

City of Mercer Island

Do It Yourself “Crime Prevention”



Identity Theft Information,
Quick Reference Numbers,
Personal Safety,
Burglary Prevention,
Internet Safety,
and more.....

With the assistance of the Washington State Crime Prevention Association and Pemco Insurance Company, the following booklet was made possible.

Do It Yourself Crime Prevention: Your Crime Prevention Handbook

We lose more than belongings to the criminals who violate our homes and communities, we lose our freedom – the freedom to feel safe walking city streets after dark, going to a park alone, or letting our children walk home from school. We even lose the ability to feel secure in our own homes. And our law enforcement agencies, no matter how effective, can't protect us completely.

We can't always get back what crime takes away. But we can take back our freedom to feel safe. This “Do It Yourself” handbook gives us the tools we need to ensure greater security for ourselves and our families. Do your part: Go over the checklists on burglary prevention, personal safety, and child safety, and make the recommended changes.

You can help prevent crime in other ways, as well. Start with your own kids, by supporting local schools and getting involved in activities. Teach your children to say no to drugs, and help them foster skills to lead productive, fulfilling lives.

In the community, you can also participate in programs and organizations such as Boy and Girl Scouts of America, Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Sisters, and Junior Achievement. Take part in anti-drug campaigns and set up a block watch in your neighbor hood.

By working together, we can empower ourselves to make our streets safe for everyone.

CONTENTS

HOME SECURITY

Physical Security	4
Alarms	7
Block Watch	8
Burglary Prevention List	10

PERSONAL SAFETY

Personal Safety Checklist	12
In The Home	12
Telephone Answering/Internet Use	13
On The Go	13
In Your Car	14
Child Safety	15
Child Safety Checklist	16
Domestic/Dating Violence Prevention	17

PERSONAL PROPERTY PROTECTION

Auto Theft Prevention	18
Identity Theft	18

RESOURCE PAGE	24
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HOME SECURITY:

Burglary is a crime that threatens all homes, but especially those which provide criminals with the “opportunity” to intrude, steal and escape undetected. There are three primary strategies you can employ to minimize the burglar's opportunity:

1. Physical Security
2. Alarms
3. Block Watch

Physical Security

Interior Lighting:

When you are away from home, keep some interior lights on. This creates the appearance that someone is home. Use a timer to turn the lights off and on at normal hours. A radio playing adds to the illusion that the home is occupied.

Exterior Doors:

Install solid-core wood doors with rugged frames that cannot be spread apart with a pry bar. A single cylinder deadbolt with a one inch throw, in addition to the key-in-the-knob lock, is essential. Use a wide angle viewer to observe visitors.

Garage Doors:

Always keep them closed and locked. A burglar in your garage has access to tools and ladders and can often work on your home undetected.

Windows:

Windows should have auxiliary locking devices. Keep your windows closed and locked when you are away. Screens and storm windows should be securely fastened to the structure.

Landscaping:

Shrubs that provide you with privacy also give a burglar a place to hide. Prune bushes down to two feet or trim trees up at least four feet.

Exterior Lighting:

A 40 watt light at each entrance, including the garage, will provide you with both safety and security and will not be wasting our nation's energy when used in conjunction with a timer or sensor. Time, noise and light are a burglar's worst enemy. With a little effort, you can set up deterrents against possible danger, injury to people or damage to property.

Sliding Doors and Windows:

Exterior sliding doors and windows have a number of security problems in common. Many glass doors and sliding windows have flimsy locks that are easily pried or even juggled open.

1. If the door or window slides on an inside track, you may use a metal rod or cut down a length of wooden dowel to fit snugly along the bottom track to prevent the door from being forced open.
2. A "Charlie Bar" is a more permanent and visible means of preventing lateral movement. Some models are designed to fit an outside sliding door panel.
3. Some doors and windows can be secured with a pin. Inspect your door or window in the fully-closed position. If the frame permits drilling, drill a hole through the outside frame and halfway through the sliding one. Slide into place a pin or sturdy nail that fits the hole snugly to prevent the door or window from being forced up or back. Be careful when drilling through the frame that you don't damage the thermal seal or the glass. Fire safety requires that pin locks be installed at the bottom of a window, not at the top. This is to avoid super-heated air near the ceiling of a home engulfed in flames.

Fire Caution:

You can deny a burglar quick, silent entry while leaving quick fire exits for your family. It is best to first call the Fire Department for advice on fire escape plans and then make security improvements with that escape plan in mind. Rehearse the escape plan, especially with children.

Exterior Lights:

Lighting is considered one of the best deterrents to burglary. High pressure sodium or mercury vapor lights attached to timers are very effective tools that prevent trouble. Passive infrared sensors that turn lights on when movement is detected are available. They are excellent for enclosed backyards, sidewalks or driveways. They can be cumbersome when the area has a lot of foot traffic or animals.

Interior Lights:

During the hours of darkness, and prior to a normal bedtime hour, a home should have lights on in various rooms. A home not showing any interior lights will give the appearance of being unoccupied and could attract the unwanted attention of a burglar. Similarly, a home owner who leaves lights on when absent for a weekend or longer will attract attention to the home during the night because all other homes in the area are in darkness.

A light timer installed in a living room or family room and another in a bedroom, each set to come on and to go off at different times, will give your home the appearance of being occupied during the hours of darkness even when it is not. Timers can also be used to turn a radio on and off.

Through Door Viewers:

In order to avoid opening your door without knowing who is there, a viewing device is recommended. The best solution is to install a through-door viewer, a miniature telescope with a wide angle (220 degree) lens to let you see someone standing to one side of the door. These are relatively inexpensive and will adjust to varying door thickness.

Ladders:

Step and/or extension ladders should not be left outside the house unless secured to an anchor point with a chin and padlock. Similarly, ladders left unsecured in an open garage will afford easy access to a burglar.

Garages:

Keep the garage door locked at all times. There is no need to advertise your absence by showing the public your empty garage. Your garage also probably contains valuable items such as bicycles, tools and garden equipment. The burglar may drive right into your garage, close the door and load up the goods, or break into your house from the garage by using your tools to force entry.

The entrance door between a garage and the home should be a solid-core wooden or metal door with a single cylinder deadbolt. As most garage doors contain less than satisfactory locking devices, you may wish to have a better grade installed. In addition, if you have an overhead garage door, you can increase security by drilling a hole in one of the tracks or door or both and placing a hook or other device in the hole to stop the door from being opened. Double, side-hinged garage doors can be made more secure by the installation of cane bolts. You may wish to consider installing an automatic garage door opener. This device allows you to stay in the safety of your vehicle until the garage door opens instead of having to get out of your vehicle to open it. It is best to purchase a dual frequency remote garage door opener and a worm drill or locking chain mechanism.

A positive point in favor of automatic garage door openers is that the arms and linkage on the door act as a barrier to forced entry. On the negative side, the door may open from a stray signal. Find out whether the unit you are considering purchasing will filter unwanted signals. This equipment can be disconnected from the power source if the house is not occupied for a period of time.

Alarms

Locking doors & windows are the first important steps in improving the security of your home. Entry is made difficult and often not much more is required to deter a burglar. For additional protection, an electronic alarm system would provide excellent back-up to these security devices. Homes that are left unoccupied for long periods of time or those situated in a location that prevents easy observation by neighbors are considered more vulnerable. An alarm system can provide valuable security and greater peace of mind for these homeowners.

No other security system is as efficient (well, maybe a large dog) and practical for alerting neighbors and/or police that a break-in has occurred. The intruder is scared off for fear of being apprehended. Alarm systems are offered in a variety of forms and the average homeowner may be somewhat confused when first exploring the alarm market. Some alarms are simple, self-contained units that are inexpensive and designed to suit a single door or window. These types of alarms alert someone who is home.

Other alarms take the form of more elaborate systems that can either be wired to a bell or horn. This sounds the alarm locally (in or immediately outside the house) or it can alert a central monitoring station. When selecting an alarm system, choose at least three reputable companies to get bids from and the following questions may assist you in selecting the company that is right for you.

Questions to Ask an Alarm Company Salesperson:

1. Is the firm established, with a history of performance and service?
2. Does the alarm company have insurance to cover the cost of any damage to your property caused by the company during installation of the system?
3. Are the company and installers properly licensed and bonded? Is anything subcontracted (installation, service or monitoring)?
4. Is the alarm company a member of the Washington Burglary and Fire Alarm Association (800-248-9272)?
5. Is the system equipped with a battery back-up? Is the battery rechargeable?
6. Does the company offer a written guarantee? What is guaranteed and for how long? Are parts and labor covered?

Responses to false alarms draw from limited resources and can pose risks to the community when emergency vehicles are responding; therefore, the City of Mercer Island allows for one false alarm during a 6 month period - false alarms thereafter are fined. If you have questions regarding false alarms, call 206-236-3518.

Block Watch:

You and your neighbors can prevent crime within your community and make it a safer, more secure place to live. Even though today's lifestyles sometimes make it difficult to be as neighborly as we'd like, being a good neighbor is one of the best ways to prevent crime. Neighbors can be your best protection when they band together to look out for each other's interests.

What is Block Watch?

Block Watch is simply a program of neighbors watching other neighbors' property. At all times when you are at home, be alert to what's going on in your neighborhood. A police officer patrolling your community may not recognize a stranger in your yard, but your neighbors would.

How Does It Work?

The program works through cooperation - Neighbors Watching out for Neighbors. Neighbors know who you are, and what type of car you own. They may be the first to notice a burglar at your window or door. Each neighbor can effectively watch those homes to each side, the front and back of his own home. The Block Watch program is not intended to form citizen crime watch patrols or vigilante groups. You are only asked to report the situation to the police and let them handle it. It is not a good idea to confront any suspicious person(s) or attempt arrest yourself; your safety could be in jeopardy.

Activities to Watch for:

- A scream from anywhere.
- Anyone removing valuables from homes or vehicles.
- Sound of broken windows or shattered wood.
- Persons going door to door.
- Strange vehicles parked at your neighbor's house.
- Vehicle passing by numerous times, suspiciously parked or constantly traveling back alleys.
- Anyone being forced into a car.
- Beam from flashlight or light in neighbor's home.
- Persons loitering around neighborhood.

If you see something suspicious, write down the description of any suspicious persons, get the make, model, color, and license numbers of strange vehicles. Call the police and other members of your block Watch group immediately. Don't assume someone else has called. Call the Police immediately.

How to Report a Crime:

Law enforcement needs your help reporting crimes. Be alert wherever you are and learn to recognize crime. When you see or hear something that might indicate a criminal act is being committed, don't hesitate to call the police.

When you are reporting a crime, stay calm and state the problem. Give the address where the emergency is occurring. Remember to give the full address and the nearest cross street.

It is important to be able to describe the offender to police after the offense has occurred. Police need to know the suspect's race, sex, age, height, weight, build, complexion, hair color, eye color, clothing and miscellaneous identifying marks such as tattoos, scars, etc.

Let the police dispatcher control the conversation. Answer all questions to ensure the best response. If you wish to remain anonymous, give your name to the operator, and then request anonymity.

What Else Can You Do?

Exchange work and vacation schedules with neighbors you trust so you can keep an eye on each other's homes. If you know that your neighbor is away and you see an obvious invitation to a burglar, correct it. Close the open garage door and remove the accumulation of newspapers from the doorstep. Make the effort to become acquainted with your neighbors.

How to Develop the Program:

To develop a Block Watch program in your neighborhood, contact the Mercer Island Police Department at 206-236-3500. They will assist in developing a community plan. For the program to be totally effective, each resident must take an active role in both security improvement and observation.

Burglary Prevention List:

Outside Perimeter:

- Y N Do you lock your porch and garage?
- Y N Do you lock your doors when away from home for short periods?
- Y N Do you lock the doors out of your view when working in the yard?
- Y N Do you avoid leaving keys hidden near access doors?
- Y N Do you leave notes on the door to indicate your absence?
- Y N Are your windows fitted with locks and do you lock them?
- Y N Are sliding doors and windows secured with a track pin or Charlie Bar?
- Y N Do you keep tools, ladders, etc., in places inaccessible to potential burglars?
- Y N Do you store lawn mowers, snow blowers, gas barbecues, etc., out of sight when not in use?
- Y N Do you light the outside of your home to discourage prowling or loitering?
- Y N When you move to a new residence do you hire a reliable locksmith to re-key all locks?
- Y N Do you change your locks immediately if your keys are lost or stolen?

Inside Security:

- Y N Do you refuse to provide personal information over the phone or internet?
- Y N Do you avoid leaving valuables or large amounts of cash at home?
- Y N Do you leave lights on and a radio playing when out for short periods?
- Y N Do you shred or burn all receipts or documents with personal information on them?

Vacation Security:

- Y N Do you notify a neighbor of your travel plans and give a key with a request for a periodic house check?
- Y N Do you leave window shades in the normal position?
- Y N Do you cancel all deliveries?
- Y N Do you make arrangements for your yard to be kept up and any mail or brochures to be picked up?
- Y N Is your mail box a locking mail box so it is inaccessible to others?
- Y N If you own a second car, do you park it in the driveway?

- Y N Do you use a light timer on interior and exterior lights?
- Y N Do you double check all doors and windows to be sure they are properly secured before leaving?

Apartment Security:

- Y N Do you refer unknown persons seeking entrance to the manager?
- Y N Do you report suspicious activities to the manager or police?
- Y N Do you advise the manager of any travel plans and request apartment checks and mail pick-up?
- Y N Do you store valuable property in your apartment locker?

**IF YOUR ANSWER IS NO TO ANY OF THE ABOVE,
YOU SHOULD IMPROVE YOUR HOME SECURITY**

You may feel additional home security is an unnecessary financial burden, but consider that home security is not renewable. It is one of the few ways you can permanently protect your family, yourself, and your home. It also must be stressed that most homes' security can be vastly improved by just locking doors, windows and keeping valuables out of sight.

PERSONAL SAFETY:

Most crimes are crimes of opportunity. The key to staying safe from assault or robbery is to avoid places or activities that provide a criminal the opportunity to commit a crime against you.

Likewise, the best way to avoid domestic assault is to take steps to limit the attacker's opportunity to get away with the crime.

Probably the least expensive measure you can take to protect yourself against crime is to incorporate certain habits into your daily routine that make you and your family less vulnerable. Adopt a security conscious lifestyle. The best prevention is precaution. A basic rule is to stay alert to your surroundings. Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave! Evaluate the extent to which you lead a security conscious lifestyle by taking the following survey:

The Personal Safety Checklist:

In the Home:

- Y N Do you keep doors and windows locked at all times?
- Y N Do out have a peephole so that you can see who is outside without having to open the door?
- Y N Do you always verify a person's identification before opening your door?
- Y N If a stranger asks to use your phone, do you refuse to let them into your home and offer to make the call yourself?
- Y N Do you use your first initials only in telephone directories, on mailboxes, etc.?
- Y N Do you refuse to reveal personal information to anyone on the phone, at your door or on the internet?
- Y N Do you always have your keys ready when approaching your home?
- Y N Do you always have your keys ready when approaching your car?
- Y N If you return home to find windows and doors tampered with, would you avoid entering and go to a neighbor's house to call the police?
- Y N Is your mail box a locking mail box?
- Y N If your mail box is not locking, do you remove incoming mail immediately and always take outgoing mail to a secure mail drop?

Telephone Answering / Internet Use:

- Y N Do you teach family members not to give personal or family information to strangers over the phone or internet?
- Y N Do you record only non-specific messages on your answering machine and avoid messages like “we'll be back at 7 o'clock on Sunday”?
- Y N If you receive an obscene or threatening phone call or email message, would you call the police?
- Y N Do you monitor your child’s computer and television use, only allowing computers and TV’s in common areas, not bedrooms?

On the Go:

- Y N Do you plan in advance to use the safest route to your destination?
- Y N Do you choose busy, well-lit streets?
- Y N Do you avoid routes that pass by high-risk areas, i.e., vacant lots, alleys?
- Y N Do you avoid isolated bus stops?
- Y N Do you walk facing traffic so you can see approaching cars?
- Y N Do you walk near the curb to avoid the element of surprise or someone hiding between shrubs or in a doorway?
- Y N Do you stay out of reach if someone in a vehicle stops to ask directions?
- Y N Are you wary of approaching strangers?
- Y N If you continue to be followed, do you flee to the nearest safe place?
- Y N Do you try to get a description of the person and/or vehicle following you?
- Y N Do you avoid hitchhiking?
- Y N Do you avoid carrying large sums of money in your purse or wallet?
- Y N Do you carry your purse close to your body, without wrapping the straps around your arm or hand?
- Y N Do you avoid leaving a purse unattended, even for a moment?
- Y N Do you avoid displaying large amounts of cash in public?

In Your Car:

- Y N Do you always lock your car doors while driving?
- Y N Do you keep windows rolled up whenever possible?
- Y N Do you avoid picking up hitchhikers?
- Y N Do you keep your car in good running order to avoid break down in dangerous areas?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Y | N | Do you look for well-lit areas to park your car? |
| Y | N | Do you always lock your car when it is parked and not leave valuables in it? |
| Y | N | Do you look around the car before you get out, especially at night or in deserted areas such as underground parking lots? |
| Y | N | When returning to your car, do you have your keys in hand? |
| Y | N | Do you look in the back seat before getting into the car? |
| Y | N | If you are being followed, do you avoid going home and go to the nearest place of safety instead? |

When faced with danger, trust yourself. Stay as calm as possible. Try to not panic and evaluate your options. There is no one right way to respond to a confrontation. Every situation is different. The response depends upon the circumstances - location of the attack, your personal resources, the characteristics of the assailant, and the presence of weapons.

There are many strategies that are effective, but you must rely on your own judgments. Various forms of responding are as follows, but again do whatever it takes to save yourself - the biggest goal is to get away and get safe.

- **Screaming to attract attention**
- **Distraction and then fleeing**
- **Verbal assertiveness**
- **Stalling for time**
- **Negotiating**

Once you are able to get away, call 911 immediately.

Child Safety:

Helpful Rules to Keep Young People Safe:

Most parents want to educate their children about sexual abuse, but they don't know how. These guidelines will help parents teach their children how to keep safe. Remember, you can't tell a child too much. Knowledge doesn't stimulate inappropriate behavior - ignorance does. Parents who talk openly with their children will be "approachable". Children will feel free to bring their worries and concerns to them in the future.

On Mercer Island, we are very fortunate to have child safety skills taught to children K-12 within the schools. The Mercer Island Police Department has an officer designated to work with the students on how to be safe. Here is a list of the safety rules the children are taught in school:

- RULE # 1 Never Touch Weapons – tell an adult if you see a weapon on the ground
- RULE # 2 Call 911 if you have a people emergency – for pet emergencies call 296-PETS. Cell phones, push “on” button, press “911”, then press send or talk (the green button) to get help
- RULE # 3 Never talk to strangers. A stranger is someone you don’t know - they could look nice. Never leave a store, get in a car, or go into a stranger's house. Tell an adult if a stranger contacts you. This includes the internet. Children should not be talking to people over the internet that “YOU” don’t know. Additionally, computers and TV should only be in common areas and their use monitored by you.
- RULE # 4 Use the Buddy System – never go anywhere by yourself
- RULE # 5 If lost in a store, go to someone that works there – someone who wears a uniform or nametag. If lost in the woods, stay put and yell for help. Don’t try to find the trail - you will get lost even more.
- RULE # 6 Don’t put anything in your mouth without asking for permission first
- RULE # 7 Always ask for permission before going anywhere
- RULE # 8 Tell someone you trust if someone gives you a bad touch – bad touch is when someone touches you in your private parts, where your bathing suit covers, by someone other than a doctor, nurse or parents when you are sick.

The Child Safety Checklist:

- Y N Does your child know what to do if lost?
- Y N Have you discussed with your children what should be done if they find themselves at a questionable party?
- Y N Do you know your child's friends and their parents?
- Y N Have you physically checked out the facilities your child attends such as day care or school, sports facilities or other play areas?
- Y N Can you account for your child's whereabouts hourly?
- Y N Have you discussed with your child who he/she can call if he or she needs help?
- Y N Have you ever done any public transportation training with your child?
- Y N Do you know specifically how much money your child has to spend?
- Y N In the presence of your child, do you display a positive attitude towards people in authority: police, school administrators, and teachers?
- Y N Is your home a gathering place for kids?
- Y N Do you really listen and spend time with your child?
- Y N Does your child know how and where to reach you at any time?

Domestic and Dating Violence Information

Domestic and dating violence is a pattern of behavior used by an individual to establish control over his/her intimate partner. Domestic/dating violence can consist of physical, sexual, psychological, and or emotional abuse. Over time, the abusive behavior may become more frequent, more life threatening and negatively impact children as well. Domestic/dating violence is against the law, and without outside intervention, it often does not stop.

To ask for help may be the most difficult choice a victim has to make, but it is the one choice that can save your life and your families. Please don't try to do it alone. There are many people that are trained to help and are great resources to assist you.

Emergency

911

Eastside Domestic Violence 24 hour crisis line

425-746-1940 or 1-800-827-8840

Youth Eastside Services

425-747-4937

Court Orders of Protection:

Provided by the Bellevue District Court located at:

585 112th Ave SE

Bellevue, WA 98004

206-205-9200

PERSONAL PROPERTY PROTECTION:

There is an alarming growth in the number of thefts of personal property, especially in relation to identity theft. Although many citizens are insured against theft of personal property, when someone takes our identity, it can be a lengthy and painful process to recover from.

Auto Theft Prevention:

Auto theft is a widespread crime that affects the whole community. Higher insurance rates, property damage and possible injuries and loss of life from accidents are the results. Its a billion dollar a year crime. The thieves' motives are joy-riding, transportation or profit (either selling the vehicle or stripping the parts). You can reduce the risk of theft of your unattended car, its parts or contents by observing certain precautions.

The majority of stolen cars were left unlocked, often with the keys in the ignition. Whether you leave your car for a moment or for several hours, always lock it and take the keys with you. Never leave your vehicle with the engine running. Never leave valuables in your car. Don't make it easy for a thief!

Never have an identification tag on your key ring - thieves may use it to access your residence. Never leave check books, credit cards or personal information in your car. Park in well-lit and busy areas. Do not keep your vehicle registration or driver's license inside your car - carry it with you.

Identity Theft:

In the course of the day, you may write a check at the drugstore, charge tickets to a concert, rent a car, call home on your cell phone, or apply for a credit card. Chances are you don't give these routine transactions a second thought - but others may. Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America, affecting half a million new victims each year.

Identity theft, or identity fraud, is the taking of a victim's identity to obtain credit and credit cards from banks and retailers, steal money from a victim's existing accounts, apply for loans, establish accounts with utility companies, rent an apartment, file bankruptcy, or obtain a job using the victim's name. Thousands of dollars can be stolen without the victim knowing about it for months, or even years.

The imposter obtains your social security number, your birth date, and other identifying information such as your address and phone number. With this information and a fake driver's license, they can apply in person for instant credit or through the mail posing as you. They often claim they have moved

and provide their own address. Once the first account is opened, they can continue to add to their credibility.

They get the information from your doctor, lawyer, school, health insurance carrier, and many other places. "Dumpster divers" pick up information you may have thrown away, such as utility bills, credit card slips, and other documents.

To prevent this from happening to you:

- Do not give out personal information over the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you have initiated the contact or know whom you're dealing with. Identity thieves will pose as bank representatives, Internet service providers, and even government officials to get you to reveal identifying information.
- Shred all documents, including pre-approved credit applications received in your name, insurance forms, bank checks and statements you are discarding, and other financial information.
- Do not use your mother's maiden name, your birth date, the last four digits of your social security number, or a similar series of numbers as a password for anything.
- Minimize the identification information and the number of cards you carry. Take what you'll actually need. Don't carry your social security card, birth certificate, or passport, unless necessary.
- Do not put your social security number on your checks or your credit receipts. If a business requests your social security number, give them an alternate number and explain why. If a government agency requests your social security number, there must be a privacy notice accompanying the request.
- Do not put your telephone number on checks.
- Be careful using ATMs and phone cards. Someone may look over your shoulder and get your PIN numbers, thereby gaining access to your accounts.
- Make a list of all your credit card account numbers and bank account numbers with customer service phone numbers, and keep it in a safe place.
- When you order new credit cards in the mail or previous ones have expired, watch the calendar to make sure you get the card within the appropriate time. If the card is not received within that time, call the credit card grantor immediately to find out if the card has been sent. If you don't receive the card, check to make sure a change of address was

not filed.

- Do not put your credit card number on the Internet unless it is encrypted on a secured site.
- Pay attention to your billing cycles. Follow up with creditors if bills don't arrive on time. A missing credit card bill could mean an identity thief has taken over your credit card account and changed your billing address.
- Cancel all credit cards that you have not used in the last six months. Open credit is a prime target.
- Order your credit report at least twice a year. Reports should be obtained from all three major sources (Equifax, Experian, or TransUnion).

Where to go for more information:

Write to Direct Marketing Association, Mail Preference Service, PO Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735 to remove your name from direct mail lists.

Federal Trade Commission: Accepts complaints from ID theft victims:

<http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft>

- Identity Theft Hotline: 1-877-ID THEFT
- To request the booklet "ID theft, When Bad Things Happen to Your Good Name"
- Call 1-877-FTC-HELP or mail a request to:
FTC, Consumer Response Center
600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20580

Washington State Attorney General's Office: Posts detailed information about ID theft on-line at: <http://www.wa.gov/ago/consumer/idtheft>

Consumer Resource Centers - Provide statewide ID Theft experts who can refer you to the proper authorities and who can assist consumers and businesses regarding the new law. Call 1-800-551-4636.

Credit Reporting Agencies: It is important to include your social security number and current address when writing to the following three credit bureaus:

- **Equifax:** <http://www.equifax.com>
P.O. Box 740241
Atlanta, GA 30374
Order Credit Report: 1-800-685-1111
Report Fraud: 1-800-525-6285
- **Experian:** <http://www.experian.com>
National Consumer Assistance Center
P.O. Box 2002
Allen, TX 75013
Order Credit Report: 1-888-EXPERIAN
Report Fraud: 1-888-EXPERIAN
- **Trans Union:** <http://www.transunion.com>
P.O. Box 2000
Chester, PA 19022
Order Credit Report: 1-800-888-4213
Report Fraud: 1-800-680-7289

Social Security Administration

E-Mail: oig.hotline@ssa.gov
Fraud Hotline: -800-269-0271
FAX: 1-410-597-0118
Mail: P.O. Box 17768, Baltimore, MD 21235

U.S. Postal Service: If theft of U.S. Mail is involved, or a fraudulent change of address has been filed, contact the U.S. Postal Inspector in your area or on-line at: <http://www.usps.com/postalinspectors>

Department of Motor Vehicles: If a false driver's license was obtained in your name, or someone is using your driver's license number, call 360-664-8885, or write:

Department of Licensing
Driver Responsibility Fraud Unit
P.O. Box 9030
Olympia, WA 98507-9030
E-Mail: drvfraud@dol.wa.gov
Or on-line at: <http://www.wa.gov/dol>

How the Law Applies to Victims of Identity Theft:

Court Orders to Correct Public Record: Upon a criminal conviction, the law authorizes the courts to issue an order for the victim to use in correcting public records that contain false information due to the theft of identity. For example - arrest records in the victim's name that were the result of the defendant using the victim's name at the time of arrest.

Consumer Protection Remedies: The criminal provisions also constitute violations of the Consumer Protection Act (CPA), and victims and the Attorney General's Office (AGO) can pursue civil actions against the perpetrators using the protections of the CPA (RCW 9.35.800). Also, the following civil provisions all contain CPA remedies whereby the victims and/or the AGO can enforce compliance.

Businesses Required to Provide Information to Victims (RCW 9.35.050): The law requires businesses that have information relevant to the identity theft to provide that information to a victim once the victim provides positive proof of their identity and a copy of their police report. For example, the victim now has the legal right to require a business to hand over their records about the credit account the ID thief opened in the victim's name. Those records often contain critical information the victim needs in order to prove they were not the person who is responsible for that account. It is also information the victim can then provide to law enforcement to assist them in their investigation. The business may require the victim to provide all or some of the following items before complying with this section:

- A copy of a government-issued photo
- Identification card
- A copy of a filed police report evidencing the victim's claim; and a written statement from the State Patrol verifying the victim has completed the fingerprint verification program under RCW 43.43.760.

Blocking Bad Information from Credit Reports (RCW 19.182.160): Under the law, a victim of identity theft can block any adverse credit reports resulting from the crime by filing the police report of the crime with the credit-reporting agency and supplying the agency with other proof of identification similar to those above. Provisions are made for denial and removal of the block in cases of fraud or error. The effect is that the victim's credit record is restored to reflect only the victim's true credit history.

Limitations Imposed on Collection Agencies (RCW 19.16.250): A collection agency may not call a debtor (victim) more than one time in 180 days in order to collect on debts associated with fraudulent checks as long as the victim forwards information regarding the alleged theft to the collection agency. The victim must provide the collection agency with the relevant police report and proof of the victim's identity similar to the provisions above.

The Stop Fraud Network:

The Stop Fraud Network is a fraud prevention program designed to teach senior citizens how to protect themselves from con artists. Sponsored by the Washington State Attorney General's Office, this program also encourages senior citizens to call a toll-free fraud hot-line when they become aware of fraudulent activity. This enables law enforcement to identify fraud and act quickly. For more information about the Stop Fraud Network, call the Stop Fraud Hot-line at (800) 622-0033.

REFERENCES:

Washington Attorney General	800 - 551-4636
Washington Crime Prevention	509- 527-9290
Mercer Island Police	425 - 587-3400

Seek help if your home has a domestic violence problem. Children who see abuse at home run a higher risk of juvenile delinquency and drug abuse. They grow up thinking violence is a legitimate way to solve problems.

If you're not a parent, you can still do your part to help kids develop honesty, feel good about themselves, and learn right from wrong. Volunteer with kid's organizations in your community and become a friend to a child. Support your local schools and those who work there. Include neighborhood kids in your Block Watch program by organizing "second homes" they can go to in an emergency.

You have only one chance to raise your child. And you always can help other kids who don't get the love and support they need at home. Make the time now to be a friend, teacher, and role model to a child. That's one crime-prevention measure that will protect everyone.

RESOURCE PAGE

Emergency – Police / Fire / Medical	911
Police non emergency	425-587-3400
Fire Business	206-236-3600
Police Business / records	206-236-3500
Crime Prevention / DARE	206-236-3522
City Hall	206-236-5300
Mercer Island Municipal Court	206-236-3451
Maintenance / Streets / Garbage	206-236-3613
Utilities	206-236-3560
Business Licenses	206-236-3562
Building Dept.	206-236-5300
Parks & Recreation	206-236-3545
Youth & Family Services	206-236-3525
Eastside Domestic Violence Crisis Line	425-746-1940 or 1-800-827-8840
Animal Control	206-296-PETS

**Mercer Island City Hall / Police / Court are located at:
9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer Island, WA 98040**

City Hall is open	M – F	8:30 am – 5:00 pm
Police Records is open	M – F	8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Court is open	M – Thurs.	9:00 am – 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm