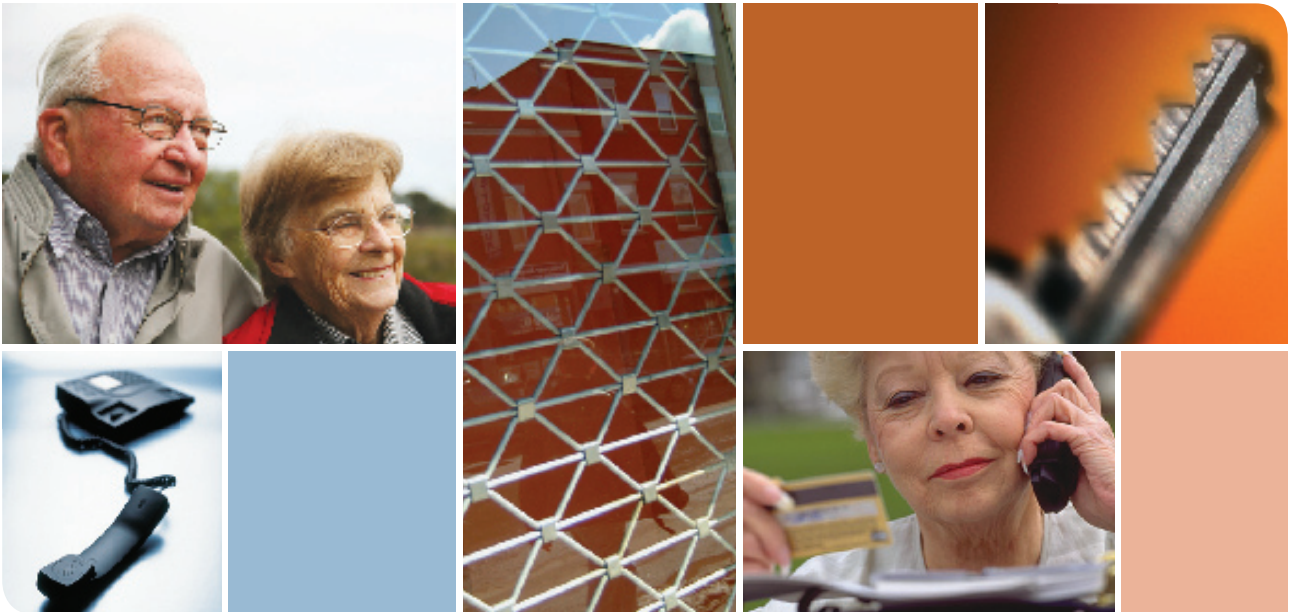




Australian Government

# Safe and Secure Kit

*for seniors*



**This kit is printed, authorised and distributed with the compliments of:**

Senator Gavin Marshall

LABOR SENATOR FOR VICTORIA

376 Victoria St  
NORTH MELBOURNE VIC 3051

T: 03 9348 9699

F: 03 9348 9837

E: [Senator.Marshall@aph.gov.au](mailto:Senator.Marshall@aph.gov.au)

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# A Message from your local Member of Parliament



Personal safety is an important issue for us all, whether it is in our home or out in the wider community.

I have put together this kit with some tips on what we can do to promote a safe and secure home and community.

It is by no means complete, but I hope that some of the tips will be useful. I also encourage you to become involved with your local Neighbourhood Watch group (NHW). By working together, communities can cut crime and make their neighbourhoods safer for everyone.

Building safer communities is building stronger communities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gavin Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Gavin Marshall**

Labor Senator for Victoria

**Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided.**

# Neighbourhood watch

By working together, communities can cut crime and make their neighbourhoods safer for everyone. That is why Neighbourhood Watch programs have been successful in many areas.

Neighbourhood Watch is a program organised by the community to reduce residential crime.

Neighbours watching out for each other can decrease prowling, loitering and burglary by being alert and observant, by recording licence plate numbers and descriptions of suspicious people and reporting this information to the police.

## **Protecting your neighbourhood**

Many Neighbourhood Watch groups hold social activities to enable neighbours to get to know each other better and build community spirit.

Friendly neighbourhoods have more success in avoiding crime.

Remember that burglars are afraid of other people seeing them commit crimes.

If there is not a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in your area, think about starting one.



**If you have any information on a criminal act, you can phone CRIMESTOPPERS on 1800 333 000. Calls are not taped or traced and you may remain anonymous.**

# Personal security

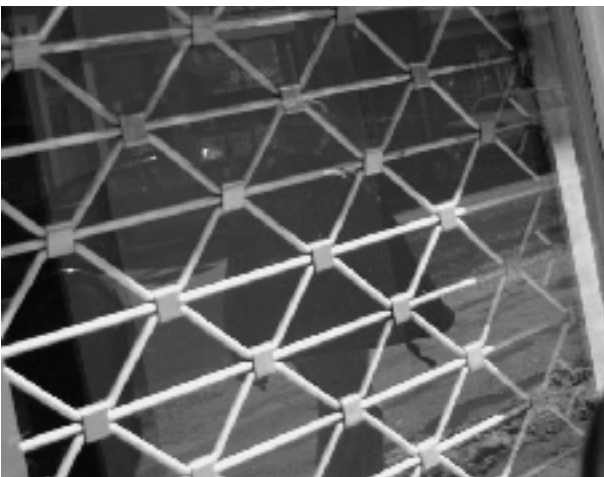
**There are many ways you can improve the personal safety of you and your family.**

## At Home

- Close curtains as soon as indoor lights are turned on.
- Make sure windows and doors are secure – even during the day.
- If you are in the back garden or at the back of the house, make sure the front door is locked and vice versa. Burglars will steal from a house that is occupied.

## Answering the Door

- Don't let strangers into your home. Ask for identification (A business card is not ID). If you are still not satisfied, phone the organisation they say they are representing.
- If a stranger asks to use your phone, direct them to the nearest public phone or keep them outside and make the call for them.
- Door chains and door viewers are worth the cost. They will enable you to speak to strangers without letting them in.
- Although expensive, fitting a security door is a good idea. Keep it locked from the inside and don't leave the key in the lock. Locating it out of sight on a hook near the door is a good idea.



## Intruders in Your Home

**If you arrive home and suspect an intruder is in the house:**

- Do not go in, go to a neighbour's and phone the police.
- Keep out of sight and a safe distance from the house. If you see an intruder leaving, jot down a description of the person, their vehicle and number plate.



## Your Telephone

- If you don't know a caller, don't give personal information over the phone, even if the caller claims to be from a reputable organisation or your bank. Most banks ask for a security number known only to you and the bank. Do not give out your date of birth or any other personal information no matter how pushy the person is on the phone. Banks do not threaten their customers over the phone so do not fall for any threats implied or otherwise, hang up immediately and ring your banking institution and make enquiries.
- Leave a list of emergency numbers next to your phone, including the number of a neighbour or someone nearby.
- If you own a touch phone, store emergency numbers in the memory so you can dial them quickly by pressing one button.

- Don't let strangers know you are home alone, or when you will be away from the house.
- If you live alone, consider installing a telephone in the bedroom.
- If you receive an obscene or abusive phone call, don't talk to the caller – hang up. If calls persist, keep a record and notify the phone company and the police.
- Use an answering machine to screen calls. Do not leave messages saying you are out.

## Out and About

- Walk only on busy or well-lit streets. Don't take shortcuts through dark alleys, across parks or through isolated areas.
- If you regularly walk home after dark, consider buying a screech alarm. Carry it in your hand, not in a bag where it may be difficult to reach in an emergency.
- Walk facing the traffic and on the left-side of the footpath.
- If you are going to be out late, arrange for a lift or book a taxi in advance.
- When using a public phone, stand with your back to the phone so you can see around you.
- When returning to your home or car, have your keys ready.
- When you return to your car in a parking area, check nobody is hiding around the car.
- Keep your car doors locked while driving.
- If a friend or a taxi takes you home, ask them to wait until you are safely inside. Have your key ready as you approach your car or home.

## Shopping

- **In shopping centres keep your handbag or wallet closed and secure.** Never leave it unattended; for example, in a shopping trolley.
- **If you carry a handbag, don't dangle it;** hold it close to your body. If you use a wallet, put it inside a jacket pocket or a front pocket.



- Try not to carry more money in your wallet than you need.
- If you feel you are being followed, turn to see if someone is there instead of being caught off guard. Enter a shop or building where there are people.
- **If someone tries to snatch your bag, do not resist. No amount of money is worth the risk of serious injury. If possible tip the contents of your bag out;** that way the thief might quickly grab only the money and leave personal valuables behind.

## Public transport

- Avoid isolated transport stops and sit near other passengers when using public transport.
- Avoid travelling alone at night.
- If you must travel alone at night, sit or stand near the conductor or driver and arrange to be met at your destination.
- Report any strange people who harass you or follow you.
- If you feel threatened on public transport, move closer to other passengers or get off as soon as possible at a stop where there are people.

## Senior citizens

Many senior citizens, especially those who live alone, feel vulnerable at times.

**Here is some advice that is handy for everyone, but may be particularly helpful for older people to feel secure and confident:**

- Don't isolate yourself behind locked doors. One way of encouraging neighbours to keep an eye out for your welfare is to keep an eye out for theirs.
- Get involved with your neighbours, the local community and a Neighbourhood Watch group.
- Local contact and friendships develop a sense of security and dispel unnecessary anxiety.
- Criminals are less likely to see you as a target if you are careful and alert and living confidently in the community.
- Don't hide spare keys in obvious places.



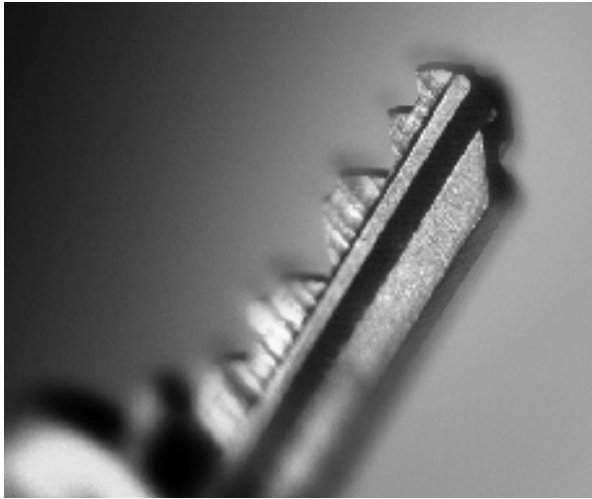
**Home Assist/Secure is available for disabled and elderly people who require assistance with minor house repairs and maintenance.**

# Locking up

Making your property secure can be an involved and expensive business, especially if you don't take care. Before you make any major decisions, think about your security needs and then shop around.

No one wants to turn their home into a fort. However, this section is a guide for securing your home.

It may well be that a combination of some of the following tips and a better awareness of home security will give you and your home suitable protection against burglars.



## Basic Precautions

- Think about installing deadlocks on all outside doors. Don't leave keys in the door.
- Lock all doors and windows when you go out, even it is only for a few minutes.
- Security screens on windows allow for them to be kept open at night, especially in our warm weather.
- Never leave notes on your door.
- Install a door viewer to check all unexpected visitors.
- Have good exterior lighting. Sensor lights are an excellent way to light up your yard.
- Leave a light, radio or TV on when you go out – it makes it look like you're at home when you're not.
- Trim your trees and shrubs to ensure unwanted visitors are easily visible and have nowhere to hide.
- Make a note of the serial numbers of all your appliances.
- Engrave your valuables. Engravers can be borrowed from your local NHW.
- Don't put identification on your key ring.
- Change locks or cylinders when you move into a new house.
- Never give keys to a workman.
- Plant spiky plants such as roses, bougainvillea, or cactus around windows.
- If you have recently bought electrical goods such as a TV or stereo, don't put the boxes out where they can be seen from the street. Cut or crunch them up and put them in the bin.
- Burglars can get into your house through the roof. In high-risk areas it's a good idea to attach hinges and a sliding bolt to access holes.
- Before installing a pet door, check that it's not large enough for a small person to fit through.
- In case of fire or emergency keep your keys where you can get them quickly. Everyone in the house must know where they are.

## While on Holidays

- Consider having a trusted friend house-sit your home.
- Shut and lock your garage/shed.
- Advise local police if you will be away for any length of time.
- Use electrical timers for lights and radios.
- Ask a neighbour to water and tidy your garden and to collect your mail.
- Ask a neighbour to hang washing on your line occasionally.
- Ask a neighbour to alter curtain or blind positions.

# Protecting your possessions

Thieves want easy opportunities. They want to get into your home and your car quickly and leave without being seen or caught.

A determined thief needs only a moment to make off with your valuables.

That is why it's a good idea to engrave identification such as your drivers licence number, preceded by the initial of your State, on your valuable possessions.

If they do steal identified property and the police later recover it, your identification mark will mean it can be quickly returned to you.

Neighbourhood Watch programs lend portable engraving kits to members of the public, so that valuable household items can be marked.



## Protecting your car

After your home, your car is probably your next most expensive possession.

Most car thieves won't bother if they can't open the car and remove what they want in a few seconds.

- **Before you leave your car:** lock valuables away in the glove box or the boot.
- **Leave your car locked and wind up all windows.** Even the smallest gap can enable the windows to be forced open. Never leave pets in your car thinking they will protect your property.
- **Lockable fuel caps:** These are a good idea and will prevent your petrol being stolen or will force joyriders to abandon your car when petrol runs out.
- **Aerials:** try to get into the habit of retracting your aerial, if it does not automatically do so, when you park in the street.
- **Car alarms:** consider having your car fitted with an anti-theft alarm if it doesn't already have one. Steering locks and immobilisers are also good value, but you must remember to engage them before you leave the car.
- **Door locks:** lock your car every time you leave it, even if it is only for a few minutes, particularly in your own driveway.
- **Keys:** don't hide spare keys anywhere, inside or outside the car. Keep a record of the serial numbers of your car keys and accessories. Never leave your car keys in the ignition when you are away from the car.
- **Luggage and valuables:** don't leave valuables on display inside your car. Radios, cameras, coats, interesting cases and parcels may tempt thieves to break in.
- **Keep your garage locked.** Many cars are stolen from driveways, both day and night.
- **Park well away from isolated or dark areas** – especially at night.

# Con artists and their schemes

No one likes being 'ripped off' by shonky businesses. You can help protect yourself by following these tips:

- People from legitimate companies carry identity cards. Phone their company if you are not sure about their identification and don't let them into your home until you are sure. (A business card is not I.D.)
- Keep informed about the latest con schemes in your community by reading the newspaper and listening to friends. Be cautious about schemes that sound too good to be true or have to be kept secret.
- Be cautious about door-to-door tradespeople recommending house repairs. Seek advice from someone you know or three quotes from recommended tradespersons before you commit yourself. If it sounds too good to be true – it usually is!
- Be wary of 'good deals' on home repairs and improvement jobs, and 'get rich quick' schemes which involve giving someone money before the scheme is revealed or completed.
- Don't be pressured into accepting any deals on the spot and do not sign anything. Ask for some time to think about the deal and you will contact them with your decision.
- Pyramid selling schemes are illegal in Queensland. Some schemes try to promote themselves to consumers as multi-level marketing operations with promises of easy money. It is only the people at the top of the pyramid who benefit, not the ordinary consumer who invests further down the line.
- You should investigate any moneymaking venture very carefully before deciding whether to invest. If you are joining a multi-level selling scheme, seek legal advice first. If it is pyramid selling, leave well alone.
- If you're worried about a possible fraud, contact the police.

# Personal papers and finance

## Banking

- Keep your savings in a financial institution. Don't keep large amounts of money at home, in your handbag or wallet.
- At the bank, put money into your purse or wallet before moving away from the tellers.
- There are many ways to bank now. Electronic banking is a safe and secure way to transfer money.
- Consider paying your bills by B-Pay, direct debit or paying over the phone with a credit card.



## Handbags and Wallets

- Handbags can be a target for thieves and should be held securely and kept closed. It is not wise to put a handbag down on a counter or on the floor in a public place. Keep it in front or beside you with your hand looped around the handle or strap. Be careful in the street, as it is easy for someone to snatch your bag before you are really aware of what has happened.

## Cash and Credit Cards

- Never make a display of your cash or credit cards.
- If you are drawing money from an automatic teller machine make sure no one can see you key in your PIN number. Be careful because someone can come up behind you while you are preoccupied at the machine.

- If your credit cards are stolen inform the credit card company immediately so transactions can be stopped. Keep this phone number handy and keep a record of card numbers so you can provide them when reporting a loss to your bank.
- Never carry your personal identification number (PIN) with your cash or credit cards. If you can't memorise your PIN number write it down somewhere in a code resembling a phone number.
- Cash is a favourite target for thieves. Always try to avoid carrying large amounts with you, whether at home or when travelling.
- If you go overseas travellers cheques are one of the best ways to carry money. ATMs are widely available.

## Passports and Personal Papers

- Keep these in a safe place at home. A floor or wall safe is best, although a locked filing cabinet is also suitable. Only tell a trusted friend or relative where these papers are kept.
- Keep a separate list of your possessions on a valuable property record such as the one at the end of this booklet.



## Legal Matters

- Before you sign any legal documents, read them carefully and have them checked by a trusted family member, solicitor or legal aid officer.
- Keep all legal documents such as your will, insurance policies and share certificates together in a safe place at home, or preferably at your solicitor's office or bank.
- Refuse to sign any paper if you feel you are being pressured into signing before you have had time to think about it.
- Check with a friend, solicitor or police if you are in doubt.

## Make a Will

- Making a will gives many peace-of-mind. These can be made in several ways, including through a solicitor, Public Trustee, bank or a do-it-yourself kit from a newsagency.
- Store it in a safe place.

# Electrical safety

Electricity is so much part of everyday life it is easy to take it for granted. Yet each year many people die and hundreds are hospitalised with serious injuries from electricity.

The biggest single number of deaths occur from flexible leads and lead accessories.

That is why special care is needed when dealing with electricity and electrical appliances.

## Always switch off the power source and call a licensed electrician immediately if:

- a fuse blows repeatedly somewhere in the wiring system;
- an appliance or fitting produces an electrical shock;
- sparking, spluttering or overheating is occurring at the end of a flexible cord or power point.

**Always use a qualified electrician.**

## Safety hints

- Avoid 'piggy-backing' double adaptors;
- Have appliances checked regularly and always switch off at the wall;
- Remove the wall plug before cleaning;
- Keep portable heaters or other electrical appliances out of the reach of children;
- Ensure you have dry hands before touching electrical switches or appliances;
- Make sure appliances and tools comply with regulations.



# First aid kit

**Keep your first aid kit in a clean, dry, airtight container. Include the following items recommended by the Australian Standards Association.**

- Sterilised cotton gauze swabs to clean wounds;
- Sterile gauze and cotton wool pad to dress wounds;
- Assorted sterile adhesive dressing strips;
- Stretch bandage;
- Calico triangular bandage;
- Rust-resistant scissors;
- Safety pins or clips;
- Rust resistant tweezers;
- Isopropyl alcohol swabs;
- Sting neutraliser;
- Sterile eye irrigation;
- Cold pack or ice pack (keep in freezer);
- Pain reliever (eg paracetamol or aspirin);
- Syrup of Ipecac;
- Antiseptic wash, paint or cream.



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# Property and valuable items register

All valuable property should be marked with a unique identification number. Preferred options are your initials, date of birth and the initial of your State; or your driver's licence number, preceded by the initial of your State. After items have been marked, record these important details and keep this record in a safe place.

**The following pages contain charts you may wish to use as a guide for your own valuable property record.**

RECORD YOUR IDENTIFICATION NUMBER HERE



