



CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

## Crime Prevention News Letter

Colorado Springs  
Police Department



February 23, 2010

### IMPORTANT NUMBERS

**Emergency: 911**

**Non-Emergency:**

- \* CSPD Dispatch, 444-7000;
- \* El Paso County Sheriff, 390-5555; Crime Prevention Coordinator, 520-7151
- \* CO State Patrol, 635-0385 On the Road, \*CSP

**CSPD Patrol Divisions:**

- \* Falcon, 444-7240;
- \* Gold Hill, 385-2100;
- \* Sand Creek, 444-7270;
- \* Stetson Hills, 444-3140

**CSPD Crime Prevention Offices:**

- \* Falcon, 444-7246;
- \* Gold Hill, 385-2117;
- \* Sand Creek, 444-7276;
- \* Stetson Hills, 444-3168

**Police Operations Center**

705 S Nevada Avenue  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903  
\* 444-7595

**Other Contact Information:**

- \* Crime Stoppers, 634-STOP (7867);
- \* Drug Hotline (Narcotics Tips), 444-3111;
- \* Impound Lot, 667-2777
- \* CSPD Community Relations Office, 444- 7410 or email AskCSPD@SpringsGov.com

### Robberies and Robbery Prevention

Robberies are a quick way for criminals to make money. The definition of robbery is when someone steals or takes anything of value from you, against your will, by using force, intimidation or violence. Robberies are commonly classified by the means employed, such as armed robbery, or the place of offence, such as bank robbery.

If you have been watching the local news broadcasts during the last several weeks, you are probably aware that Colorado Springs experienced an uncharacteristic spike in the number robberies taking place within the city limits. During December 1, 2009 and January 31, 2010 CSPD received a total of 136 robbery reports. 77 of these cases, or 56.62%, were classified as business robberies and personal robberies made up the remaining 43.38%, or 59 cases. Of the 77 business cases, 62.34%, or 48 cases, involved Fast Food, Convenience/Gas Stations, or Retail Stores. Of the 59 personal robberies, 69.49%, or 41 cases, were classified as street robberies. It appeared that the vulnerable time for business robberies was between 6:00 PM and 9:00 PM and that for personal robberies between 3:00 PM and 3:00 AM.

This number of robberies taking place in such a short period of time is unusual for Colorado Springs and is hopefully an irregular occurrence that will soon subside. However, even if the numbers drop back to "normal," the thing for the wise citizen to do is to start learning appropriate counter-measures and making plans to put them into action. With that in mind, this newsletter will provide suggestions on how to respond to a robbery and, better yet, how to reduce to the possibility of being robbed. Also, information on some training provided by CSPD is included at the end

### What Should You Do If You Become The Victim Of A Robbery?

It's not easy to think about being robbed, but one of the best things you can do for yourself is to consider the possibility ahead of time and doing some mental pre-planning. To be prepared, your best protection lies in thinking ahead, "What would I do if this happened to me?" If you don't have a plan you may panic or do something to cause the robber to panic and hurt you. Look at the following suggestions and then visualize how you would respond to various scenarios that you may know of or have heard about.

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- **DO NOT PANIC** – of course this won't be easy, but 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 cannot.
- **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 cannot be changed such as scars, marks, tattoos, limps, accents, etc.
- **WEAPONS** - take careful note of any weapons. You will have to describe it 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.

## What Should You Do After A Robbery?

- Notify the police immediately and be prepared to tell them:
  1. the address, with an exact location in the building;
  2. as complete a description as possible of the robber(s);
  3. 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.;

4. a description of any vehicle used and the number of people in the vehicle;
  5. the direction of travel; and
  6. 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.

## How Can You Protect Yourself?

- Be aware of your surroundings. Walk with a purpose, head up, and looking around. Stay in lighted areas at night. The robber doesn't want to be seen.
- Stay with the crowd — there is safety in numbers.
- Women should carry their wallet in their pocket, not their purse.
- 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.
- Don't leave a purse on a counter or in a shopping cart unattended.
- Men should consider carrying two wallets, one of them filled with cut up paper. Most robbers are not going to go through the wallet until they have fled to safety.
- Be cautious when wearing "flashy" jewelry.

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- 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.
- Take the profit out of robbery by not carrying 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 such as a grocery store.
- Have your pay, social security, or retirement checks directly deposited into your bank account.
- When you go to the bank, don't flash your cash.
- 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.
- While driving, keep your vehicle doors locked.
- If you are walking and a vehicle is following you, reverse directions or cross the street.
- If someone acts suspiciously, 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.
- Have at least two employees open and close the business.
- Do not release personal information to strangers.
- Keep purses and personal valuables locked in desks or lockers.
- Install a robbery alarm.
- Place a surveillance camera behind the cash register facing the front counter. Replace videotapes regularly.
- Vary times and routes of travel for bank deposits.
- Don't use marked "moneybags" that make it obvious to would-be robbers you are carrying money for deposit.
- Keep a low balance in the cash register.
- Place excess money in a safe or deposit it as soon as possible.
- Cooperate with the robber for your own safety and the safety of others. Comply with a robber's demands. Remain calm and think clearly. Make mental notes of the robber's physical description and other observations important to law enforcement officers.
- If you have a silent alarm and can reach it without being noticed, use it. Otherwise, wait until the robber leaves.
- Be careful, most robbers are just as nervous as you are.
- Keep your business neat and clean. A tidy, orderly place of business is inviting to customers, but not to robbers. Dressing neatly also sends the right message.
- Stay alert! Know who is in your business and where they are. Watch for people who hang around without buying anything. Also, be aware of suspicious activity outside your place of business. Write down license numbers of suspicious vehicles if visible from the inside of your business.

## **Robbery Prevention Tips for Businesses**

Every business owner, manager and employee plays a part in making businesses safe. Here are some things you can do to help prevent robbery:

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- Make sure the sales counter can be seen clearly. Don't put up advertisements, flyers, displays, signs, posters or other items on windows or doors that might obstruct the view of the register from inside or outside your business. The police cruising by your store need to see in.
- Try to greet customers as they enter your business. Look them in the eye, and ask them if they need help. Your attention can discourage a robber.
- Keep your business well-lit, inside and outside. Employees should report any burned-out lights to the business owner or manager. Keep trees and bushes trimmed, so they don't block any outdoor lights.
- Encourage the police to stop by your business.
- Learn the names of the officers who patrol your business.
- Use care after dark. Be cautious when cleaning the parking lot or taking out the trash at night. Make sure another employee inside the business keeps you within eye contact while you are involved in work details outside of your building.
- If you see something suspicious, call the police. Never try to handle it yourself. It could cost you your life.
- Handle cash carefully. Avoid making your business a tempting target for robbers. Keep the amount of cash in registers low. Drop all large bills right away. If a customer tries to pay with a large bill, politely ask if he or she has a smaller one. Explain that you keep very little cash on hand.
- Use only one register at night. Leave other registers empty and open. Tilt the register drawer to show there is no money in it.
- Leave blinds and drapes partially open during closing hours.
- Make sure important signs stay posted. For example, the front door should bear signs that say, "Clerk Cannot Open the Time Lock Safe."
- If your business is robbed put your safety first. Your personal safety is more important than money or merchandise.
- Don't talk except to answer the robber's questions.
- Don't stare directly at the robber.
- Prevent surprises, keep your hands in sight at all times.
- Don't make any sudden moves.
- Tell the robber if someone is coming out of the back room or vault or working in another area of your business.
- Don't chase or follow the robber out of your place of business.
- Leave the job of catching the robber to the police.

## **Safety At Home**

- Install quality deadbolt locks on all exterior doors and use them.
- Remember a small chain between the door and doorjamb is not safe. It can be easily broken and pulled out.
- Install quality locks on all windows and use them.
- When a window is left open for ventilation, keep the opening small enough to prevent entry.
- Install a wide-angle viewer in the doors at all entrances to see who is outside without opening the door.
- Remove or trim shrubbery that hides doors and windows so neighbors or passersby can see someone trying to break into your home.

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- Light the outside of your home to discourage prowling or loitering. Use outside floodlights for all entryways, pathways, stairwells and laundry, trash and parking areas. Connect outside lights to a timing device, motion detector or a light sensitive switch so lights switch on automatically during hours of darkness.
- Make a decision about installing an alarm system only after considering such factors as the cost, the reputation of the company and the likelihood of false alarms.
- A watchdog offers additional protection.

## ***If A Stranger Is At Your Door:***

- Never indicate you are home alone.
- When home alone never open your door to a stranger.
- Use your wide-angle viewer to see who is at your door.
- Do not open the door to anyone you do not know without first verifying the person's identity. This includes police officers, repair, delivery or salespersons, and political or charity volunteers.
- Ask to see identification.
- Have the person slip their identification card under the door. If you have any doubts about the person, look up the telephone number in the telephone directory and call the company or agency the person claims to represent.
- Do not rely on telephone numbers given to you by strangers at your door, the telephone number they give you could be an accomplice.
- Do not open the door to a stranger requesting help or the use of your telephone. Offer to make the telephone call yourself while the stranger waits outside.
- When a package is delivered, ask that the parcel be left outside the door. Receipts that require a signature can be slipped under the door. Open the door and pick up the package only when you are positive the delivery person has left.

- Never allow a stranger into a security entrance. This includes someone asking to leave a package or a note for a neighbor.
- Children should be trained not to answer the door.
- Place only your first initial and last name on mailboxes and building directories. Consider listing a fictitious roommate if you live alone.
- List only your first initial and last name in the telephone directory. Do not list your address.
- Engrave all your valuable property. Keep a record of the serial numbers of valuable equipment. Photograph or videotape other valuables. Keep photographs, videotapes and records of serial numbers separate from your valuables in a safe at home or in a safe-deposit box.
- Before moving into a new residence change the locks. Previous tenants may still have keys.
- Always lock your door, even if you leave your home for just a few minutes.
- Keep venetian blinds and curtains closed, especially at night. Leave lights on in two or more rooms to indicate the presence of other persons.
- Have telephone numbers for emergencies, such as the CSPD, fire and paramedic services on every telephone instrument in the house.

## ***Intruders:***

- If you are at home and you suspect someone is trying to break in, call the CSPD immediately;
- If confronted by an intruder, remain as calm as possible;
- Consider your safety and that of your family as the highest priority; and

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- Choose a strategy such as negotiating, fleeing, screaming, fighting or complying whichever seems safest and most effective relative to the situation.

## ***Telephone Calls:***

- Do not give your telephone number to wrong telephone number callers. Ask the caller, "What telephone number are you calling?"
- Check references of any person calling seeking information about you for a survey, credit check or subscription drive. Call the agency or company the person works for and verify the identity and intent of the telephone call.
- Never reveal to a stranger or wrong telephone number caller, your address or that you are home alone.
- If you receive a threatening, harassing or obscene telephone call, notify the CSPD and your telephone company.
- Place the receiver down immediately. Do not say anything.
- Keep a record of the date, time and the content of each telephone call.

## **Safety When Walking**

- Avoid walking alone.
- Walk on streets where there are other people.
- Stay alert to your surroundings at all times. Observe people and activities around you. Look confident and purposeful when you walk.
- Plan and use the safest and most direct route to your destination.
- Choose busy, well-lighted streets and avoid isolated areas, alleys, vacant lots, abandoned buildings and construction sites.
- Walk near the curb and do not pass too close to shrubbery, dark doorways and other places of concealment.
- Avoid shortcuts.

- Become familiar with stores and gas stations that stay open late at night, as well as CSPD, sheriff, highway patrol and fire department locations.
- Walk facing traffic so you can see approaching cars.
- Carry a flashlight during hours of darkness.
- Be aware that wearing earphones connected to portable radios, cassette and CD players while walking can distract you and make you less able to sense potential danger.
- Always bring change with you for cab fare, bus fare or telephone calls in case you decide not to walk. Keep some extra money separate from your wallet or purse for emergencies.
- Never hitchhike and do not accept rides from strangers.
- Carry a personal alarm. Use the personal alarm to attract attention and to summon help if you feel you are in danger. Carry the personal alarm in your hand so that you can use it immediately.
- If followed or threatened by someone in a car, use your personal alarm or scream loud and long, cross the street and run in the opposite direction. This will force the driver to turn the car around to pursue you. Try to obtain the license plate number and a description of the car and its occupant(s).
- If followed or threatened by someone who is walking, use your personal alarm or scream loud and long, cross the street and run in the opposite direction. Head for bright lights and people.
- Do not display money or credit cards.
- Unless absolutely necessary, never wear expensive jewelry or carry large amounts of money.
- Keep your money and wallet in the inside pocket of your jacket or purse.

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- Secure your purse or handbag under your arm so that it cannot be easily snatched.
  - When arriving home by taxicab or limousine request the driver to wait until you are inside the house.
  - Have your key ready so you can open the door to your house as soon as possible.
- If a door or window has been forced open or broken while you were out, do not enter your home, because a burglar may be inside. Use a neighbor's telephone to call the CSPD. Advise the CSPD you will wait at your neighbor's house until they arrive. Make sure to give them the address.
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## CSPD TRAINING DATES:

All classes listed below are at the Gold Hill Sub-Station, 955 W. Moreno Ave

POC is Officer Bob Harris, Gold Hill Division Crime Prevention Officer

email: HARRISRO@ci.colospgs.co.us

Office (719) 385-2117

Cell (719) 499-7102

<b>COURSE</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
TASER (civilian)	Wednesday, March 10, 2010	7-8pm
ID Theft Prevention	Tuesday, March 23, , 2010	7-8pm
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles	Wednesday, April 7, 2010	7-8pm
Personal Safety	Tuesday, May 18, 2010	7-8pm
De-escalation Techniques	Tuesday, May 25, 2010	7-8pm
Teen Safety 1st ½ of the course	Wednesday, June 2 2010	7-9pm
Teen Safety second ½ of course	Wednesday, June 9, 2010	7-9pm
Teen Safety entire course	Thursday, June 24, 2010	6-10pm
Disaster Preparedness	Wednesday, August 4, 2010	7-8pm
Terrorism Awareness	Thursday, August 19, 2010	7-8pm
Home Safety (Home Invasion Prevention)	Wednesday, September 15, 2010	7-8pm
TASER (civilian)	Tuesday, September 21, 2010	7-8pm
ID theft Prevention	Wednesday, October 6, 2010	7-8pm
Travel Safety	Tuesday, October 19, 2010	7-8pm
Personal Safety	Thursday, November 4, 2010	7-8pm
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles	Thursday, December 9, 2010	7-8pm

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## **Incident Reporting**

If you need to contact the police either as a victim of a crime or in behalf of a victim of a crime, the more information you can provide the better. Below is a list of key information to try to have available when communicating suspect information to the police.

1. DATE
2. TIME
3. LOCATION:
4. VICTIM/WITNESS INFORMATION
  - 4a. Name
  - 4b. Address
  - 4c. Phone Number(s)
5. SUSPECT DESCRIPTION
  - 5a. Number of Suspects
  - 5b. Approximate Age
  - 5c. Race
  - 5d. Sex
  - 5e. Complexion
  - 5f. Height
  - 5g. Weight
  - 5h. Color Hair
  - 5i. Color Eyes
  - 5j. Facial Hair
  - 5k. Accent
  - 5l. Scars, Marks, Tattoos
6. DISGUISE WORN
  - 6a. Hat
  - 6b. Mask
  - 6c. Shirt
  - 6d. Glasses
7. CLOTHING
  - 7a. Pants
  - 7b. Jacket
  - 7c. Shoes
  - 7d. Jewelry
8. WEAPON
  - 8a. Gun
    - 8a1. Type
    - 8a2. Color
    - 8a3. Barrel Length
  - 8b. Knife
    - 8b1. Type
    - 8b2. Blade Length
9. VEHICLE
  - 9a. Type
  - 9b. Color
  - 9c. License Plate
  - 9d. No. Occupants