



The Keep Your
Community
Safe Initiative

2023-2024

CRIME

PREVENTION & RESPONSE TIPS

Fifth Edition
WITH CARJACKING SAFETY TIPS!

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, CALL



POLICE 911

The
**Chesed
Fund**
LIMITED

&

Project Ezra
OF BALTIMORE

Preparing our community today for a safe and secure tomorrow.

The Chesed Fund Limited is dedicated in memory of Mordechai & Rebecca Kapiloff, ע"ה, Dr. Bernard Kapiloff, ע"ה, and Rabbi Norman & Louise Gerstenfeld, ע"ה. Project Ezra of Greater Baltimore, Inc. is dedicated in memory of M. Leo & Hannah Storch, ע"ה.



This guide is dedicated in loving memory of Efraim Gordon, ע"ה
אפרים הי"ד בן יבלחט"א ברוך, ע"ה



Crime surges in our community have become the "norm."

Take responsibility for yourself and your loved ones. Prevention is the key to staying safe. There are no foolproof techniques or hardware that can absolutely guarantee your safety or security, but taking proper precautions can make you less likely to be targeted or victimized by criminals.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that it can only happen to someone else.

Since most of us are already familiar with safety and security basics, this checklist provides some new and less well known techniques and technologies to protect you, your family, your home, and your car.

Report It To Thwart It!™

If you are a victim of a crime, please report it to police and Shomrim as soon as possible, including on Shabbos or Yom Tov. Report data is used to apprehend criminals and to increase crime-fighting resources in our community.

Per the Vaad HaRabbonim of Baltimore, "If you are the victim of a crime and there is a concern that the criminals involved pose a potential danger to others, it is imperative that you call 911 and Shomrim (410-358-9999) immediately. This includes Shabbos and Yom Tov.

Any situation of even the slightest potential of danger to life (*safeyk sakanos nefashos*) must be reported immediately to enable the police to respond and Shomrim to monitor the situation. Waiting to report a crime can put other members of the community in harm's way."

**If You See Something,
Say Something®**

POLICE 911
SHOMRIM 410.358.9999





PERSONAL SAFETY

- In an age-appropriate manner, plan with your family how to react in various emergencies and life-threatening scenarios (e.g., carjacking, home invasion, mugging). Designate a room in your home as a “safe” room to stay safe in the event of an emergency (e.g., a room that has additional locks or steel doors).
- Advise children to give up their valuables (e.g., bikes, jewelry, money) if someone demands them. Let them know you will replace any items taken.
- Store important phone numbers for police, Shomrim, Hatzalah, NWCP, Chaverim, and your home security company in your cell phone. It is best to program these numbers on speed dial.
- Enhance your alertness while walking by limiting your cell phone use so that you use all your senses.
- Become familiar with your cell phone’s emergency capabilities. Learn how to place an SOS emergency call. If your phone itself does not have that feature, download an app.
- Stay alert for any suspicious activity in your neighborhood (e.g., cars with people staying in them for a while, strange vehicles or people, anyone loitering on the street). Call police and Shomrim if you are concerned for your own or your neighbors’ safety.
- Carry a whistle, tactical (high-powered and metal flashlight) or personal alarm device, especially when walking alone. Personal alarm devices, which emit loud warning sounds or connect to live help, are now available as jewelry or watches.
- Do not carry weapons such as pepper spray or a knife. It may not be legal and require proper training. You might be introducing a weapon into an attack that might assist your attacker.
- Do not carry large sums of money or valuables and avoid wearing expensive or flashy jewelry.
- Avoid using both arms to carry packages or belongings to and from your car.
- If you are on foot and being followed by someone in a car, run or walk quickly in the opposite direction and call police and Shomrim as soon as possible.
- If you are being followed by someone who is walking, turn around to let the person know you see him or her, and call police and Shomrim as soon as possible. Cross the street and run toward an open store or more populated area.
- If you feel unsafe when leaving a building, ask a security guard or someone you know to escort you.
- Do not get on an elevator with someone who makes you uncomfortable. Trust your gut. If you are already in the elevator when the person enters, exit immediately, or as soon as possible. Always look at the elevator panel for the alarm button when entering an elevator.
- Look for exit doors when entering any building (e.g. social hall, hotel, restaurant) so that you always have an avenue of escape in case of emergency.
- Avoid walking through alleys if possible. Walk close to the curbside of the street to avoid blind spots and poorly lit areas. If you think you are being followed, stay in well-lit populated areas and dial 911 immediately.
- If you use public transportation and you are alone on the bus, light-rail or subway stop, avoid sitting or standing in the booths. Stand in a highly visible area as you wait for your ride.
- Learn self-defense techniques

WALKING OR RUNNING:

- Try to go with a buddy.
- Stay alert and avoid becoming lulled into a “zone.”
- Take a cell phone with you, but avoid using it unless necessary.
- Do not wear earbuds in both ears.
- Wear reflective clothing or items.

POPQUIZ

WHAT SHOULD YOU CARRY WITH YOU, ESPECIALLY WHEN WALKING ALONE?

- A. Whistle
- B. Tactical Flashlight
- C. Personal Alarm
- D. Any of the above

ANSWER: D



CAR SAFETY

DO:

1. Always take your wallet or purse and a charged cell phone with you when driving.
2. When approaching your car look around and inside the car before unlocking it and getting in.
3. Keep your purse, wallet, laptop, and other valuables out of sight while driving.
4. Store laptops, GPS devices, and any other valuables in the trunk.
5. Be aware of your surroundings. Stay alert and avoid looking down at your cell phone while idling. When stopped at a traffic light, observe what is happening around you. Pay special attention to people who seem to be lurking or cars that suspiciously follow you into driveways or parking lots.
6. Keep your doors locked and windows shut while driving, especially if making frequent stops.
7. Park "smart" by choosing spots in highly trafficked and well-lit areas. In public parking garages or parking lots, park as close as possible to the attendant booth or store entrance, and near security cameras.
8. Make sure you are not being followed, and always look around as you load shopping bags into your car. Pay extra attention to people around you at rest stops.
9. When in traffic, attempt to leave room between your car and the car in front of you so you can drive away quickly if approached by a carjacker.
10. If someone unknown approaches you while you are near or in your car and it doesn't feel right, trust your instincts. Drive away quickly and call 911. If you can't drive away, use your key fob or car horn to attract attention.

Consider installing a dashboard camera to record any incidents in the front or back of your car. Also consider installing a GPS car tracking system to locate your car if it is stolen. Place stickers from these companies on the driver's-side door, window, and windshield of your car.

DON'T:

1. Don't sit in your car with the doors unlocked or the windows rolled down.
2. Don't stay in a parked car unnecessarily (e.g., looking at your cell phone, doing miscellaneous tasks).
3. Don't leave your car running unattended, making it an easy target for theft. It is also a punishable offense with a \$70 fine and one point on your license. The only exceptions, for five minutes or less, are if your car uses a remote starter or is parked on your property, locked.
4. Don't drive alone in high crime neighborhoods, on isolated roads, or in empty parking lots.
5. Don't stop at isolated ATMs, especially at night.
6. Don't stop to help a disabled motorist or pedestrian. Stay in your locked car and offer to call a service station or the police.
7. Don't open your window for someone approaching your car asking for directions or trying to sell you something.
8. Don't be afraid to ask for a store security guard to walk you to your car.
9. Don't park near walls, bushes, dumpsters, cargo vans, trucks, or other surroundings that someone can hide behind.
10. Don't be a victim because you are not prepared.

GOOD HABITS FOR GETTING INTO A PARKED CAR

- Approach your car with keys ready in your hand
- Quickly enter your car
- Lock your doors (if they don't lock automatically)
- Put on your seatbelt
- Start your engine
- Drive away





DURING & AFTER A CARJACKING

Carjackers typically look for victims who aren't paying attention to their surroundings.

Carjackings can happen at gas stations, ATMs, or even in home driveways or at a red light. Carjackers can attempt to get you out of your car by faking an accident, pretending to be a stranded motorist, or by flashing their car lights to make you think something is wrong with your car. Police officers and security experts suggest staying proactive and safe by following these do's and don'ts.

What If

...you are near the car when approached by a carjacker? Don't get into the car with the carjacker. Throw the keys away from you and run in the opposite direction of the car.

...you are carjacked while you are in the car? Make direct eye contact and let the carjacker know you are getting out of the car. If there are children in the car, let the carjacker know you are removing the children from the car. If the carjacker refuses to allow you to remove the children from the car, press the panic button on your key fob and scream and fight as much as possible.

...your car is "bumped?" Be suspicious. Before getting out to check the damage, first assess the situation. Consider if it is daytime, is a populated area or a safe neighborhood. If not, signal for the other driver to follow you to a populated area or local police station. Keep your doors locked and windows shut while dialing 911 to report the crash.

...you are pulled over by someone in an unmarked car who claims to be a police officer? Stay in your locked car and call 911. Tell the person who pulled you over that you are calling 911 to confirm they are in fact a police officer.

...you suspect you are being followed while driving? Make three right turns down active streets. If you are still being followed, call 911 and head towards the nearest police station or fire station and do not drive home.

IF YOU ARE CARJACKED:

- Don't argue with the carjacker.
- Do give up your purse, wallet, keys, cell phone, etc.
- Try to remember the carjacker's appearance and any distinguishing features, like tattoos or other markings.
- Don't follow the carjacker.
- Call the police as soon as it is safe to do so.

If you are forced to stay in the car with a carjacker, protect yourself and fight for your life, including crashing the car if necessary.



HOME SECURITY

- Request that police or a security professional perform a home security evaluation to look for weaknesses in your home security and to eliminate entry points for a break-in (e.g., sliding doors that can be jimmied off track, door locks that don't function properly). Walk around the outside of your house and note which valuable items are visible through windows; move these elsewhere.
- Install an alarm system, even if you choose not to have it monitored. There are very inexpensive options available.
- Reinforce all external doors so they can't be kicked in easily (e.g., garage doors, back doors). Doors should have hinges that face indoors. External hinges can be unscrewed easily and the door removed. If your door's hinges face out, replace the door.



HOME SECURITY *CONTINUED*

- Replace door screws and lock screws that are 2- and 3-inch long with 4-inch deck screws. When purchasing new locks, buy locks with 4-inch screws, or replace the screws with 4-inch ones.
- Take the same precautions with second story, balcony, and garage doors. These should always be locked when not in use.
- Sliding doors should be made of break-resistant glass, locked at all times, with an added security bar in place. They should have keyed locks instead of a handle latch.
- Doors with glass paneling should have double-cylinder locks, since a single-cylinder lock can easily be opened by breaking the glass and unlocking the door from the inside. Make sure to cover the glass paneling with metal bars on the inside of the door. Obscure the panes with curtains so would-be intruders can't see in.
- Doors must fit securely in their frames. If any exterior door is sagging or rotted, replace the door, not just the lock.
- Pet doors are not recommended. If you have one, consider boarding it up.
- Check all windows that have air conditioner units and reinforce the windows. Install window alarms.
- Reinforce locks on back doors, doors that lead to a garage, and garage doors themselves.
- Reset the code for your factory-set garage door.
- Sheds should be locked with the biggest padlock that will fit the lock. Use a shrouded padlock since they are harder to cut through.
- Reset combination codes annually. Examine combination locks occasionally. Replace them if the number buttons are worn and the combination can't be reset.
- Do not hide house keys in a mailbox or under a doormat or a rock.
- Keep copies of door keys inside, near the door, in case of an emergency.
- Always check through a peephole or window before answering the door. Instruct children not to open the door for strangers unless an adult verifies their identity first.
- Be suspicious of unexpected deliveries. Ask the delivery person to leave the package by the door. If the person insists you sign for the package, ask him or her to slip you the form through the mail slot.
- If someone knocks on the door and claims to have hit your car or claims to be hurt and in need of help, don't open the door or let the person into your home. Call the police.
- Take pictures or video of your home and of all your valuables, and have the items engraved with your name and phone number.
- Review your homeowners insurance theft policy and increase the plan's coverage, if necessary.
- If you are a gun owner, make sure the gun and ammunition are kept unloaded in an easily accessible yet secure, locked location out of children's reach.
- Keep flashlights on each floor and in every room in an obvious place and regularly ensure that they have working batteries.
- Keep your home alarm activated, especially at night, even when you are home or if leaving for just a short while.
- Consider installing an alarm panel or keeping a portable panic button in the master bedroom so you can signal for help during an emergency.
- Don't keep expensive toys or items (lawn mowers, etc.) out in the open. Cover expensive outdoor grills with a tarp. Bikes and scooters should not be left out, even for a few minutes, unless locked up.
- Do not leave your remote garage door opener in your car, even when parking in your garage.
- Always keep your front and back doors locked, even when working in the yard.
- Keep your car key fob within reach from your bed to use the car's horn or alarm as a deterrent, if necessary.
- Keep neighbors' contact information readily available.



Consider using these devices:

- combination locks on entry doors
- voice-activated smart locks
- Bluetooth-enabled technology that works with your existing door locks to lock or unlock them
- WiFi-enabled camera doorbells to see who is ringing your doorbell via your cell phone or computer.
- lights that turn on when the doorbell rings, so it appears someone is home, even when no one actually is



HOME SECURITY CONTINUED

- timers or apps with variable time settings to turn on lights, music or televisions while you are out
- security cameras that send alerts to your phone or computer when windows, doors, or gates open and close
- barking dog alarms or other door stop alarms
- alarm company and “Beware of Dog” signs and stickers
- motion-sensor lights to flood the perimeter of your home with light when movement is detected
- window guards that prevent windows from being raised more than a few inches
- steel door for the master bedroom
- anti-theft tracking devices for valuable items
- Research *hilchos Shabbos* or ask your local Rabbi regarding the listed devices

If traveling:

- Ask a neighbor to pick up your mail, packages, and newspapers, move garbage cans according to the garbage pickup schedule, and keep an eye out for any suspicious activity.
- Give your contact number, itinerary, house keys, car keys (if not traveling with your car), home alarm codes, and instructions for emergency access to a trusted friend.
- Unplug or turn off the house phone and don’t announce on your voicemail that you are going to be away.
- Make arrangements for lawn care or snow shoveling.
- Set interior and exterior lights on a timer to make it appear as if someone is always home.
- Avoid posting anything on social media showing you are not at home. Instruct your children not to post anything either.



DURING & AFTER A BURGLARY

The following tips may not be practical in every situation. Use the ones that will help you according to your circumstances.

- If you enter your house and the door or lock seems broken, or if things don’t look the same as you left them, leave immediately and call police and Shomrim.
- If you are in your home and hear suspicious noises and/or voices, secure the door to the room you are in as much as possible, and call police and Shomrim. Stay on the line with the operator until police arrive.
- If you are faced with an intruder try to stay calm, and don’t make any sudden moves. If you have to move, first tell the intruder what you are doing and why.
- Follow the intruder’s directions, but don’t offer more than what the intruder asks for.
- If you have a silent alarm, activate it only if it is safe to do so without alerting the intruder.
- Make mental notes of everything you can about the intruder: age, race, scars, height, weight, hair, eye color, build, clothing, and anything unusual: tattoos, accent, mannerisms, speech patterns. Note type of weapon used and information about the car (e.g., color, model, license plate number).
- Note the direction the intruder heads in when leaving, and call police and Shomrim immediately.
- Ask any witnesses to remain on the scene until police arrive. If they need to leave, get a recorded statement.
- To avoid disturbing or eliminating the fingerprints that may have been left, do not touch anything the intruder may have touched.
- Immediately try to recall all the mental notes you made during the burglary and write them down for police. Ask anyone else present to do the same; however, do not compare notes, as doing so may cause memories to become skewed.
- Insist on a police report, even if it was only an attempted burglary or only minor items were stolen.
- Make sure you were not a victim of identity theft in the course of the burglary. If your ID was taken, notify all credit bureaus immediately.
- If your credit card or banking information was taken, put a hold on your accounts and notify all credit bureaus immediately.
- Make a list of all the items that were stolen and submit it to police and your home insurance company.
- Try to track down stolen valuable items by contacting local pawn shops. Give as good a description of the item as possible.
- Refortify and rekey your home, since homes that were burglarized once are many times more likely to be burglarized again.



DURING & AFTER A MUGGING

- If a mugger approaches you with or without a weapon and demands valuables, toss them to the side and in the mugger's line of sight.
- Do not make any sudden moves that could trigger the mugger to react violently. If the mugger has a knife or similar weapon, try to stay out of striking distance, if possible.
- Do not attempt to fight off the mugger unless you are being assaulted; if you do, you risk being badly hurt or worse.
- Call police and Shomrim and file a police report when you are safely away. Give as good a description as possible to help them apprehend the attacker.
- If your wallet or purse is stolen, put a hold on your accounts and notify credit card companies and credit bureaus. Also notify the Motor Vehicle Administration if your license is stolen.
- If someone calls to say that your wallet or purse has been found and you should go somewhere to retrieve it, be cautious unless it is someone you know. Request that police escort you to ensure you are not being set up for a home burglary.
- If your house keys or car keys are stolen, immediately rekey your home and/or car.

As a general rule, when you feel concerned for your safety, trust your instincts.



DURING & AFTER AN ASSAULT

- Use all self-defense techniques you know.
- Scream.
- Blow an emergency whistle.
- Activate an emergency call on your cell phone.
- Activate a personal alarm.
- Use a tactical flashlight.
- Run away as fast as you can. If you can't run away, kick the person in the groin or face.
- If the attacker tries to take you into his or her car, fight as hard as you can. Statistics show that once a victim is moved to a second location, the chances of surviving are much lower.
- Once you are safe, call police and Shomrim to report the crime. Give as good a description as possible, to help them apprehend the attacker.
- There may be DNA evidence on your clothing or body that could lead to a suspect. Do not do anything that may jeopardize any evidence.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS CHECKLIST IS NOT A COMPLETE GUIDE TO ALL PREVENTIVE SAFETY TIPS.

Please feel free to contact us with any comments or questions at info@chesedfund.com or at 410-653-3333.

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