

SAFETY TIPS

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America

**A SAFE  
WORKPLACE IS  
EVERYBODY'S  
BUSINESS**



National Crime Prevention Council

**medeco**  
HIGH SECURITY LOCKS



MISSION

STATEMENT

*To enable people to create safer and more caring communities by addressing the causes of crime and violence and reducing the opportunities for crime to occur.*

The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) is a private, nonprofit tax-exempt [501(c)(3)] organization whose primary mission is to enable people to create safer and more caring communities by addressing the causes of crime and violence and reducing the opportunities for crime to occur. NCPC publishes books, kits of camera-ready program materials, posters, and informational and policy reports on a variety of crime prevention and community-building subjects. NCPC offers training, technical assistance, and a national focus for crime prevention: it acts as secretariat for the Crime Prevention Coalition of America, more than 4,000 national, federal, local, and state organizations committed to preventing crime. It hosts a number of Web sites that offer prevention tips to individuals, describe prevention practices for community building, and help anchor prevention policy into laws and budgets. It also operates demonstration programs in schools, neighborhoods, and entire jurisdictions and takes a major leadership role in youth crime prevention and youth service; it also administers the Center for Faith and Service. NCPC manages the McGruff "Take A Bite Out Of Crime" public service advertising campaign. NCPC is funded through a variety of government agencies, corporate and private foundations, and donations from private individuals.



This publication was made possible through a generous grant from Medeco. Medeco locks are made with pride in the U.S.A. For more than 30 years, Medeco has led the security industry in innovation and quality, guarding lives and assets at facilities worldwide, including U.S. government and military installations, both here and abroad, schools and universities, hospitals and banks, vending machines and parking meters, homes and offices, and much more.

Founded in 1968, Medeco is a market leader in locks and locking systems for security, safety, and control. The company's customer base includes wholesale and retail security providers, original equipment manufacturers, and institutional and industrial end-users.

Medeco is an ASSA ABLOY Group company. The ASSA ABLOY Group is the world's leading manufacturer and supplier of locking solutions, dedicated to satisfying end-user needs for security, safety and convenience.

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**W**hether you are at home or at work, crime prevention is everybody's business. When you go to work, don't leave your crime prevention sense at home. Almost any crime that can happen at home or in your neighborhood can happen in the workplace.

As you read through the checklists, make sure the person responsible for your building, be it the owner, manager, or landlord, has taken care to create safe workplace. If not, volunteer to lead a group to work with the management to make sure that your work environment is safe.

## Preventing Office Crime

- Keep your purse, wallet, keys, or other valuable items with you at all times or locked in a drawer or closet.
- Check the identity of any strangers who are in your office—ask whom they are visiting and if you can help them find that person. Don't forget to request identification from service or utility workers as well. If this makes you uncomfortable, inform security or management about your suspicions.
- Do not allow visitors to be alone in your office space. Be sure to provide an escort at all times.
- Be discreet. Don't advertise your social life or vacation plans and those of your co-workers to people visiting or calling your place of work.

### Check the Locks and Doors

Good locks are the first line of defense. Volunteer to lead a team of employees to work with management to ensure the physical security of your workplace.

- Check for high security locks, such as Medeco<sup>®</sup>, or electronic access control units on all doors—closets that have private information or hazardous materials, outside doors, basements, are a few to consider.
- Verify that any electronic access control unit in use has secure key bypass utilizing patented control of duplication of keys. Any access control unit is only as good as its mechanical override devices.
- Make sure all doors are solid. Look for sheet steel on both sides of back and basement doors.
- Make sure doorframes and hinges are strong enough that they cannot be pried open.
- Lock steel bars or door barriers with high security padlocks that have a hardened steel body

and shackle to resist drills, hammers, blow-torches, and bolt cutters.

- Be certain all windows are secure.
- If doors only have a locking knob or lever, install or have installed, a deadbolt for additional security.
- Have management change locks before you move into a new office unless they can account for all keys and provide assurance that keys have not been made without their knowledge.
- Don't assume someone else has reported a door, window, or lock that is broken or not working properly. Report these problems immediately.

## **Check the Lights**

Your workplace should be protected with proper lighting.

- Install motion sensitive as well as constant outside lights.
- Illuminate dark places around the building by trimming shrubs, adding lighting, etc.
- Leave some interior lights on even when the business is closed.

## **Check the Common Trouble Spots**

- Reception area—Is the receptionist equipped with a panic button for emergencies, a camera with a monitor at another employee's desk, and a high security lock on the front door that can be controlled?
- Stairwells and out-of-the-way corridors—Don't use the stairs alone. Talk to the building manager about improving poorly lighted corridors and stairways.
- Elevators—Don't get into elevators with people who look out of place or behave in a strange or threatening manner. If you find yourself in an elevator with someone who makes you nervous, get off as soon as possible.

- Restrooms—Make sure restrooms are locked with high security locks and only employees have keys. Be extra cautious when using restrooms that are isolated or poorly lighted.
- Mailrooms—Is the mailroom accessible only to authorized personnel? Do all employees know what the signs of suspicious mail include? (Refer to the USPS document *Best Practices for Mail Center Security* for additional information.)
- After hours—Don't work late alone. Let someone know where you are and how long you intend on staying. Create a buddy system for walking to parking lots or public transportation or ask security to escort you. Never open the door to a stranger after hours.
- Parking lots or garages—Choose a well-lighted, well-guarded parking garage. If your building has its own garage, work with your facility manager if you do not feel safe. Always lock your car and roll the windows up all the way. If you notice any strangers hanging around the parking lot, notify security or the police. When you approach the car, have the key ready. Check the floor and front and back seats before getting in. Lock your car as soon as you get in—before you buckle your seat belt. Write down the license number of any vehicle involved in a possible crime.

## **Keeping Insider Information Inside**

Remember that not only the physical aspect of your workplace is vulnerable to crime but also some of the company's most valuable property—its information. From telephone directories and training materials, to budgets and product research, to employee and customer profiles, more and more people see stealing this information as easy way to take advantage of businesses.

When insider information leaks outside, everybody loses. Profits drop, reputations are damaged, employees lose jobs, and morale plummets.

- Think before talking about the details of your job in public places, such as restaurants, airplanes, classrooms, and parties.
- Know who is on the other end of the line—telephone, email, fax—before giving out any sensitive information.
- Keep your work area clear. When you'll be gone for a few hours and at the end of the day, put your papers in a locked drawer or file cabinet.
- Think about what's on a piece of paper before you toss it in the trash. If it's sensitive information, tear it up or use a paper shredder.
- Protect identification badges, office keys, and codes as you would your own credit cards. Immediately report them missing if one is lost.
- Have a formal document destruction policy that defines when documents should be destroyed and how. Be wary of offsite destruction services for the most sensitive documents

## **Keeping Information Inside Your Computer**

Technology creates complicated security issues. Being able to communicate with people in an instant also means that your computer and the information stored there can be vulnerable to crime. If your company uses an outside Internet provider, it is important that you familiarize yourself with that company's privacy policy and email service. Understand the type of protection they offer and what, if any, backup policies they have. Remember the following:

- Do not share sensitive information with unknown individuals in chat-rooms or other Internet discussion forums.
- Verify that you have an encrypted connection when providing credit card or other financial information online.
- Use a password that cannot be easily guessed—mix up letters and numbers in a random fashion. Change your password regularly.

- Backup all systems regularly. Keep backup information in a fire safe or better yet off the premises.
- Use virus protection software.
- Use a firewall or gatekeeper between your computer and the Internet.
- Disconnect computers from the Internet when they are not in use.
- Regularly download security patches from your software vendors.
- Don't send confidential, financial, or personal information on your email system.

## **Keeping Violence Out of the Workplace**

Violence in the workplace takes many forms, from raised voices and profanity or sexual harassment to threats, coercion, or intimidation to robbery or homicide. Many of us think that workplace violence consists solely of a disgruntled employee committing homicide. More commonly, it is a robbery gone awry. With proper planning, an employer can prepare the workplace for incidents of violence. To assess a workplace's vulnerability to violence, ask yourself these questions.

### IS YOUR OFFICE SECURE?

- Do you have easy-to-use phone systems with emergency buttons, sign-in policies for visitors, panic buttons, safe rooms, security guards, office access controls, good lighting, safety training?
- Does your employer take care in hiring and firing?
  - Before hiring, are employment gaps, history, references, and criminal and educational records thoroughly examined?
  - Are termination procedures defined clearly with attention to advance notice, severance pay, and placement services?
- Could you recognize potentially violent employees? Signs of stress that could erupt into violence include



- depression
  - frequent absences
  - talking in a louder-than-normal voice
  - being startled easily
  - increased irritability
  - impatience
  - concentration and memory problems.
- Are you encouraged to report unusual or worrisome behavior?
  - Is there a clear, written policy that spells out procedures in cases of violence and sanctions for violators?
  - Do you know to whom you should report unusual behaviors?
  - Do you work in a supportive, harmonious environment? Is there a culture of mutual respect?
  - Does your employer provide an employee assistance program?

Once you have assessed your workplaces vulnerability to violence you should take steps to implement a workplace violence prevention program, if one is not already in place. This comprehensive program is supported by all levels of employees and addresses physical security, hiring and firing practices, and employee vulnerabilities. Work with upper management to encourage them to evaluate your workplace and help start a workplace violence prevention program where you work.

## Keeping Safe on Business Travel

Whether you take to the road for business or pleasure, it is critical that you take your crime prevention instincts with you. Being aware of the threat of crime—and what you can do to prevent it—will go a long way toward making your trip safe and successful.

### At the Airport

- Stay alert and watch your bags and computer carefully at all times. Don't let anyone but uniformed airline personnel handle or watch your bags.
- Always carry proper identification such as a state issued driver's license or passport.
- Keep your airline ticket and identification close to you at all times.
- Do not bring anything on board for another person unknown to you or not traveling with you, however innocent or small the package or item may appear.
- Report any unattended items or suspicious activity in the airport or aircraft to the nearest airport or airline official.
- Carry your purse close to your body or your wallet in an inside front pocket. Better yet, use a money pouch under your clothes.
- Watch out for staged mishaps, like someone bumping into you or spilling a drink. Often it's a ploy to divert your attention from your valuables.
- Keep a separate record of the contents of checked luggage in case your luggage is lost or tampered with. And keep anything of value in a carry-on that stays with you.

### On the Road

- Become familiar with your travel route before you start your trip. Get a map and study it before you leave.
- Make sure your rental car is in good operating condition. Learn how to operate all windows,

door locks, and lights, as well as other equipment, before you leave the rental lot.

- Keep maps and rental agreement concealed, not lying on the seat or the dashboard.
- Keep car doors locked while you are driving. Store luggage in the trunk.
- Park in well-lighted areas only, close to building entrances and walkways. Remember to lock the car when you leave and store all valuables out of sight.
- Have car keys ready when approaching your car. Check the back seat and floor before you get in.
- If you are bumped by another car, think before you get out. If you are in doubt or uncomfortable, signal the other driver to follow you to a nearby police station or a busy, well-lighted area where it's safe to get out. If you have a cellular phone, call someone for assistance.

## **At the Hotel**

- Never leave luggage unattended in public areas.
- Keep all hotel doors and window locked.
- Insist that hotel personnel write down your room number at check-in rather than stating out loud the number of your room.
- Learn the locations of fire exits, elevators, and public phones, in case of an emergency.
- Make sure your room has an indoor viewer (peephole) and dead bolt lock.
- Keep valuables—laptops, cellular phones, jewelry, cash, etc.—in the hotel safe when you're not using them.
- Before taking a cab, ask the staff about directions and estimated costs to familiarize yourself with the area and avoid being taken advantage of by someone preying on a traveller.
- Always verify who's at your hotel room door. Don't open the door to someone you don't know. If an unexpected visitor claims to be a hotel employee, call the front desk to confirm.
- Don't announce room numbers in public. Keep track of your room keys.

### **Make it Your Business To Be Prepared for an Emergency\***

Emergencies can happen at any time—fire, water main break, civil disturbance, even a communications failure. When these unplanned events happen, it is critical that you and your co-workers know what to do. In an emergency, all employees should know where they need to go and what they need to do. Being prepared for an emergency can limit injuries and damages and help people return to a normal business day.

- Learn about your company's emergency plans. Ensure that a plan is developed if one is not in place. A good plan is outlined later in this section.
- Practice your company's emergency plans. Evacuation plans need to be legible and posted prominently on each floor.
- Know the exit routes and evacuation plans in your building. Know at least two exit routes from each room, if possible. Be able to escape in the dark by knowing how many desks or cubicles are between your workstation and two of the nearest exits.
- Have a designated post-evacuation meeting location where appropriate personnel can take a headcount and identify missing workers. Every employee should be aware of this location.
- Make special emergency plans for co-workers who are disabled, non-English-speaking, or may require assistance during an emergency.
- Know the location of fire extinguishers and medical kits.

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\* Much of this information has been taken from *United for a Stronger America: Citizens' Preparedness Guide*, a publication by the National Crime Prevention Council. If you would like to receive a free copy of this booklet, please call 800-627-2911.

- Make a list of important numbers—these can include babysitters, critical business contacts, spouses, etc. Keep a printed list at your desk and near other telephones. Do not rely on electronic lists, direct-dial phone numbers, or computer organizers that may not work in an emergency.
- Gather personal emergency supplies in an unlocked desk drawer or other easy to reach space, including a flashlight, walking shoes, a water bottle, and nonperishable food—packaged so that it can be easily opened.
- Report damaged or malfunctioning safety systems to appropriate personnel for repair and maintenance.
- Never lock fire exits or block doorways or stairways. Keep fire doors closed to slow the spread of smoke and fire.
- Put together an office phone tree. In the event of an emergency during non-business hours, your office may need to get information to employees quickly. Develop a list of everyone's home phone numbers with instructions for who will call whom. Make sure everyone keeps a printed copy at his or her home.
- Make plans to help each other. Determine how you will help each other in the event that public transportation is shut down or thoroughfares are impassable. Offer to temporarily house, transport, or feed your co-workers in case of emergency.

## **Emergencies in Multi-floor Buildings**

- Leave the area quickly following your worksite's evacuation plan. In the event of fire, crawl under the smoke to breathe cleaner air. Feel doors for heat before opening them. Never use an elevator when evacuating a burning building. Always go directly to the nearest fire- and smoke-free stairwell.
- If you are trapped in the building, stay calm and take steps to protect yourself. If possible, go to a room with an outside window and telephone for help.

- Open a window if possible, but be ready to shut it if smoke rushes in. Stuff clothing, towels, coats, or newspapers around the cracks in doors to prevent smoke from entering your shelter.

## **Developing an Emergency Response Plan**

A good emergency response plan helps companies not only protect its employees but its community, and the environment. Emergency response plans are a dynamic measure that must include everyone in the workplace. Get together with other employees and use these tips as a guide to help set up an emergency response plan. Once you have a plan in place, it is critical that the plan is practiced with all employees—including evacuation plans.

- Teach all employees exits to use during an emergency.
- Know the location of and how to use all portable fire extinguishers throughout the building.
- Cover all types of emergencies in the plan, including fire, medical, suspicious persons or devices, accidents, hazardous materials, robberies, theft, and natural disasters.
- Ask your employer to provide annual first aid and CPR training for all employees. Courses are generally available through the local Red Cross chapters or hospitals.

As you create an emergency plan think about the following.

- Consider the worst-case scenario. What happens if you cannot exit the building by the staircase or certain outdoor exits? Are there other alternatives?
- Make special emergency plans for co-workers who are disabled or may require assistance during an emergency.
- What about visitors? How are they identified? Who is responsible for getting them out of the building during an emergency?

- What will happen to the business if the electricity is off for more than 24 hours? What is the back up for payroll and bill paying?
- What should you do with a suspicious piece of mail?

According to the Federal Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry, human error is the single largest cause of workplace emergencies and can result from

- Poor training
- Poor maintenance
- Carelessness
- Misconduct
- Substance Abuse
- Fatigue

To get more information on how you can develop your emergency response plan, contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It works with state and local communities to develop emergency response plans. It also trains citizens and emergency professionals on how to respond if there is a crisis. 800-480-2520; [www.fema.gov/library/bizindex.htm](http://www.fema.gov/library/bizindex.htm).

## When Emergencies Happen

### ALWAYS

- Avoid panic by staying calm, using common sense, and getting help when needed.
- Know what the plan is for different emergencies. Review plans mentally. Think about what it would be like if the electricity was off or it was nighttime.
- Seek out and remember the location of at least two exits you could use in an emergency.
- Evacuate buildings in an orderly and rapid fashion upon the request of authorities, activation of fire alarm, or if a situation appears to be life threatening.
- Know the location of fire extinguishers and medical kits.
- Have a post-evacuation meeting place and know its location.

## NEVER

- Delay in reporting an emergency to the designated person in your office.
- Use elevators during a fire or fire alarm activation.
- Cross police barriers without authorization.
- Jeopardize your life or the lives of others by attempting to save company property.
- Lock fire exits or block doorways, or stairways.

## Safety at Home

### Check the Locks

- Change all locks when moving into a new house or apartment.
- Make sure every outside door has a sturdy, well-installed deadbolt lock. Keys in the knob locks are not enough.
- Only give keys to a few trusted people and keep a list of who you've given them to.
- Do not leave spare keys in obvious places like under flowerpots or welcome mats. Instead leave an extra key with a neighbor you trust.
- Do not have identifying tags on your key ring that provide thieves with personal information such as your name and address.
- Consider investing in locks with keys that cannot be easily duplicated such as Medeco® High Security Locks so you are sure copies of keys are not made without your knowledge.
- Install a double cylinder lock on doors located near windows to prevent thieves from breaking the window and turning the latch. Be sure to check your local codes to be sure they allow double cylinder locks
- Consider using a “childsafes” deadbolt, or “captive double cylinder,” which has a removable thumb turn key that provides an easy exit for your family in emergencies and, when the



thumb turn key is removed, provides additional burglary protection when you are away from home.

- Think about investing in an alarm system. Remember that alarm systems do not offer any protection (simply notification or noise) and should be considered only after strong doors and locks are in place.

## **Check the Doors and Windows**

- Choose solid wood, fiberglass, or metal doors for outside doors.
- Install doors with hinges on the inside of the door so hinges cannot be easily removed.
- Be sure that the door frame is solid and cannot be spread without considerable effort.
- Install weather stripping around doors if they do not fit tightly in the frame.
- Install a peephole or wide-angle viewer in all entry doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door. Door chains break easily and don't keep out intruders.
- Use vertical bolts on sliding glass doors so burglars cannot gain entry by lifting them off the track. Reinforce security by placing a metal or solid wood rod, like the end of a broomstick, on the inside track.
- Watch the garage door close completely when you come and go so that someone cannot sneak under as it closes.
- Make sure back doors and the doors that connect your garage to your home are solid and secured with high security deadbolt locks.
- Use locks on windows. Don't forget garage windows.
- Lock your pet door when you are away.

## **Check the Outside of Your House**

- Install outside lights and keep them on at night. Change to burned out bulbs.
- Install motion sensitive lights; they will not only make you feel safer when approaching your

home after dark but also will deter people who don't want to be seen.

- Keep your yard clean. Prune back shrubbery so it doesn't hide doors or windows. Cut back tree limbs that a thief could use to climb to an upper level window. Consider planting low thorny bushes below windows.
- Display your house number clearly so police and other emergency vehicles can find your home quickly.
- Make sure that all personal belongings such as sports equipment and grills are safely stored inside your house, garage, or shed when not in use.
- If you travel, create the illusion that you're at home by using timers that turn lights on and off in different areas of your house throughout the evening. Stop the mail from being delivered or have a neighbor pick it and newspapers up while you travel.

## **Get Involved**

- Join Neighborhood Watch in your community, or find out from local authorities how to start one in your neighborhood. Remember, there's safety in numbers. A united community is a safer community. For more information, contact NCPC or your local crime prevention officer.
- Work with neighbors and schools to create safe places for children to go in the event of an emergency. These places may include the school, fire or police department, designated safe houses, or places of worship.
- Compile an inventory of the skills and supplies that people in the neighborhood have that would be of use in an emergency. Include such things as who is a doctor or nurse, who has a generator, who has camping equipment, who is trained in first aid or CPR.

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