



**THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
POLICE FORCE**



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Police Chief

COMMUNITY RELATIONS BUREAU  
(973) 763-3000, ext 7802

VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH ORGANIZATION

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**TIPS to SECURE PROPERTY and SELF!**

Please find below a comprehensive list of specific tips that Sgt. Wiggins and I have compiled for recommendations on how to protect your homes, vehicles, property, and yourself. In general, we recommend these general steps, as well as specific measures on the following pages. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out your Zone Director, or to us!

***Some General Reminders:***

1. Check around the outside of your home/apartment to determine whether individuals can gain access to windows and doors. Also, inspect your basement windows and secure them if they are loose, unmaintained, or can be compromised.
2. You should remove chairs, garbage cans, tables, and the like that can be used by criminals to reach windows and other access points to your residence.
3. If suspicious individuals ring your doorbell or are observed in apartment hallways, and contact is made, pay attention to the physical description of the individual(s) and what they say. If the explanation for such is suspicious, call the police at 973-763-3000, ext. 2. If possible, ***do so without them knowing***. While speaking to SOPD, make every effort to be as accurate as you can be in your description of the individual—see attachment for suggestions of characteristics to note
4. Alarms: **TURN YOUR ALARMS ON**, activate them always. Note: There is also the option to have an alarm company install a system in apartment units, if you do not already have one.
5. Make sure the locks on your windows and doors are secure. If you reside in an apartment, this is especially important for fire-escapes and balconies.
6. Regarding flat screen TV's: This "item" is a popular target of late. Secure your TV's with a child-proof cable or other safety harness (usually accompanying the appliance when you purchased it). Typically these cables are provided to prevent children from pulling these appliances off of consoles or wall brackets; but they will also deter criminals from easily removing them from your home! (Be sure that you install these devices following manufacturer's instructions.)
7. We would also like to point out that the Community Relations Bureau of SOPD offers free inspections of homes to address some areas that might be improved to "target harden" your house against crime. Sgt. Al DiEsso is the Officer currently in Community Relations. will be able to take appointments for home inspections. Residents may contact him directly to make arrangements via email or phone:

Sgt. Al DiEsso  
Community Relations Bureau  
South Orange Police Department  
(973) 763.3000, ext. 7802  
[adiesso@southorange.org](mailto:adiesso@southorange.org)

Remember first and foremost, **call 911 for emergencies** or SOPD: **973-763-3000, ext. 0**  
For non-emergencies, or to report suspicious activities, dial SOPD: **973-763-3000, ext. 2.**  
Join your Neighborhood Watch Organization!

## ***Specific measures to protect the safety for your home***

### **When you are not home:**

- Make your house appear to be occupied when you are away.
- Keep your porch/exterior lights on at night to deter crime around your home (*you can buy a light switch timer for your outdoor lights*).
- Put timers on your lights, TV, radio to turn on every night.
- Consider leaving a radio “on” (tune to a talk radio station), even during the day.
- For the exterior of your home, use motion sensors on your lights.
- For extended periods away:
  - Temporarily stop mail and paper deliveries
  - Turn off your phone ringer & lower the volume on your answering machine (a ringing phone can reveal that you are not there to answer it)
  - Ask a friend or family member to check on your home and go inside periodically if you’ll be gone for more than a day or so. This will make it seem like someone is home.
  - Ask someone to leave a parked car in your driveway.

### **Even when you are home:**

- Use an alarm system. Doors, windows, and also the screens should be armed. Put up signs or decals indicating that you have an alarm system protecting your home. If you can’t afford a system, the use of signs can still be a deterrent.
- Make sure all sensor lights are working; also look into audible motion sensor alarms.
- Shut and secure windows on lower floors when you are not going to occupy these sections of your home for a good portion of time even during the day; screens are not effective.
- Lock all doors or any unlocked access points (e.g., pet doors), even when you are home but not in the room where these doors and windows are located.
- Make sure your doors are hung properly and hinges and screw hardware are complete (no missing parts). If the wood of the jam is compromised, create new holes and reinstall hardware. The space between the door and jam should be no more than 1/8 inch.
- Secure sliding windows and sliding doors with solid security bars that you jam behind the moving section; or, use steel pins that prevent opening or lifting doors/windows off of their tracks.
- Keep bushes and trees trimmed back from your house. Make your entry ways and walks to your home visible from the street or your neighbors’ homes.
- Check around the outside of your home/apartment building. You should do this regularly to make sure that no one has tampered with your screens, windows, or doors to get inside your home.
- Also, if sensors and/ or outside lights are within reach of the ground, consider moving them (if possible) to prevent them from being disabled.
- Do not leave valuables/purses/laptops/wallets/car keys within sight from the outside of your home (through windows or doors), especially upon first arrival home; they can be grabbed quickly if robbers know what they want and where to get it.
- **Regarding flat screen TV’s:** This “item” is a popular target of late. Secure your TV’s with a child-proof cable or other safety harness (usually accompanying the appliance when you purchased it). Typically these cables are provided to prevent children from pulling these appliances off of consoles or wall brackets; but they will also deter criminals from easily removing them from your home! (Be sure that you install these devices following manufacturer’s instructions.)

### ***Some good practices (Action steps):***

- Make your home address number visible from the street for first responder personnel.
- Keep your tools and such locked in locked garages or sheds.
- Make sure all second floor roofs and windows are not-accessible from the ground (consider proximity of trees, ladders, etc).
- Make an inventory (including a video?) of personal property. Include serial numbers for items, and physical descriptions.
- Consider a diversion safe for valuables—a safe disguised as an everyday item (can of soda, cereal box, etc).
- Is the outside of your home well-lit all night (sensor lights and audible alarms mentioned above)?

- **Found property:** If you discover items such as a bicycle, purses, ID's, or other such things on your property, DO NOT TOUCH OR MOVE IT. Please Contact SOPD at the non-emergency number, (973) 763-3000, option #2.
- Consider entry doors that are made of steel, solid core wood (at least 1-3/4 inches), or metal-wrapped wood.
- Do not hide extra keys outside of your home; give copies of keys to a trusted neighbor or friend instead.
- Share your garage code with a trusted friend or neighbor.
- Shred or destroy all mail with any identifying information before discarding it.

(From CrimePreventionTips.org, <http://www.crimepreventiontips.org/home-safety/preventing-crime-part-1.html>):

*Burglars will focus on specific hiding areas for valuables. Target areas include master bedrooms including dressers, small safes, jewelry boxes, bathroom counters, desks, under beds or mattresses, and inside toilet tanks. A preventative measure would be to use diversion safes (designed to look like standard household products), which have the look and feel of real, usable items.*

### ***In your neighborhood***

- Join your neighborhood watch group.
- Meet the people who live nearby; get to know their names, their cars, and exchange phone numbers.
- Keep a list of this contact information near a phone, so you can call anyone on your block should the need arise. This is the purpose of neighborhood watch.
- Watch for “familiar strangers”—people who linger, hang around, or come and go on your block frequently (on foot, bike, in cars/trucks). Such people might be casing the neighborhood, looking for an opportunity to commit a crime.
- Call the police and let neighbors know if you see someone unfamiliar at their home.
- Once again, an important rule of thumb is: ***Don't be afraid to call the police to report suspicious behavior.***

### ***While you are “out”***

- Always bring your cell phone.
- Be aware of your surroundings, specifically people and passing vehicles.
- Do not walk alone.
- Use extra caution in poorly lit areas at night.
- Consider carrying a personal safety device or a loud, shrill security alarm or whistle. Or use your voice.
- Limit usage of personal electronic devices such cell phones, iPods, and PDA's.
- If confronted by a criminal who is armed with a weapon, comply with their demands—your “stuff” isn't more valuable than your life.

### ***In your car:***

- Never leave your car running/unattended.
- Never leave the keys to your vehicle in the car, even if inside a locked garage.
- Keep your doors locked, even while driving.
- Leave enough space between your car and the cars around you, especially at lights or stop signs. Leave your car in gear; if the need arises for to leave quickly, you have room to maneuver.
- Always roll up your windows and lock the car, even if it is parked in front of your home.
- Never leave valuables/electronics in plain view, even if your car is locked. Keep them out of sight.
- Always park in well-lit areas, when possible.
- Install a mechanical device that locks the steering wheel, column, or brakes, even if the device does not work. Appearance is everything.
- Investigate the purchase of a vehicle anti-theft device (such as OnStar, LoJack).
- Documents containing personal information should not be left in your vehicle. This would include your driver's license, credit cards, or title to the vehicle.
- If you must leave your key with a valet, attendant, or mechanic leave only the ignition key.
- Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) should be etched on windows, doors, fenders and trunk lid.
- Copy your license plate and vehicle information on a card and keep this with you. In the event that your vehicle is stolen this information will be needed for a police report.