

PERSONAL SAFETY GUIDE



A GUIDE FOR EVERYONE

Outlining the simple steps we can all take to make ourselves safer.

On behalf of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, County Manager, Sheriff's Office and the Children's Collaborative Action Team we are pleased to present you with a Personal Safety Guide. This guide is to assist you in developing a personal safety plan for both home and work. We hope that you will take the time to read through this guide as it contains useful information for you and your family.

Greg Munks, Sheriff
San Mateo County Sheriff's Office

PERSONAL SAFETY

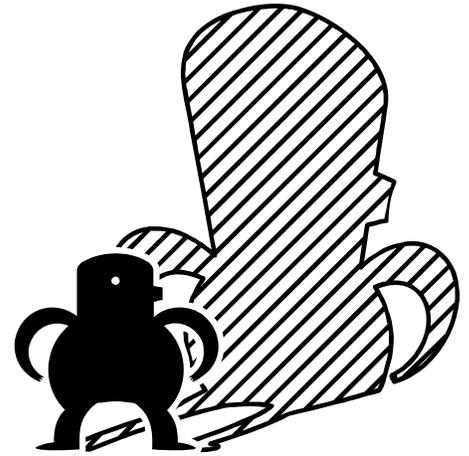
TAKE AWAY THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CRIME BY:

TRUSTING YOUR INTUITION - If you feel threatened or something does not feel right, take action immediately and change the situation. Your instincts are your best tools for personal safety.

Be AWARE - Awareness helps you avoid becoming victimized by letting a potential assailant know you are aware of what is going on around you.

Be ASSERTIVE with your . . .

- **Body** - walk, look, and move with confidence and with purpose. Do not walk with your head down, but don't challenge people either – these extremes will draw attention to an attacker.
- **Voice** - set personal boundaries, educate people on how to treat you; scream and cause a scene if necessary. 80% of all assaults can be prevented with proper assertiveness.



QUICK TIPS:



- Plan your itinerary with safety in mind.
- Know the safe places where you live, work, and play.
- Police stations, fire stations, hospitals, and open businesses are all safe places.
- Keep your valuables concealed.
- If carrying a wallet, keep it in a front pocket.
- If someone is walking behind you or approaching you and you are not sure of their intent, make eye contact with them for one second. This will let the person know that you are aware, you see them and you are not a victim.
- Walk in well lit, well-traveled streets. Avoid shortcuts through wooded areas, parking lots, or alleys.
- Walk facing traffic to avoid being surprised by someone in a vehicle. If someone tries to pull you into a vehicle, run, scream, fight, do what ever you can to avoid being taken.
- Don't fumble in your purse or pocket for your door key; have it in-hand before you reach your home or vehicle.
- If you think someone is following you, abruptly switch directions or cross the street. If you're still being followed, go to a public place and ask for help.
- Remember you can call 9-1-1 toll free from any public pay phone. Cellular phone users should program 9-1-1 into your direct dial feature.

AUTOMOBILE SAFETY



✓ THINGS TO DO:

- ✓ Lock all doors upon entering your vehicle.
- ✓ Have your car keys in hand and ready to unlock the door.
- ✓ Always check your car before getting in; make sure no one is hiding inside or underneath your car. Once inside, lock your door.
- ✓ It is best to park in attended lots. If you must leave a key with the attendant, leave only the ignition key or valet key. In all other cases, lock your car.
- ✓ Park only in well lit areas at night.
- ✓ If you have a flat tire in an area you feel might not be safe, try to keep driving (slowly) until you reach a safe location.
- ✓ If your car breaks down, open the hood, get back in the car and lock the door. If someone comes to help, roll down the window just enough to ask them to call law enforcement.
- ✓ If you feel you are being followed, drive to the nearest police station or public place.
- ✓ When an emergency vehicle approaches, yield the right-of-way. Immediately drive to the right hand edge or curb of the roadway. Keep clear of any intersection. Stop and remain stopped until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed. *California Vehicle Code Section 21806(A)(1).*

DO NOT

- ✗ Leave packages or personal items in open view in the car; place them in the trunk.
- ✗ Pick-up a hitchhiker.
- ✗ Stop to assist a disabled motorist. Call 9-1-1 for them.
- ✗ Try to beat the emergency vehicle to an intersection.
- ✗ Make sudden moves. Indicate your intentions with your blinkers.

MAKE A WINTER SURVIVAL KIT FOR YOUR CAR:

- Blankets
- First aid kit
- A can & waterproof matches (to melt snow for water)
- Windshield scraper
- Booster cables
- Road maps
- Mobile phone
- Compass
- Toolkit
- Paper towels
- Tire chains (in areas w/heavy snow)
- Bag of sand or cat litter (to pour on ice or snow for added traction)
- Tow rope
- Collapsible shovel
- Container of water and high-calorie canned or dried foods and a can opener
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Canned compressed air with sealant (for emergency tire repair)
- Brightly colored cloth



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



- While waiting for a bus/train, stand near others, keeping a safe distance away from the approaching bus/train.
 - If the immediate area is deserted or in darkness, stand near an occupied building or lighted area until transportation arrives.
 - If the coach is empty or near empty, sit as far up front to the driver as possible.
 - If someone begins to bother you, get up and notify the driver immediately.
- Upon arriving at your stop, be aware of those who get off with you. If you feel you are being followed, go to the nearest occupied building or seek assistance from transit personnel or police.
 - After dark, attempt to get off the bus in a well-lighted area. Use well-lighted streets to get to your destination and pre-plan your route if possible.

FIREARM SAFETY



California Penal Code Section 12035 identifies “criminal storage of a firearm” as storage of a loaded firearm where a child has access to the firearm. If the firearm is in a locked container or uses a locking device, the firearm is no longer considered “criminally stored”. Safe storage of firearms is the duty of all firearms owners.

FREE GUN LOCKS

The San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office offers free firearm locking devices to anyone who requests them. The firearm locking devices can be picked up at the Sheriff’s Office School Resources Unit on the first floor of 400 County Government Center or by contacting the Sheriff’s Office Range Facility at (650) 573-2340.



For more information on
safe storage of firearms visit:

www.projectchildsafe.org

CHILD SAFETY



Effective January 1, 2005, all children under six (6) years of age or weighing less than 60 pounds must be properly restrained in the backseat of passenger vehicles.

The law also prohibits children from riding in the front seat of a vehicle with an active passenger airbag if the child is under the age of one or weighs less than 20 pounds or is riding in a rear-facing restraint system.

Child Restraint Law (California Vehicle Code Section 27360-27368)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REGARDING CHILD RESTRAINTS:



Visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's website: www.nhtsa.gov

Schedule a **FREE SAFETY SEAT INSPECTION** with the Sheriff's Office School Resource Unit. Call (650) 363-4763 or (650) 363-4531. For more information visit the Sheriff's Office website: www.smcsheriff.com

CHILDREN & UNATTENDED VEHICLES:

Parents may mistakenly think that they can safely leave a child in a vehicle for a "quick" errand. Unfortunately, a delay of just a few minutes can lead to tragedy.

Research and real-world incidents have demonstrated that on a warm, sunny day, even at temperatures as mild as 60 degrees Fahrenheit, a closed vehicle can be lethal. Because a child's body temperature increases three to five times **faster** than an adult's and children are not able to dissipate heat as efficiently as adults, every minute counts when a child is trapped in a hot vehicle.

VEHICLE HEAT STUDY

Average elapsed time and temperature rise:

- ▣ 10 minutes ~ 19 deg F
- ▣ 20 minutes ~ 29 deg F
- ▣ 30 minutes ~ 34 deg F
- ▣ 60 minutes ~ 43 deg F
- ▣ 1 to 2 hours ~ 45-50 deg F

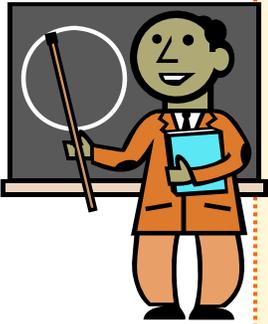


*Information source: Golden Gate Weather Services
(<http://ggweather.com/heat/index.htm>)*

When the outside temperature is 90 degrees Fahrenheit, even with the windows cracked, the air temperature inside a car can reach 125 degrees Fahrenheit in just 20 minutes and approximately 140 degrees in 40 minutes. In these conditions, young children can die or suffer permanent disability in a matter of minutes.

In addition to heat stroke, children left unattended in automobiles may also experience other types of injuries as well. For example, there are documented cases in which children left unattended in cars have put the vehicle in motion and hurt themselves and other people. Carjackings and abductions that may occur when a child is left alone in a vehicle are also cause for concern.

SAFETY TIPS



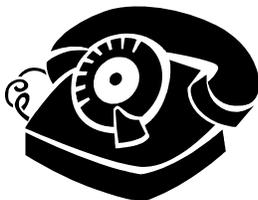
- Children should never be left alone in a vehicle, not even to run a quick errand.
- Keep vehicles locked at all times; even in the garage or driveway.
- Keys should never be left within reach of children.
- Teach your children to never play in or around a vehicle.
- Consider installing cross-view mirrors and/or a backup detection device on your vehicle.
- Always make sure that all child passengers have left the car after it is parked.
- If a child is locked inside a car, get them out as quickly as possible. If they are hot or seem sick, call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.

MISSING CHILDREN

Source: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (www.missingkids.com)

ACT IMMEDIATELY if you believe that your child is missing.

- Search the house checking closets, piles of laundry, in and under beds, inside old refrigerators - wherever a child may crawl or hide.
- If you still cannot find your child, **immediately call your local law enforcement agency.**
- If your child disappears in a store, notify the store manager or security office. Then immediately call your local law enforcement agency. Many stores have a *Code Adam* plan of action—if a child is missing in the store, employees immediately mobilize to look for the missing child.
- When you call law enforcement, provide your child's name, date of birth, height, weight, and any other unique identifiers such as eyeglasses and braces. Tell them when you noticed that your child was missing and what clothing he or she was wearing.
- Request that your child's name and identifying information be immediately entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Person File.
- After you have reported your child missing to law enforcement, call the:



**National Center for
Missing & Exploited Children
1-800-THE-LOST
(1-800-843-5678)**

TEACH YOUR CHILD THESE SAFETY TIPS:



- Never get into anyone's car without your parent's permission.
- Move away from a car that pulls up beside you if you don't know the driver.
- Say, "No, thank you," if a stranger or someone else offers you candy or gifts.
- Never answer the door if you are home alone.
- Don't play in deserted buildings.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Kids and Cars:** www.kidsandcars.org - Mission is to assure no child dies or is injured in a non-traffic, non-crash motor vehicle related event.
- **CyberTipline:** www.cybertipline.com - Handles leads from individuals reporting the sexual exploitation of children.
- **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children:** www.missingkids.com
Provides services nationwide for families and professionals in the prevention of abducted, endangered, and sexually exploited children.
- **San Mateo Juvenile Mediation Program:** (650) 312-5269
Conducts voluntary and confidential meetings between victims and juvenile offenders to discuss the crime's impact on everyone involved.
- **Children's Collaborative Action Team (CCAT):** www.smccapc.org
Parent Support Line: (888) 220-7575 Child abuse prevention.

"Hold Me. Hug Me. Love Me. . . But please don't ever shake me!"

Information provided by the Children's Collaborative Action Team (CCAT)

Shaking a baby can cause learning problems, blindness, permanent brain damage, or death. Shaking usually happens when a baby or young child will not stop crying.

When your baby cries . . .

- ♥ Check his diaper
- ♥ Feed or burp her
- ♥ Sing or hum to him
- ♥ Gently rock her
- ♥ Walk him outside in a stroller
- ♥ Take her for a car ride (in a child safety seat)

If you feel frustrated, overwhelmed or angry . . .

- ♥ Place your baby in a safe, secure place and leave the room for a few minutes.
- ♥ Ask someone you trust (a parent, relative or friend) to watch your baby for you.

If your baby has a fever, is vomiting, or is crying louder and longer than usual, contact your doctor or go to the hospital.

And remember, no matter how angry or impatient you feel – Please don't shake your baby . . . EVER!

For information on Child Abuse Prevention, visit the Children's Collaborative Action Team's website at: www.smccapc.org or call: 1-888-220-7575.



SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION

Sexual assault is a serious offense which affects women as well as men. No one deserves to be a victim of sexual assault. It is always the fault of the perpetrator. Because every rape or assault is different, there's no single solution for thwarting an attack. However, awareness, assertiveness, and a willingness to fight back are proven tools of prevention.

INFORMATION AND FACTS:

- About 80 % of rape victims knew their attacker.
- The majority of rapes are planned. Research shows that a rapist is looking for available, vulnerable targets. It does not matter what you are wearing, what you are doing or where you are. No person asks to be hurt or degraded.
- Most rapists appear to be normal; most are married and young. They can be of any race, color, or economic class.

IF YOU ARE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED:

- Go to a safe place.
- Notify law enforcement immediately. Reporting the crime can help you regain a sense of personal power and control.
- **YOU ARE THE EVIDENCE.** Preserve the physical evidence.

DO NOT:



- *Shower*
 - *Douche*
 - *Brush your teeth*
 - *Change your clothes*
 - *Disturb the scene of the crime*
- Even if you think you do not have any physical injuries, get a medical examination.
 - If you feel you have been given a rape drug (Rohypnol or GHB “gamma-hydroxybutyrate”) have the medical attendant take a urine sample. These drugs are more likely to be detected in urine than in the blood.
 - Seek professional counselors who are trained to assist rape and sexual assault victims move through this trauma.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

People with disabilities may be perceived as “easy targets.” Below are suggestions that will help reduce the chance of becoming a target of crime.

- If you are mobility impaired, always be aware of your surroundings and of barriers that may hinder your escape.
- Be aware of pouches, backpacks or bags, particularly when you are in crowds. Make sure they are within your control and that you know where they are in relation to you.
- If you are visually impaired, know your surroundings. If you are traveling to an unfamiliar location, be accompanied by a sighted person. If you must travel alone, travel in high traffic areas; don't allow yourself to become isolated.
- Shriek alarms, whistles and air horns are great for attracting attention and scaring off attackers.
- Cellular phones can be useful if you need assistance and cannot get to a public phone.
- If you have to call 9-1-1, tell the dispatcher that you have a disability and that you require a specific accommodation.
- If you are looking for attendant care or personal care aids, make sure you contact a recognized disability specific agency.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



- **AMERICAN RED CROSS**
Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities
Website: www.redcross.org
- **FEMA**
Disaster Preparedness for People With Disabilities
Website: www.fema.gov
- **SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES**
Ensures full community participation of people with disabilities.
Telephone: (650) 573-2580
- **US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**
Website: www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

HOME SAFETY



- Take a critical look at your home every four months to see if it is secure.
- If you discover a burglar breaking in or already in the home, leave immediately and call 9-1-1.
- During an emergency it is difficult to remember the simplest numbers. Have emergency numbers listed near your phone or pre-set all emergency numbers on speed dial.
- Do not place valuables where they can be seen from the windows.
- If you decide to keep a firearm in the house, store it in a gun safe designed for this purpose.
- All doors in your home leading to the outside should have dead-bolt locks with one-inch throws.
- When away at night, leave a light on.
- Do not leave a key over a door or under a mat or in a “hide-a-key.”
- Your garage door should have a padlock.
- Never leave a message on your answering machine indicating you are not at home.
- Use as much outdoor lighting as possible, especially in areas that may conceal a burglar’s activity. Use motion detection lighting in these areas.

When Leaving on a Trip



- Load luggage in garage; don’t advertise the fact you are leaving on a trip.
- Stop all deliveries.
- Connect a timer to a light.
- Have someone maintain your lawn and pick up your mail.
- Mark all valuable property with your California driver’s license number.



SMOKE DETECTORS ARE LIFE PROTECTORS!

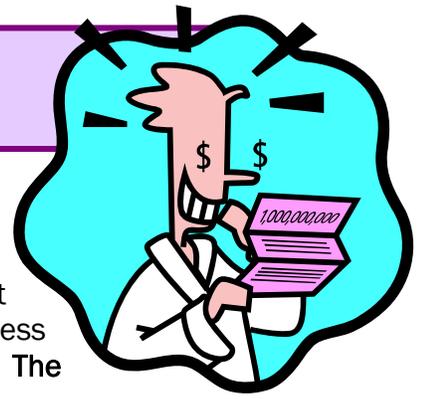
Protect yourself and your family by installing and maintaining one or more smoke detectors and developing a fire escape plan, which you practice often.



- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home, including the basement. For extra safety, install smoke detectors both inside and outside the sleeping area.
- If you are unable to stand on a ladder or have difficulty installing a smoke detector, ask a relative or friend for help.

FRAUD & SCAM

The number of scams perpetuated against the public is on the increase. The elderly are targeted more than 80% of the time. The most common frauds are prize offers, travel packages, vitamins, and other health products, investments, and charities. Before sending any money always checkout unfamiliar companies with your local consumer protection agency: Better Business Bureau, California Attorney General, or the National Fraud Information Center. The old saying is true, *“If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.”*



ATM / BANK SAFETY



ATMs are a great convenience, but can compromise your safety. A robber looking for easy prey only has to stake out an ATM in a low-traffic, dimly lit area and bide his time. Below are some tips when using an ATM.

- Be aware of your surroundings, particularly at night.
- If you observe or sense suspicious persons or circumstances, don't use the ATM; or, if you're in the middle of a transaction, cancel it, and leave the area.
- If you must use the ATM at night, use one located inside a store or in a well-lighted area.
- If the lights at the ATM are not working, don't use it.
- If you need to use the ATM at night, take another person along if possible.
- If you are using a drive-up ATM, be sure your passenger windows and doors are locked.
- Keep your Personal Identification Number (PIN) a secret. Never write it down anywhere, especially on your ATM card.
- To keep your account information confidential, take receipts/transaction records with you.
- Do not count or display any money you received from the ATM until you are in a safe place. Immediately put your money into your pocket or purse and count it later.
- Have all deposits and documents ready before you reach the ATM.

IDENTITY THEFT



While you cannot prevent identity theft, you can reduce your risk of fraud by following some guidelines. The most important one is to check your credit report at least once a year. If you do become a victim of identity theft, you can catch it early by checking your credit report regularly.

OTHER STEPS TO CONSIDER:

- If you shop on the Internet, use a secure browser (look for https: in the browser address) or place your order by phone or mail.
- Check your Social Security Earnings and Benefits statement once a year to confirm no one else is using your number.
- Consider getting an unlisted home phone number.
- Make a list or photocopy of all your credit cards and keep them in a safe place.
- When making new passwords, do not use easily guessed ones like your birthday or social security number. Never carry a list of passwords with you.
- When ordering new checks, pick them up at the bank instead of having them mailed to your home.
- Shield the keypad when at an ATM or using a phone calling card.
- Opt-out of pre-approved credit offers by contacting www.the-dma.org or call 888-567-8688. You can request to be removed from mailing and calling lists.
- If you are missing a credit card statement or it appears late, a thief may have filed a change of address request with the post office or the creditor. Call the creditor and check if there have also been additional cards requested. Call the post office to check on a change of address request.
- Shred unused pre-approved credit card applications, receipts, bills, and other financial information.
- Cancel your unused credit cards and limit the number of open credit card accounts you have.
- Always take credit /debit card receipts with you. Never throw them in a public trash can.
- Only release your Social Security when necessary.

DO NOT:

- Carry your Social Security card, your birth certificate, or passport with you unless you need it for a specific reason.
- Print your driver's license or social security number on your check.
- Carry more than two credit cards with you.
- Leave bill payment envelopes at your mailbox for the postal carrier to pick-up, especially with the little red flag up. This is an invitation.
- Give out personal information over the phone unless you initiated the call and have a trusted business relationship with the person.

IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF ID THEFT.

A victim must act quickly after learning that they are a victim of identity theft. This can prevent further use of the victim's credit identity. Keep a log of the date, time and substance of all telephone conversations related to the theft. File a police report. Keep the report number and obtain a copy of the report. You may need both to verify the crime to creditors.

Credit Bureaus: Ask that your file be flagged with a fraud alert and add a victim's consumer statement to your report.

- Equifax - www.Equifax.com / Telephone: 800-525-6285
- Experian - www.Experian.com / Telephone: 888-397-3742
- Transunion - www.Transunion.com / Telephone: 800-680-7289



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:



- **RAPID ENFORCEMENT ALLIED COMPUTER TEAM** - www.reacttf.org
Committed to reducing the incidence of high technology crime through the apprehension of the professional organizers of large scale criminal activities.
- **OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL - IDENTITY THEFT**
www.caag.state.ca.us/idtheft/tips.htm
Information to assist individuals who are victims or suspect they may be victims of identity theft.

SAN MATEO COUNTY RESOURCES

FOR VICTIMS

- **Rape Trauma Services (24 hrs)**
(650) 692-RAPE -or- (650) 692-7273
- **Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse (CORA)**
(650) 312-8515
- **East Palo Alto Family Violence Prevention Program**
(650) 306-0476
- **Woman, INC. 24 hour Domestic Violence Crisis Line**
(Including lesbian/bi-sexual/transgender women)
(415) 864-4722 / Toll Free (877)-DVHELPU (384-3578)
- **Children's Collaborative Action Team – Child Abuse Prevention**
1-888-220-7575 / website: www.smccapc.org

EMERGENCY

- **Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Center (24 hrs)**
South County (650) 368-6655
North County (Coastside) (650) 579-0350
- **San Mateo Medical Center Psychiatric Emergency Services**
222 West 39th Avenue, San Mateo 94403

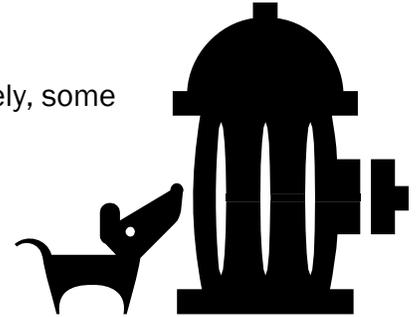
LEGAL HELP

- **Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County: 1-800 381-8898**

ANIMAL SAFETY

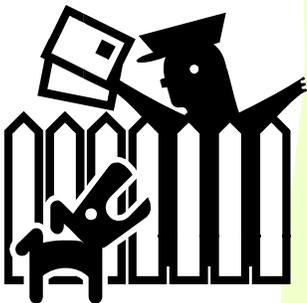
DOGS

- All breeds of dogs have the potential to attack or protect. Unfortunately, some owners promote aggression in their dogs as symbols of power.
- Children, the elderly and home service people like letter carriers and meter readers make up the majority of all dog bites.
- Do not run past or away from a dog. Dogs naturally love to chase things and can become excited or aggressive.
- Never disturb a dog that's caring for puppies, sleeping, or eating.
- If a dog approaches to sniff you, stay still. In most cases, the dog will go away when it determines you are not a threat.
- All strange dogs must be treated with caution and a person should not approach or stroke a dog unless invited to do so by its owner.



IF YOU ARE THREATENED BY A DOG:

- Remain calm. Don't scream or run.
- If you say anything, speak calmly and firmly.
- Avoid eye contact.
- Try to stay still until the dog leaves, or back away slowly until the dog is out of sight.
- Crouching to reduce your body size may relax some dogs, but any movement must be made slowly and deliberately.
- If you fall or are knocked to the ground, curl up into a ball and use your hands to protect your face.
- If someone else's dog bites you, contact authorities and tell them everything you can about the dog:
 - ♦ Name of the owner - if you know it
 - ♦ Color and size of the dog
 - ♦ Location of where you saw it, etc.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:



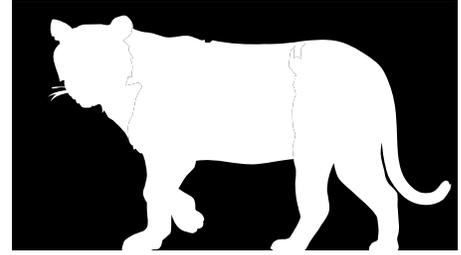
Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA (650) 340-8200
www.peninsulahumanesociety.org

San Mateo County Animal Licensing (650) 363-4220

IF YOU ENCOUNTER A **MOUNTAIN LION.**

DO NOT . . .

- ✗ Approach a lion - most mountain lions will try to avoid a confrontation.
- ✗ Run from a lion - running may stimulate a mountain lion's instinct to chase.
- ✗ Crouch down or bend over.



REMEMBER TO . . .

- Hike with a group.
- Stand and face the animal. Make eye contact. If you have small children with you, pick them up if possible so they don't panic and run.
- Do all you can to Appear Larger: Raise your arms. Open your jacket if you are wearing one. Pickup small children. Throw stones, branches, or whatever you can reach without crouching or turning your back. Wave your arms slowly and speak firmly in a loud voice.
 - If attacked, fight back with sticks, caps/hats, jackets, garden tools and your bare hands.
 - Immediately Report all encounters or attacks to the:

California Department of Fish and Game
24 Hour Dispatch Center
(916) 445-0045

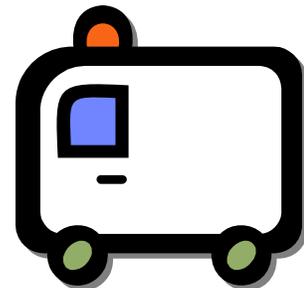


REDUCING your chances of encountering a mountain lion near your home:

- Keep the perimeter of your house well lit at night.
- Keep pets secure. Either bring pets inside or keep them in a kennel with a secure top. Don't feed pets outside: this can attract raccoons and other mountain lion prey.
- Keep children safe – make sure children are inside before dusk and not outside before dawn.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

- Remain calm.
- Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Be clear, brief and accurate.
- Tell the dispatcher what the emergency is and where it is happening.
- As long as it is safe, stay on the telephone to hear and respond to instructions.



SAN MATEO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SHERIFF GREG MUNKS



**COUNTYWIDE SECURITY UNIT
400 COUNTY CENTER
REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063
(650) 363-4400
www.smcsheriff.com**

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