- Being aware of the dangers can help to keep you out of danger. Here are some important facts: Rapists don't look any different from other men. In many cases the woman may know her attacker. Most cases of violent crime involve people that belong to the same race or cultural background. Battering, physical abuse of a partner or ex-partner is **always** a crime.
- Avoid risky situations. Use common sense. Stay out of isolated areas, especially at night. Don't go off alone with anyone that you do not know well. **Never** hitchhike.
- Stay alert and pay attention to your surroundings and the people in them. Watch for behavior and attitudes that may signal trouble. For example: if you are out with a man, and he shows a lack of respect for your feelings or ideas. Does he want to make all of the decisions? Does he get angry if you try to pay for some of the expenses of the date? Does he pressure you to drink?

- Trust your instincts, if you sense that something is wrong, get away as soon as possible. It is always best to be cautious.
- Consider taking a course in self-defense. Even if you never have to use the skills that you learn, taking the course can give you confidence. This confidence alone can make you less of an inviting target. But, be very careful not to overestimate your ability to defend yourself.
- Never let a stranger know that you are home alone. Whether the person is at your door or on the phone.
- If a stranger asks to use your phone, offer to make the call and have the person wait outside.

STREET SMARTS

- ❑ Know where you are going and the safest way to get there. Tell someone when you are leaving and when you will arrive there.
- ❑ Walk at a good steady pace, keep your head up and do not look down at the ground. Look confident. If you find yourself in unfamiliar surroundings, do not show confusion or alarm.
- ❑ Avoid carrying a lot of packages- it can make you look defenseless.
- ❑ Stay on well lit streets where there will be other people walking. Walk with other people whenever possible.
- ❑ Don't wear headphones; they make you less aware of what is going on around you.
- ❑ Change course if someone is following you on foot. Cross the street and head for other people. If a car is following you turn around and walk in the opposite direction.
- ❑ Carry a whistle or another noisemaker. The sound may scare off an attacker.
- ❑ Don't stand too close to a car if you are giving motorist directions.
- ❑ Take special care when jogging. Vary your route. Try to go with a friend and avoid isolated areas.
- ❑ When traveling, in the car keep doors and windows locked and windows rolled up.
- ❑ Don't pick up hitchhikers, no matter how harmless they look. Keep an eye in you gas gauge stop and get gas if you are running low. Make sure that your car has been serviced to reduce the chances of a breakdown. If your car does break down in the highway: Raise the hood and turn on the

emergency flashers. Stay inside the car with the doors locked. Wait for the police. If someone stops, ask him/her to call the police and/or a nearby garage. Carry a “Send Help” or a “Call Police” sign in your car.

- Park near your destination. Park in areas away from shrubs and wooded areas that will be well lit if you are returning after dark. **Never** park near a van. Be especially alert in parking garages, regardless of the time of day. Make a mental note of where you park so, you can find your car quickly. Have your keys out as you approach your car. Watch out for anyone hiding behind nearby cars. Upon returning immediately check the back seat to make sure that no one is hiding there. Once inside your car lock the doors immediately

- If you are taking public transportation, wait in busy, well-lit spots. Sit close to the driver. If someone harasses you, scream. Notice who gets off with you. If you sense danger, walk or run toward people.

USE CAUTION ON DATES

- Date rape is a serious problem. Learn how to protect yourself. Make your sexual limits clear. If you feel that you are being pressured, be firm in your refusal. Tell the person that “No” means “No”.
- Avoid secluded places. For example stay away from deserted parks and beaches, or a private home or apartment. Suggest meeting in a public place or double dating.
- Beware of drugs and alcohol. It is much easier to be in control if you are not under the influence. Keep an eye on how much your date drinks, too.

RESPONDING TO AN ATTACK

- Once again only you can decide how to respond. No one strategy will work in every case. It is always important to do several things: Size up the situation and ask yourself these questions, is help nearby? What state of mind is the attacker in? Does the person have a weapon? Is the attacker interested only in money or valuables? (If so give them up. Your life is more valuable than things.)
- Act quickly You have many options, for example: Yell at the attacker, scream for help, run away, fight back, a quick blow to a vulnerable area can take the attacker by surprise and give you a chance to escape. Aim for the throat, eyes, nose, knees or the groin. You may decide to do nothing but whatever you do choose, do not second-guess yourself.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN RAPED

- Protect yourself from further physical and emotional harm: Report the rape to the Police Department. If you are less than eighteen years old, you **must** report it to the Police Department. If you are eighteen or older, the decision is yours. But remember, reporting an attack is an important part of ending attacks on women.
- Call the Police Department first for assistance. Go to a hospital or a doctor immediately for treatment of any injuries. Don't douche, bathe, shower or change clothes before you go. You might destroy valuable medical evidence.
- Talk to someone that you trust about what happened. Calling a rape crisis line can help. To find the number check the front of your phone book under "Community Services" or "Crisis" numbers.

- See a counselor who is trained in rape crisis work. A counselor can help you deal with fears and painful emotions that may linger after an attack.

SPECIAL TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Teach your children these safety rules.
- They should know that they could always come to you if anyone bothers them. They should tell a parent or a trusted adult if anything that makes them uncomfortable or scared happens to them.
 - Make sure that they know their name, address, and phone number.
- They should learn that if they become separated from you while shopping to say **NO** to anyone that offers to find your parents or tries to get them to leave with them. Teach them to go to a salesperson that will page you for them.
- Teach them not go anywhere with anyone that they do not know well. Say **NO!** to strangers. If a stranger says, “Here is some candy, (or a new toy). Lets take a ride in my car.” Teach your child to say, **NO!** Your child should know not to talk with, accept anything, or ride with strangers. If a stranger offers them money to help find a lost pet they should say **NO!** If this happens they should run home and tell someone that they trust what happened.
- They should know that if a neighbor asks them to come into their house, basement or garage to see their new pet or a new game, they should know to say, **NO!** They should tell that person that they have to ask their parent’s permission first.
- Teach your child that if anyone sits next to you while you are at the movies with your friends, and touches you in places that make you feel uncomfortable, to say **STOP!** They should immediately get up and tell someone, if available the theater manager. They should then move to another seat.
- Teach them to say **NO!** If anyone tries to touch any private parts of their body. Tell them that these are the areas that are

covered by your bathing suit. Teach them that only you can touch them when you bathe them or apply medicine. Only their Doctor can touch them when he examines them. Explain that if someone asks them to take off their clothes, or asks them to look at or touch that person's private parts, to say **NO!** If a stranger does touch them and then tells them that this is a game, that they will get in trouble for telling anyone, that they must run to an adult that they trust and tell them what happened right away. Explain to them that they must know that is never their fault and that when you do tell an adult that they can help and tell the police. They should know that you could say **NO!** even if they did not say no the first time. They should be taught their bodies belong to them.

- If they are home alone and the telephone rings they should never tell anyone that they are home alone. Teach them to say, "My parents can not come to the phone right now, can I please take a message?"
- If they are left home alone they should always keep the doors locked. Teach them to say **NO!** to anyone who knocks on the door who is not a member of your family. A stranger may try to make up a story that will get them to open up the door. They must never open the door to **ANY** strangers. Teach them to call the Police Department in an emergency.
- If a stranger ever approaches them and says, "Your parents sent me to get you." Teach them to say **NO!** Run away and get help from someone that they trust. Tell them that you would never send a stranger to get them.
- Teach them how to react if a stranger is following them and tries to grab hold of them. First, yell **NO!** Then tell them to shout as loud as they can, "**Help this stranger is hurting me!**" Then teach them to run to a place that is well lit where there are people that can help them.
- Don't play alone or in isolated areas. They should never take shortcuts that lead through dark or deserted areas. They should stay with their friends in well-lit place that they know are safe.
- Teach them how to lock up valuables such as bicycles when they leave them unattended for any period of time. Have them register his/her bicycle with the Pelham Police Department by

having it engraved at Police Headquarters on an appointment basis. Having your bicycle engraved can provide the Police with a serial number to trace the bicycle if it is lost or stolen.

- Parent network towards the prevention of underage drinking in your home as well as a friend's home. The #1 place adolescents say they get their alcohol from is their own homes and the #1 place they drink alcohol is at other people's homes. Contact the parent of a party-giver. Confirm that a parent or adult will be home and will be supervising the party. Avoid criminal and civil penalties by hosting a party or allowing a teen to bring alcohol into your home.
- Create a password with your child, only known between the parents and the child.
- Additional information or about child safety can be obtained by contacting the Pelham Police Department Youth Officers at 914-738-2000.

TIPS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

- You can prevent crime if you know how criminals operate. Criminals look for the easiest opportunities. You can spot these opportunities before they do and you can remove them. You can protect yourself. You do not need to be physically strong or agility or speed. You do need to be alert, cautious and be self-confident.
- Have your regular pension or other checks sent directly to your bank account. Keep money and securities in a bank box.
- Mark all valuables with a driver's license number or some other easily traceable id number and your state abbreviation.
- Know how to spot a fraud. Always beware of getting something for nothing.
- Beware of swindlers. They will try to take your money, and give you nothing in return. Watch out for certain sales gimmicks: For instance the "Bait and Switch". Here you are lured into a store for something that is a bargain and then they try to talk you into something that is more expensive. Watch out for "Referral selling". This is where you are promised a discount on something if you can get others, such as your friends or family to buy also. Another scheme to get you to buy is the "fear-sell" tactic. This sales pitch is for products or services that play on your fears and claim that they will keep you safe from anything bad happening to you. "Pressure tactics" are used to get you to buy or sign **now**, before you can think about it. If you are pressured in to buying something right away, don't. "Harmless" contracts are fine print clauses that can cause you a lot of money. Understand any contract that you are thinking about signing. Have your lawyer check it through thoroughly. Ignore any verbal promises. Beware of anyone offering debt consolidation. These loans can put you deeper into debt with very high interest rates.
- Watch out for consumer fraud and sales gimmicks.

- For example watch out for medical frauds where you are offered “miracle cure, “ or lab tests etc. See your doctor for any health problems that you may have.
- Another example is a business scheme where you are offered work at home. Then you are told that there is a small “registration fee.” Check with the Better Business Bureau.
- Another type of fraud involves, “Land in the sun deals where things seem too good to be true. Never buy anything without seeing it. Always check out the property and the seller.
- Never buy mail order insurance that promises large benefits at high rates. Make sure to read all offers carefully.
- Avoid publishing schemes that offer to publish a book or a song. The catch is that you will pay for all publishing costs plus the profit for the publisher.
- Watch out for home repairs where anyone is offering a “free inspection” of a roof, etc. The danger is that they will try to get your money for unnecessary repairs. Make sure that you deal with only local firms that you know and trust.
- Beware of con games. Always check out people who say they are “officials” by calling their office before you hand anyone any money. Stop and think before you act. Remember that con artists are the friendliest people that you could ever meet. Be careful if anyone claims to be a bank official or a detective that asks you to withdraw your savings, so that they can catch a “crooked teller”. This person will take your money and you will never see them again. The “Pigeon Drop” is another con game to watch out for. This is when a stranger strikes up a conversation and is joined by a friend who has just “found a lot of money. Then you are offered a share if you can put up money in “good faith”, that will show that you do not have to spend the “found” money right away. The other con game that is pulled on seniors is the, “Obit column sting” where the con artists send a surviving spouse bills for phony debts, purchases etc. If you happen to get an unfamiliar bill after the death of a spouse, check it out before you pay.
- “Purse Snatching” is a common crime, but not widely publicized. Any woman is a target for this offense, even though

elderly women seem to be more vulnerable. Simple rules to follow to minimize your chances of becoming a victim; do not carry a shoulder bag over your shoulder. This makes it easier for a suspect to grab the bag, knock you down and cause bodily injury. Instead, carry a small clutch-type bag underneath your arm. Do not carry large sums of money, valuable jewelry or all of your credit cards in your purse. Carry only what you plan to use for the day. This includes one check instead of the whole checkbook. Do not leave your purse in shopping carts or on counters. The most frequent areas for purse snatching are bus stops, grocery stores, and shopping center parking lots. **THE HARDER YOU MAKE IT, THE LESS LIKELY YOU ARE TO BECOME A VICTIM OF A CRIME.**

- Additional Information or advice on Elderly Abuse can be obtained by contacting the Pelham Police Department Community Policing Program at 914-738-2000.

TIPS ABOUT WEAPONS AND SELF DEFENSE

- ❑ It is best not to carry a weapon unless you are thoroughly trained in using one. Weapons may be easily turned against you if you are not prepared in using them. If you do decide to carry a weapon check with the local authorities about the state laws.
- ❑ Learning self-defense is a good idea but do not overestimate your abilities. It may be years before you can use the techniques effectively.
- ❑ The best way for citizens to fight crime is to check with your local police department. There are many ways that you can help. These include neighborhood watch programs, ID programs and other volunteer programs.

IDENTITY THEFT

- ❑ Identity theft and identity fraud are terms used to refer to all types of crime in which someone wrongfully obtains and uses another person's personal data in some way that involves fraud or deception, typically for economic gain. Criminals may engage in "shoulder surfing" watching you from a nearby location as you punch in your telephone calling card number or credit card number or listen in on your conversation if you give your credit card number over the telephone. Some criminals engage in "dumpster diving" going through your garbage cans or a common dumpster or trash bin to obtain copies of your checks, credit card or bank statements, or other records that typically bear your name, address, and even your telephone number. If you receive applications for "pre-approved" credit cards in the mail, but discard them without sending them through a personal shredder. In recent years, the Internet has become an appealing place for criminals to obtain identifying data, such as passwords or even banking information.

- Be **stingy** about giving out your personal information to others unless you have a reason to trust them, regardless of where you are.
- **Check** your financial information regularly, and look for what should be there and what shouldn't.
- **Ask** periodically for a copy of your credit report, by contacting the agencies provided: **Equifax**, **Experian** and **Trans Union**.
- If you become a **Victim of Identity Theft** conduct the following;
 1. Report the lost/stolen credit cards to the credit card companies in order to cancel the cards.
 2. Report the matter to the Pelham Police Department.
 3. Contact the FTC Federal trade commission to report the situation. 1-877-ID THEFT.
 4. Call the fraud units of the three principal credit reporting companies:

Equifax: 800-525-6285 Experian: 888-397-3742 Trans Union: 800-680-7289

MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY TIPS

- Always secure your vehicle. Lock your vehicle and take your keys. Never hide a spare key on the vehicle. Park in well-lighted areas. Do not leave valuables in sight to tempt a thief. Always park with the wheels turned toward the curb. Back your car into the driveway. Police can observe the vehicle if the hood were raised to hot-wired by a thief.

- ❑ If you have a garage, use it. Lock your garage door.
- ❑ Never leave your car running while unattended (New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law violation).
- ❑ If possible, retain copies of all vehicle paperwork at home in a safe place.
- ❑ Use anti-theft devices to slow the professional car thief. A kill switch or starter bypass switch will prevent the electric current from reaching the coil or carburetor thus causing the vehicle not to start. Alarm systems that contain a siren, lights, or horn if the car is tampered with. Fuel switches, which stop the fuel, supply. Steering column locks such as the Club. Locking gas caps. Keyless entry systems, etc.
- ❑ Identifying your vehicle by having the vehicle identification numbers engraved on window glass trim. Additional Information about VIN ETCH can be obtained by contacting the Pelham Police Department at 914-738-2000 and requesting to have an appointment to have your vehicle on file with the Police Department and also lowering your insurance costs!
- ❑ If your vehicle is stolen, it should be reported to the Police Department as soon as possible. However, before the vehicle can be listed as stolen, you must have your vehicle's license plate number and or the vehicle identification number. Stolen vehicles are sometimes used in the commission of other crimes. Quick action often results in recovery of your vehicles as well as prevention of another crime. If the criminal is apprehended, you must be willing to file charges and testify in court. If you recover your own vehicle, you must call the nearest police station. If you do not, your car will continue to be listed as stolen.
- ❑ Report lost/stolen license plates from your vehicle as well. In addition, your license plates can also be used in the commission of other crimes. Stop by the Pelham Police Department in order to report any motor vehicle items that may have been lost or stolen in order to file a report with the local department of motor vehicles (DMV).
- ❑ Secure children as well as recommend adults “buckle up” prior to traveling in a vehicle in Westchester County. Contact the

Pelham Police Department for State and County Laws requiring Seat belt safety for all. Assistance for child safety seats is provided on an appointment basis by contacting the Pelham Police Department.

- Continue to stay safe on the roads by following the local DMV requirements for motor vehicle operation in New York State.