

SAFETY TIPS

WHAT YOU ARE LEGALLY ENTITLED TO WHEN RENTING:

- Your landlord must provide deadbolt locks on all exterior doors.
- If you would like any additional upgrades for security purposes such as an alarm, extra lighting, or bars on the windows, you must first consult with your landlord and generally you will be responsible for the cost of upgrades.

WHEN SEARCHING FOR A PLACE TO LIVE LOOK FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Ask the current residents and neighbors if they feel like the area is a safe place to live.
- Are the areas outside the building well lit, particularly from the parking areas to the entrance?
- Is there an additional security presence at the residence? If so is it a substantial presence?
- How far away is emergency assistance if it is needed?
- Is the door sturdy and are the locks sufficient?
- Do all the windows have locks and are these locks sufficient?
- You may find our Local Area Profiles handout a helpful resource when familiarizing yourself with the surrounding communities

TO AVOID BEING A VICTIM OF THEFT OR BURGLARY:

- Arrange a security survey of your property with the Prince George's County Police Department's Community Oriented Policing Service (COPS) to highlight potential security risks. Contact the COPS program coordinator at (301) 909-7126 for more information.
- Secure your valuables. Make sure you don't leave valuables outside of your residence.
- Keep doors locked at all times.
- Be sure that windows are closed and locked when you leave the home.
- Invest in additional security such as an alarm or dog. If not, put up dummy security or "Beware of dog" signs.

- Don't leave boxes for high value goods visible in your trash (e.g., computer, electronic equipment).
- If you or your roommates will not be in the home for an extended period of time, have someone collect your mail and newspapers.
- Avoid having large groups of strangers in your home.
- Don't leave valuables unattended in public places.
- Stay away from areas with high theft rates.
- Avoid overly crowded areas where it is easy to be pick pocketed.

TO AVOID BEING ROBBED:

- Don't walk alone at night if you can avoid it.
- Use services such as N.I.T.E. Ride, Shuttle-UM, and police escorts as alternatives to walking alone.
- Avoid isolated locations near high crime areas.
- Don't walk around while heavily intoxicated.
- Don't show off valuables such as cell phones, PDA's, or cash unnecessarily.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS:

Emergency Fire Rescue and Police
911

NON-EMERGENCY NUMBERS:

Prince George's County Police.... (301) 352-1200
 University of Maryland Police.....(301) 405-3555
 Maryland State Police.....(301) 345-3101
 Maryland Park Police.....(301) 731-0054
 Metro Transit Police.....(202) 962-2121
 Poison Center.....(800) 492-2414
 Animal Control & Shelter.....(301) 780-7200

HOSPITALS:

University Health Center.....(301) 314-8185
 Prince George's Hospital.....(301) 618-3162
 Washington Adventist Hospital.....(301) 213-4976
 Doctors Community Hospital.....(301) 306-9180
 Laurel Regional Hospital.....(301) 725-4300
 Holy Cross Hospital of Silver Spring
 (301) 754-7000

TRANSPORTATION NUMBERS:

N.I.T.E Ride.....(301) 314-6483
 Transportation Services.....(301) 314-7275

SECURITY CHECKLIST

OUTSIDE THE UNIT

- Are the buildings and grounds well maintained?
- Are the entryways, sidewalks, and parking areas well lit?
- Are entryways visible from the street?
- Are the residents' names printed on the mailboxes?
- Is the mailbox lockable and in good condition?
- Are the lots and surrounding streets free of abandoned cars?
- Is parking usually available close to your door?
- Is the area well lit at night and on weekends?
- Are there designated visitor parking spaces?
- Does the apartment complex provide security services (patrols, escorts)?
- Do neighbors feel safe?
- Is the building close to high-traffic, well-traveled areas?
- Are shrubs cut below window level?
- Are tree limbs cut above window level so that you can see in and out of your home?
- Is the unit number visible from the street?
- Is the property near fire stations and other emergency services?
- Are the alleys around the residence clean?

IN THE UNIT

- Are the exterior doors made of core wood or metal?
- Do the doors have knob locks, chains, deadbolts, and/or peepholes?
- Is there a security system in the building?
- Is there a sufficient number of working smoke detectors in the living space and in hallways? Are they hardwired?
- Are there adequate emergency escape routes in the event of a fire?
- Are there fire extinguishers?
- Do curtains, blinds, and draperies fully cover windows?
- Are there safe places to go in case of a tornado?
- Is there a high turnover of residents?

ENTRANCE TO THE UNIT

- Can the main entryway be easily seen from the street even at night? Is it well lit?
- Are there sturdy locks on all the windows?
- Are security bars/screens provided if it is a ground floor or basement unit?
- Are doors to the laundry room kept locked?
- Does the landlord have a published policy about issuing and replacing keys?
- Does the building have a doorman or buzzer for guests and deliveries?
- Are locks on the doors of the buildings and apartments adequately secure?
- Is there a peephole at the door?
- Do the front and rear doors have 180-degree peepholes?
- Do doors have deadbolt locks?
- If door hinge pins are outside, are they non-removable?
- Does the door securely fit the jamb?
- Is the strike plate securely fastened to the door jamb?
- Is the door jamb fastened tightly?
- Does the bolt extend sufficiently into the strike plate?
- Are key control procedures used to ensure that locks are changed when keys are lost or not returned?
- Are you informed of who has keys to your living space?
- Do sliding glass doors have blocking cleats to prevent opening from the outside?
- Can windows be left open for ventilation be secured?
- Are window air-conditioners secured from the inside?
- Are door locks located so they can't be reached through a window?