

Chapter 12

Protecting Yourself from Crime

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SYNOPSIS

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12-1. Protection from Street Crime

- ▶ Walk with confidence and remain aware of your surroundings.
- ▶ Do not walk alone on dark, deserted streets.
- ▶ Park in well-lit areas as close as possible to the door of a business.
- ▶ Ask a store clerk to walk you to your car.
- ▶ Lock your car doors at all times.
- ▶ Look under, around, and inside your car before getting in it.
- ▶ Keep your wallet or purse where pickpockets cannot reach it. A close-fitting pouch is more secure than a purse.
- ▶ Hold your purse firmly and do not leave it unattended on a counter, grocery cart, or car seat.
- ▶ Men should keep wallets in a front pants pocket or inside a suit coat pocket.

- ▶ Separate your cash, checks, and credit cards in your purse or pocket to reduce a loss if a pickpocket tries to take your wallet.
- ▶ Only carry the cards you know you will need that day, and never carry your Social Security card.
- ▶ Carry a driver's license and other important papers in a small wallet kept in your pocket.
- ▶ Never carry a large sum of money.
- ▶ Never write your PIN number on your ATM or Electronic Banking Transfer cards.
- ▶ Avoid ATM machines in deserted areas. Instead, use ATMs in stores or bank lobbies.
- ▶ Keep a list of your credit cards somewhere other than your wallet to make it easier to report a loss. Report any loss immediately.
- ▶ If you are going out alone at night, let someone know your plans. When out alone, keep a whistle or personal body alarm handy and hold your keys in your hand while walking.
- ▶ Avoid waiting at deserted bus stops. Walk to the next bus stop where others may be waiting. Also, consider taking a taxi and ask the driver to wait until you are inside at home.
- ▶ If you are riding the bus, be aware of anyone who might be staring at you. Tell the bus driver if you are concerned for your safety. You can prevent trouble by anticipating it.
- ▶ If someone grabs your purse, do not put yourself at risk by resisting. If you try to resist, you may be injured. Other options are to sit down to avoid being knocked down, make noise, whistle, or call for help. In any case, tell the police as soon as possible.
- ▶ Always remember — your life and well-being are more important than your belongings.

Victims' compensation programs help victims of violent crimes. For more information or an application form, contact your local district attorney's office.

12-2. Protection at Home

- ▶ When planning to be away from home, never hide a door key under the doormat, behind the shutter, or in a mailbox. These are the first places a burglar looks. A neighbor or family member can keep an extra key for you.
- ▶ Turn on some inside lights when you are away. Use timers to vary the lights you leave on. A dark home is an invitation to burglars.
- ▶ Keep outside lights near doors and large windows turned on. Strong outside lighting helps prevent burglaries.

- ▶ When you plan to be away from home a long time, tell the police. Ask a friend or family member to check your home each day, turn on different lights, pick up mail and newspapers, mow the grass, and set out trash on regular trash pick-up days.
- ▶ Lock your doors and windows whether you are at home or away, and remember to keep your screen or storm door locked.
- ▶ When at home, keep your shades pulled at night and whenever you are undressing. Be cautious as to who knows you are alone.
- ▶ When someone knocks at your door, first check to see who it is and do not open your door to a stranger. Ask for identification and references before you let anyone into your house. If the person shows you a business card, call the company for proof before you let the stranger into your home. Also, call the police or fire department if anyone claiming to be an officer is at your door.
- ▶ Use deadbolt locks that require a key inside and outside (but keep your key in the inside of the door in case of a fire).
- ▶ Consider replacing the glass in your door with Plexiglas or Lexan or covering it with a decorative iron grill.
- ▶ Keep all doors and windows in good repair.
- ▶ Inside locks should secure all windows, except emergency exits. Place a broomstick or pole in the track of sliding doors or windows so they cannot be forced open by a burglar.
- ▶ Trim shrubs and bushes hiding doors and windows because they make excellent cover for burglars.
- ▶ Do not keep large amounts of money in your house. Burglars look in your bedroom first for valuables, so put valuables somewhere else in the house or in a safe deposit box.
- ▶ Do not list your first name or address in the telephone book or on your mailbox.
- ▶ Call your local police department for a home security and personal safety review of your home.
- ▶ Call your local fire department for help designing a fire safety plan.
- ▶ Mark your valuables with an identification number or name. This makes it difficult for a burglar to sell your valuables and easier for the police to return them to you. Your local police department can refer you to an engraving service. Sometimes libraries will have engraving tools to loan. Photograph jewelry and artwork and keep copies of these in a safe deposit box or with your insurance agent.

12-3. Protection from Abuse

You do not have to accept threats or abuse from anyone, including your family. If someone close to you has threatened you with violence or abused you in any way, the Colorado Domestic Abuse law can help protect you. Under this law, you can get an **injunction**, which is an order to stop the abuser from contacting you or coming to your home or place of work.

Under this law the abuser must be:

- ▶ A current or former relative;
- ▶ Someone who lived or lives with you; or
- ▶ Someone you are or have been intimately involved with.

A temporary or permanent **restraining order** to prevent domestic abuse may include:

- ▶ Stopping an abuser from threatening, molesting, injuring, or contacting you; and
- ▶ Keeping the abuser from your home if you can show that you could be physically or emotionally harmed.

Even if someone does not fit the definition of an abuser under the Colorado Domestic Abuse law (such as a stranger or home health worker), you can still get a restraining order against him or her. Under this rule, the county court can give you a temporary or permanent restraining order if anyone has:

- ▶ Attacked, beaten, or molested you;
- ▶ Threatened your life; or
- ▶ Threatened to do serious bodily harm to you.

There is a special type of restraining order available to older persons. People 60 or older who have been emotionally abused can get a restraining order to prevent further emotional abuse. The abused person or any other person can ask for the restraining order.

With a temporary or permanent restraining order to prevent emotional abuse you can stop someone from:

- ▶ Verbal threats or assaults;
- ▶ Verbal harassment;
- ▶ The inappropriate use or threat of inappropriate use of medications;
- ▶ The inappropriate use of physical or chemical restraints;
- ▶ The misuse of a power of attorney that results in unreasonable confinement or restriction of your liberty if you are 60 years or older; and/or
- ▶ The misuse of a guardianship or conservatorship that results in unreasonable confinement or restriction of your liberty if you are 60 years or older.

You can get the necessary forms and instructions for all three types of restraining orders at the county court in the county where the abuser lives. The filing fee and sheriff's fee for service can be waived if you cannot afford to pay it. You can contact victims' assistance agencies to accompany you and assist you with the paperwork.

Victims' assistance programs and some legal services programs can help you prepare the forms you need. They also can refer you to safe shelters and other services.

You will want to file a copy of your restraining order with your local police department.

If your abuser disobeys the court order, call your local police or sheriff immediately for help. If you do not feel satisfied with their response, talk to the supervisor or captain of the district police station.

If you wish, you may cancel the order later by going back into court. However, consider this decision carefully and discuss your options with someone you trust.

12-4. Injunctions

A temporary or permanent restraining order to prevent domestic abuse may include:

- ▶ Restraining a party from threatening, molesting, injuring, or contacting any other party or the minor children of either of the parties;
- ▶ Excluding a party from the family home or the home of another party upon showing that physical or emotional harm would otherwise result; and/or
- ▶ Awarding temporary care and control of minor children of either party for up to 120 days.

You can get the necessary forms and instructions for this type of restraining order at county, district, and authorized municipal courts. You must go to the county where the abuser lives. The filing fee and sheriff's fee for service can be waived if you cannot afford to pay it. You can contact victims' assistance agencies to accompany you to court and assist you with the paperwork.

12-5. Protection from Emotional Abuse

If someone who does not fit the definition of an abuser under the Colorado Domestic Abuse law (such as a stranger or home health worker) threatens you or abuses you, you can use an injunction to get a restraining order against them.

Under this rule, the county court can give you a temporary and/or permanent restraining order if someone has:

- ▶ Attacked, beaten, or molested you;
- ▶ Threatened your life; or
- ▶ Threatened to do serious bodily harm to you.

You can get the necessary forms and instructions for this type of restraining order at the county court in the county where the abuser lives. The filing fee and sheriff's fee for service can be waived if you cannot afford to pay it. You can contact victims' assistance agencies to accompany you and assist you with the paperwork.

There is a special type of restraining order available to older persons. People 60 or older who have been emotionally abused can get a restraining order to prevent further emotional abuse. The abused person or any other person can ask for the restraining order.

A temporary and/or permanent restraining order to prevent emotional abuse may include restraining a party from acts that:

- ▶ Constitute verbal threats or assaults;
- ▶ Constitute verbal harassment;
- ▶ Result in the inappropriate use or threat of inappropriate use of medications;
- ▶ Result in the inappropriate use of physical or chemical restraints;
- ▶ Result in the misuse of a power or authority granted to a person through a power of attorney that results in the unreasonable confinement or restriction of the liberty of a person 60 years of age or older; and/or
- ▶ Result in the misuse of a power or authority granted to a person by a court in a guardianship or conservatorship proceeding that results in the unreasonable confinement or restriction of the liberty of a person 60 years or older.

12-6. Glossary

At-Risk Adult. An individual 18 years or older who is susceptible to mistreatment or self-neglect because the individual is unable to perform or obtain services necessary for the individual's health, safety, or welfare, or lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make or communicate responsible decisions concerning the individual's person or affairs.

Conservator. An individual, institution, or other organization that is appointed to be responsible for the property of an incapacitated person.

Financial Exploitation. The illegal or unauthorized use of an at-risk adult's funds, property, or resources for another person's profit or advantage.

Guardian. An individual, institution, or other organization that is appointed to be responsible for the care and custody of the person of an incapacitated person through a formal court proceeding.

Injunction. A court order directing the people named within the order to refrain from doing certain specified acts or to do a particular act.

Power of Attorney. A written instrument by which one person, called the principal, appoints another as his or her agent or attorney in fact, and gives the agent the authority to perform certain specified acts or kinds of acts on behalf of the principal.

Representative Payee. An individual, institution, or other organization that is appointed to receive payments on behalf of a person receiving Social Security disability or retirement, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or Veterans Administration benefits if that person is unable to manage his or her financial affairs.

Restraining Order. An injunction directing the person named within the order to refrain from doing certain specified acts.

12-7. Resources

Colorado Area Agencies on Aging Fund Title III Legal Programs provide free legal assistance to persons age 60 or older. For a referral to the program nearest you, call your local Area Agency on Aging or the State Legal Assistance Developer.

Area Agencies on Aging:

Washington, Yuma, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, and Sedgwick counties:

Northeastern Colorado Association of Local Governments
Northern Region
231 Main St., Ste. 211
Fort Morgan, CO 80701
(970) 867-9409

Larimer County:

Larimer County Office on Aging
Northeastern Region
Larimer County Human Services
2601 Midpoint, Ste. 112
Fort Collins, CO 80524
(970) 498-7755

Weld County:

Weld County Area Agency on Aging
Northeastern Region
P.O. Box 1805
1551 N. 17th Ave.
Greeley, CO 80632
(970) 353-3800

Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Gilpin, and Jefferson counties:

Denver Regional Council of Governments
Northeastern Region
Aging Services Division
1290 Broadway, Ste. 700
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 455-1000

Boulder County:

Boulder County Aging Services Division
Northeastern Region
P.O. Box 471
3482 N. Broadway
Boulder, CO 80306
(303) 441-3570

Park, El Paso, and Teller counties:

Pikes Peak Area Agency on Aging
Southern Region
15 S. 7th St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80905
(719) 471-2096

Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson, and Lincoln counties:

East Central Council of Governments
Northeastern Region
P.O. Box 28
128 Colorado Ave.
Stratton, CO 80836
(719) 348-5562

Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, and Prowers counties:

Lower Arkansas Valley Area Agency on Aging
Southern Region
P.O. Box 494
13 W. 3rd St., Room 110
La Junta, CO 81050
(719) 383-3166

Pueblo County:

Pueblo Area Agency on Aging
Southern Region
2631 E. 4th St.
Pueblo, CO 81001
(719) 583-6110

Alamosa, Conejos, Mineral, Rio Grande, Saguache, and Costilla counties:

South-Central Colorado Seniors, Inc.
Southern Region
P.O. Box 639
1116 3rd St.
Alamosa, CO 81101
(719) 589-4511

Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Juan counties:

San Juan Basin Area Agency on Aging
Western Region
103 N. Chestnut
Cortez, CO 81321
(970) 564-2774

Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel counties:

Region 10 Area Agency on Aging
Western Region
Drawer 849
300 N. Cascade Ave.
Montrose, CO 81402
(970) 249-2436

Garfield, Mesa, Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt counties:

Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado
Western Region
P.O. Box 20000-5035
510 29½ Rd.
Grand Junction, CO 81502
(970) 248-2717

Eagle, Grand, Jackson, Pitkin, and Summit counties:

Alpine Area Agency on Aging
Western Region
P.O. Box 2308
249 Warren Ave.
Silverthorne, CO 80498
(970) 468-0295

Chaffee, Custer, Fremont, and Lake counties:

Upper Arkansas AAA
Southern Region
139 E. 3rd St.
Salida, CO 81201-2612
(719) 539-3341

Huerfano and Las Animas counties:

South Central Council of Governments AAA
Southern Region
300 Bonaventure Ave.
Trinidad, CO 81082
(719) 845-1133

Legal Assistance Developer for the Elderly

The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People

455 Sherman St., Ste. 130
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 722-0300
(303) 722-3619 (TTY)

Colorado Crime Victims Compensation Programs

First Judicial District

District Attorney's Building
500 Jefferson County Pkwy.
Golden, CO 80401
(303) 271-6846

Second Judicial District

201 W. Colfax, Dept. 801
Denver, CO 80202
(720) 913-9253

Third Judicial District

500 S. Albert
Walsenburg, CO 81089
(719) 738-1510

Fourth Judicial District

105 E. Vermijo
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
(719) 520-6211

Fifth Judicial District

P.O. Box 2000
Georgetown, CO 80444
(303) 569-2567, ext. 10

Sixth Judicial District

1060 Main Ave.
P.O. Box 3455
Durango, CO 81302
(970) 247-8850

Seventh Judicial District

1200 N. Grand Ave., Ste. D
Montrose, CO 81401
(970) 252-4275

Eighth Judicial District

201 La Porte, Ste. 200
Fort Collins, CO 80521
(970) 498-7200

Ninth Judicial District

109 8th St., Ste. 308
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601
(970) 945-8635

Tenth Judicial District

701 Court St.
Pueblo, CO 81003
(719) 583-6092

Eleventh Judicial District

136 Justice Center Rd., Rm. 203
Cañon City, CO 81212
(719) 269-0170

Twelfth Judicial District

426 San Juan Ave.
Alamosa, CO 81101
(719) 589-3691

Thirteenth Judicial District

336 14th St.
Burlington, CO 80807
(719) 346-5247, ext. 15

Fourteenth Judicial District

121 W. Victory Wy., Ste. 302
Craig, CO 81625
(970) 824-9175

Fifteenth Judicial District

110 E. Oak St.
Lamar, CO 81052
(719) 336-7446

Sixteenth Judicial District

311 Santa Fe
La Junta, CO 81050-0928
(719) 384-8786

Seventeenth Judicial District

1100 Judicial Center Dr., Rm. 205
Brighton, CO 80601
(303) 835-5641

Eighteenth Judicial District

7305 S. Potomac, Ste. 300
Englewood, CO 80112
(720) 874-8607

Nineteenth Judicial District

P.O. Box 1167
Greeley, CO 80632
(970) 356-4010, ext. 4748

Twentieth Judicial District

Boulder County Courts Bldg.
1035 Kimbark St.
Longmont, CO 80501
(303) 682-6801 or -6802

Twenty-First Judicial District

P.O. Box 20000-5031
Grand Junction, CO 81502-5031
(970) 244-1643

Twenty-Second Judicial District

103 N. Chestnut St.
P.O. Box 936
Cortez, CO 81321
(970) 565-3788

Elder Abuse:

Call 911 or your local police department.

Adult Protection

Call your county Department of Social Services. You may find a list of contact information for these offices at www.cdhs.state.co.us/servicebycounty.htm and in section 5-7, "Resources."

Colorado Coalition for Elder Rights and Adult Protection

(303) 866-2849 or (800) 773-1366

AARP ElderWatch

Through the Colorado Consumer Line: (800) 222-4444 (option 2) for referrals and assistance information.

Metro Denver: (303) 222-4444

Denver District Attorney's Office

(720) 913-9000

Adams/Broomfield counties District Attorney's Office

(303) 659-7720

Arapahoe/Douglas counties District Attorney's Office
(720) 874-8500

Jefferson/Gilpin counties District Attorney's Office
(303) 271-6800

* Based on a chapter originally written by Lisa Curtis, Office of the District Attorney, Second Judicial District.