

Seniors Take Action To Ensure Personal Security

(NAPSA)—Many older Americans are taking steps to help secure their personal safety and security, especially as they balance the desire for independence with the challenges of declining health.

The good news is that crime rates affecting older Americans are actually lower than they may seem. The U.S. Department of Justice reports that the number of violent crimes has decreased during the last decade.

The even better news is that, by taking a few simple safety precautions, seniors can reduce their risk and increase their sense of security in their daily lives.

Check door locks. Replace any nonfunctioning or poorly installed locks. Make sure that your garage is equipped with a sturdy lock as well.

Install exterior lighting. A well-lit home can deter nighttime break-ins.

Make your house look occupied. When you're out of town, use light timers to mimic your normal routine. Cancel newspaper and mail delivery, so that papers don't pile up outside.

Know your neighbors. Keep neighbors' phone numbers near your phone with emergency information. Inform neighbors of your travel plans and any scheduled deliveries or home maintenance appointments.

Install an alarm. Security companies offer a wide range of alarm options, including systems that provide medical alert services.

Stay safe on the street. Always walk in well-lit areas. Ask a friend to accompany you or tell someone where you're going.



Neighborhood involvement is another key to deterring crime on a street or block. Seniors who want to protect their homes and help raise awareness in the community can join neighborhood watch groups. Those interested in forming a group can contact the National Association of Town Watch (www.NationalTownWatch.org) for information.

Don't let fear of crime get you down. "When seniors feel unsafe, they may begin to withdraw from normal activities," said Scott Perry, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Bankers Life and Casualty Company, an insurance company that specializes in the senior market. "Over time, fear and reduced activity can lead to feelings of social isolation and depression."

Perry's company, a national life and health insurer specializing in the insurance needs of seniors, encourages seniors to recognize security issues and take steps to feel safe in their homes and communities. For more tips for seniors, visit www.Bankers.com and click "Senior Resources."