

## **ELDER ABUSE**

Many senior citizens are so afraid of crime that they shut themselves up in their homes and rarely go out. Or, if they do find themselves the victim of a crime they rarely have the resources available to them for support.

If you believe you have been abused or if you have been the victim of a crime reported through the Pocatello Police Department, we would like to offer you assistance through our victim services program.

Understanding your rights and what happens next can be the critical element that can alleviate undo frustration, stress and added anxiety. Call 208-234-6515 for more information.

## **AGING RESOURCE GUIDE**

The Aging Resource Guide provides a contact directory of services for the elderly.

## **CRIME PREVENTION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS**

The senior citizen population is the fastest growing population in the country. Surveys show that persons over age 65 are victims of crime far less frequently than younger people. But many senior citizens are so afraid of crime that they shut themselves up in their homes and rarely go out. Isolating ourselves behind locked doors only makes it easier for criminals to work in the neighborhood. You can reduce opportunities for criminals to strike by being alert and careful, and by following these tips.

### *When You Are Out*

- Don't carry a purse if you can avoid it. If you must, hold it close to your body—don't let it dangle.
- Never carry a wallet in your back pocket. Put it in an inside jacket pocket or front pocket instead.
- Try not to wait alone at deserted bus stops. If you can, walk to the next stop where others may be waiting also.
- When using the bus or other public transportation, sit near the driver if possible.
- Don't overburden yourself with packages and groceries that obstruct your view and make it difficult to react.
- Always have your car or house key in hand as you approach your vehicle or home.

### *When You Are at Home*

- Keep your doors locked at all times, even when you're in the house. Use deadbolt locks on exterior doors.
- If you live alone, don't advertise it. Use only your first initial in phone books, directories, and apartment lobbies.
- Get to know your neighbors and keep their phone numbers in case of emergency.
- Work out a "buddy" system with a friend to check on each other daily. Many communities have programs where police call every day to check if residents need assistance.
- If you arrive home and suspect a stranger is inside, do not go inside. Leave quietly and call the police—your safety should always come first.

### *Protect Your Money*

- If you receive checks in the mail regularly, arrange instead for them to be deposited directly in your bank account. The Social Security Administration and most pension funds offer this service.
- Avoid carrying large sums of money. If you must, have a friend accompany you.
- Don't sign a check or contract until you are sure you know the details and it is for a legitimate reason. Don't be afraid to delay a signing or to say 'no!'
- Don't keep large sums of money in your home.

### *Don't Be Conned*

If a deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is! Watch for these schemes:

- The Pigeon Drop—The swindlers claim they have found a large sum of money and offer to share it with you. They ask you to put up some "good faith" money before you get in on the deal. That is the last you will see of your money. You are left with nothing but phony instructions on how to collect your share of the "found" cash.
- The Bank Examiner—A professional-looking person tells you he is a bank official and needs your help in the investigation of a dishonest teller. He asks you to withdraw cash from your savings account and give the money to him so he can check the serial numbers. You do what he asks, and you never see him or your money again.
- Home Repairs—Never accept an unsolicited "free" inspection of your furnace, roof, air conditioner, or anything else in your home. And never leave inspectors alone when they are in your home. Don't give them an opportunity to tamper with your home or appliances.
- Buying at the Door—Watch for gimmicks or so-called "free" gift offers. When sales people call, wait, don't buy today. If it's legitimate, they'll come back tomorrow. In the meantime, check out the company with your local Consumer Affairs Office or Better Business Bureau.

### *What to Do If You Are a Victim*

- Don't attempt to resist. You might get injured. Sit down, even on the sidewalk, so you won't get knocked down. Scream and make noise.
- Never pursue a criminal. Call the police immediately.
- If you have been swindled or suspect fraud, contact your local Police Department. Otherwise, crooks will continue to con innocent citizens such as yourself.
- Make an effort to get an accurate description of a criminal-remember things such as age, race, complexion, body build, clothing, height and weight, hair, eyes, or unusual features.
- Contact your local victim assistance agency to help you deal with the trauma that all crime victims experience. Many agencies have specialized programs for senior citizens.