

## South Gate Police Department – (5) All-Purpose Safety Tips

The South Gate Police Department would like to remind the general public of some good all-purpose safety tips that can help you avoid becoming a victim.



5). If a stranger approaches and tells you that they have a winning lottery ticket, but first they need your help (in the way of loaning them thousands of dollars in cash or jewelry) in order for them to collect their winnings, be very wary. The California Lottery Commission does not-- and never has --required any collateral or upfront fee be paid in order for anyone to collect their winnings.

For the past few years, the South Gate Police Department (along with law enforcement agencies throughout California and the nation) have been actively investigating "Latin Lottery Scams," where the suspects target Spanish-speaking females between the ages of 50-90 years of age. In these scams, teams of con artist will pretend not to know one another. The first con artist will approach a female walking alone or waiting for a bus and pretend to have a winning lottery ticket worth a fortune, but then say they are an illegal alien and cannot collect their winnings unless they come up with \$5,000-\$25,000 in cash or jewelry. A second suspect (who pretends not to know the first suspect) will walk up or drive up, claim they overheard your conversation and be only too willing to help the first suspect collect their winnings by giving them money.

While several suspects have been arrested – and no new Lottery scam crimes reported in South Gate – it's important to note that while fraudulent scams come and go, you can help yourself from becoming a victim by simply telling the con artist who approaches you, "Thank you, I'm not interested" and walking away. And never get into the car of someone you do not know. Simply walk away.

Likewise, if someone you don't know calls you on the phone and tries to get you to tell them your Social Security number, credit card number, or any other personal information, the best thing to do is simply hang up the phone. If you continue to receive unwanted phone calls from strangers asking you for personal information, contact the police department.



**4).** When using a computer hooked up to the Internet, be wary of any emails from people unknown to you, or those purporting to be from a company or bank requesting that you click on an attachment. Scammers will email out thousands of phony emails that often look legitimate in a technique known as "phishing."

Law enforcement agencies have recently heard that some scammers are sending out "phishing" emails with an attachment that appears to be from Facebook telling recipients that their Facebook password has been reset and that they need to click on an attachment in order to retrieve this newly reset password. What the phony email doesn't tell you is that their attachment contains an active password stealer exploit program that will automatically install itself in your computer if you click on it. Once installed, the password stealer can potentially access any username and password combination utilized on that computer, not just for the user's Facebook account.



**3).** Never leave your purse or wallet or any personal identification such as a driver's license, Social Security card, or passport inside an unattended vehicle...not even for just five minutes Identity theft continues to be the fastest growing crime in America. Gang members and drug users are also committing identity theft because they know too many people are leaving purses and wallets inside their vehicles. Be aware when you get out of your vehicle of anyone else who may be sitting in their car or standing around watching you. If you're a female alone in a car and get out without carrying a purse an unseen suspect may naturally assume you've left your purse under the seat, or somewhere else inside that car and wait until you leave before breaking into your car. Be smart...never leave your driver's license, Social Security cards, passports, birth certificates or other important documents inside your unattended vehicle.



**2).** If you have a deadbolt on your front or back door, use it And remember to lock each and every window. Criminals are lazy and often take the easy way out. If they see that your front and rear doors have locked deadbolts they may simply choose to pass your house by and look for another house that is easier to break into. Too many people leave their house to go to work, or run errands, by locking most of their windows, but not all of them. It might be a warm day, or they might think that their bathroom window is just too small for someone to climb through. Don't chance it! Secure and lock every door and window in your house before going out. Again, if your house is completely secure would-be burglars might skip your house for one easier to break into. Avoid having your house ransacked and your valuables stolen. Always completely secure your home before going out. If you have a security screen door, use that, too.

**1).** Never leave your front door unlocked...even if you're just going into the backyard. You never know if someone else might enter your home while you're out back. Recently the South Gate Police Department received a crime report from a resident who had been

distracted by a man coming to his front door. The Suspect told the resident that there was a problem with the resident's back fence and they needed to go look at it. Only later did the resident realize that certain items were missing from the home. Be safe...never let strangers into your home. Strangers might pretend to be talking about one thing, but are really looking around your home for small valuables worth stealing (jewelry, wallets, checks, personal identification like driver's license or Social Security cards) that they can slide into the pants or jacket pocket.

Crime Prevention  
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