Don’t Make Yourself a Victim!

For a theft to be classified as a robbery, someone must take something of value from you against your will, using force, intimidation or violence. Typically, robberies are classified as “armed” or “unarmed.” A burglary is not a robbery. A burglary is when someone uses force to enter a home or business, with the intent of stealing your property or committing some other felony. It is not necessary for the theft or felony to take place; the burglary is committed at the moment of the breaking and entering. Your home or business may be burglarized, but when you are personally victimized you have also suffered a robbery.

These safety tips, provided by the Arlington Police Department, focus not becoming a victim in the first place. But, should you find yourself in this scary situation, they have also provided advice on what to do during and after the event. Stay Safe!

How Can I Protect Myself???

- Don’t present yourself as a target. Stay aware of your surroundings. Walk with a purpose, keep your head up, and look around.
- Stay in lighted areas at night. The robber doesn’t want to be seen.
- Don’t venture out alone. Stay with the crowd — there is safety in numbers.
- If you carry a purse, carry it close to your body, like a football player carries a football. Do not place the strap across your body or over your shoulder. When the robber grabs your purse, you may be pulled along with the robber until the strap breaks and you are injured.
- Be cautious when wearing "flashy" jewelry.
- Be conscious of people just "hanging around" anywhere, especially near pay phones, public rest rooms, building entrances and garages.
- Notify the police of strangers who are hanging around your home, apartment or place of business for no apparent reason.
- Do not carry large sums of money or credit cards on your person whenever possible.
- Vary your routine — don’t do the same thing at exactly the same time every day.
- Be aware of people around you when you are using your automatic teller machine (ATM) card. When possible, use an ATM that is located inside a business.
- Have your pay, social security, or retirement checks directly deposited into your bank account.
- Lock your car doors when your vehicle is unattended even if you will only be out of it for a "minute." This action may prevent a robber from hiding in your back seat awaiting your return.
- If you are walking and a vehicle is following you, reverse directions or cross the street.
- If someone acts suspicious, looks at you closely or follows you, head for bright lights and people and call the police.
- Carry a whistle or other noise making device. Use it to call attention to yourself if threatened.
What Should I Do If I Become a Robbery Victim?

- **DO NOT PANIC** — get a grip on yourself and stay calm. Take some deep breaths.
- **DO NOT RESIST** — the robber wants your valuables, not you. "Things" can always be replaced... you can not.
- **OBEY THE ROBBER'S INSTRUCTIONS** — listen closely to what the robber says and do not argue. Try to remember the exact words spoken by the robber as it may help with the police investigation.
- **BE ALERT** — notice what is happening.
- **LOOK FOR DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS** — look for things that can not be changed such as scars, marks, tattoos, limps, accents, etc.
- **WEAPONS** — take careful note of any weapons. You will have to describe them later to the police. If the robber indicates that there is a weapon in his pocket, assume it is a gun. If the robber has a gun, assume it is loaded.
- **DESCRIPTION OF ROBBER** — compare the robber to your own height and weight to estimate the size of your attacker.
- **COOPERATE WITH THE POLICE** — if you are robbed, or see someone else being robbed, report it to the police immediately.

After A Robbery...

- Notify the police immediately and be prepared to tell them:
  - The address, with an exact location in the building
  - As complete a description as possible of the robber(s)
  - Whether or not a weapon was implied or used. If you saw the weapon, a good description including the type, for example, if it was a handgun what style (revolver or semi-automatic), or other weapons such as knives, crowbars, etc.
  - A description of any vehicle used and the number of people in the vehicle
  - The direction of travel
  - Any words spoken by the robber(s)

- While waiting for the police to arrive, lock the doors and do not touch anything. Keep everyone away from the hold-up area and guard anything that may have been touched by the robber(s).

- Save anything left behind by the robber(s) such as a note, weapon, bag, clothing and do not handle any of these items.

- While waiting for the police, do not discuss the crime with other witnesses. All those involved should make individual notes of the information they have while it is fresh in their minds.