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Talking With Children About Recent Events

It is sometimes easy for us to forget how children are affected by recent events.

Following are some tips from The National Crime Prevention Council on how to talk with your children and several steps you can take to reassure them.

■ Ask what your child knows about recent

events. It is important for a parent to clarify distortions so that the child receives clear information. Encourage your child to talk by asking questions.

■ Because concerns for personal safety might be first and foremost on children's minds, reassure them that people are working to keep them safe and that together, as a family, you will all be safe. Identify safe places for your family to be, such as their schools and your work place. This will help them understand that your family will be out of danger even when you are not together.

■ Many wonder about whether or not children should be watching the television. The answer is that it is okay for them to watch TV with parental guidance. Naturally, parents should allow what they are comfortable with, but it is far better for children to watch with parental guidance than to do it alone or with peers.

■ Calmly express your emotions — remember that a composed demeanor will provide a greater sense of security for your child.

■ When talking to your children, remember that each child develops differently, and what may be appropriate to say to one child may not be the case for another.

■ Listen, listen, listen. Just be there for them!



If You Receive A Suspected Anthrax Threat By Mail

Here are some tips from the U.S. Post Office on what to do if you receive a letter or package that you suspect contains anthrax:



- Do not handle the mail piece or package suspected of contamination.
- Make sure that damaged or suspicious packages are isolated and the immediate area cordoned off.
- Ensure that all persons who have touched the mail piece wash their hands with soap and water.
- Notify local law enforcement authorities.
- List contact info for all persons who have touched the letter and/or envelope.
- Place all items worn when in contact with the suspected mail piece in plastic bags.
- As soon as practical, shower with soap and water
- Notify the Center for Disease Control (CDC) at 770-488-7100 for answers to any questions.

What Makes A Letter Suspicious?

Some typical characteristics which ought to trigger suspicion include letters or parcels that:

- Have any powdery substance on the outside.
- Are unexpected or from someone unfamiliar.
- Have excessive postage, a handwritten or poorly typed address, incorrect titles, titles with no name or misspellings of common words.
- Are addressed to someone no longer with your organization or are otherwise outdated.
- Have no return address or have one that can't be verified as legitimate.
- Are of unusual weight, given their size, or are lopsided or oddly shaped.
- Have an unusual amount of tape on them.
- Are marked with restrictive endorsements such as "Personal" or "Confidential."
- Have strange odors or stains

Protecting Your Identity

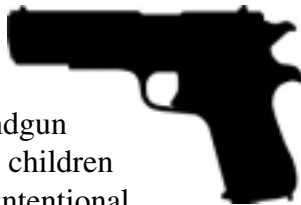
Identity theft has become more of a problem in recent years. Following are some tips from the consumer.gov website on how identity theft works and how to protect yourself.

How Identity Theft Works

- They open a new credit card account, using your name, date of birth and Social Security number. When they use the credit card and don't pay the bills, the delinquent account is reported on your credit report.
- They call your credit card issuer and, pretending to be you, change the mailing address on your credit card account. Then, the imposter runs up charges on your account. Because your bills are being sent to the new address, you may not immediately realize that there's a problem.
- They establish cellular phone service in your name.

Children and Gun Safety

According to the National Crime Prevention Council a child between 10 and 19 years old commits suicide with a handgun every six hours and 88% of the children who are injured or killed in unintentional shootings are shot in their own homes or in the homes of relatives or friends.



- Teach all children — from preschoolers to teenagers — that guns hurt and kill. Tell them not to touch weapons unless under the supervision of an adult.
- Encourage your children to tell you or another trusted adult immediately about any weapon he or she knows of.
- Explain to your children that gun violence in TV shows, in the movies, and on video games is not real.
- Show your children how to settle arguments without resorting to actions or words that can hurt. Set a good example in how you handle anger.
- Make sure that any firearms you do choose to keep in your home are unloaded and securely stored. Invest in trigger locks, gun cabinets with locks or pistol lockboxes. Lock up ammunition separately. Make sure your children don't have access to the keys.

- They open a bank account in your name and write bad checks on that account.



How to Protect Yourself

- Before revealing personal identifying information, find out how it will be used and if it will be shared. Ask if you have a choice about the use of your information.
- Pay attention to your billing cycles. Follow up with creditors if bills do not arrive on time.
- Give your Social Security number only when absolutely necessary. Ask to use other types of identifiers when possible.
- Minimize the identification information and the number of cards you carry to what you actually need.
- Order a copy of your credit report from the three credit reporting agencies every year. Make sure it's accurate and includes only those activities you've authorized.
- Learn about your rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

If your alarm system goes off by accident

- **Stay calm. Don't panic. Remember your code.**
- **Determine if there really is a fire or an intruder.**
- **If the alarm activation was accidental, carefully disarm your system. Carefully press each number of your code.**
- **After you have reset the system, wait for the monitoring station to call.**
- **Don't leave your home or business until you have spoken with the monitoring station.**

Teaching Your Kids to be Home Alone

Children develop at different rates. When determining whether or not your child is ready to stay home alone, assess the child individually, not just as part of an overall age group.

One of a parent's hardest decisions is determining whether or not a child is mature enough to stay at home without direct adult supervision. Parents want to cultivate independence in their children, but not at the expense of their children's safety. That's why parents must establish rules that spell out how they expect their children to behave while they're home alone. Parents should begin by explaining why rules are important and ask the children for their input in deciding on house rules. Post a list of rules on the refrigerator and by each telephone so everyone remembers exactly what is expected. Your rules should deal with the following topics:

- Who is allowed in the home while parents are away? Other children? Neighbors? No one?
- What should children do if the doorbell rings? Ignore it? Open the door for a few select people? Will they accept deliveries from letter carriers, florists, or others?

Answering Machine Security & Safety

Don't say:

- I am out of the office.
- I am not at home at the present time.
- I am away for the weekend.

Do say:

- Your message is important to me, please leave your name and number.
- I'm glad you called. Please leave your name and number.
- I am not available at the present time but will return your call as soon as possible.



- Should the children answer the phone? If so, how? What should they tell callers who ask for the adults in the home?



- What snacks are children allowed to prepare alone? Only items that don't need to be cooked? Microwaveable items?
- Should the children be allowed to play outside? If so, in the backyard only? Front and back? At someone else's house? Remind children to keep a safe distance from strangers and to seek safety inside if a situation makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Instruct your children to expect the unexpected. Point out potential hazards in your home, such as electrical outlets, appliances, and heating equipment, and explain how to avoid injuries from them. Make sure they know what to do if the alarm system goes off. Ask your children how they would respond to various situations. Examples include, "What if the lights go out?" and "What if a neighbor from down the street comes to the door?" Encourage your children to come up with their own questions.

What to Do if a Poisoning Occurs



1. Keep Calm
2. Call the Poison Control Center or your doctor. Have the following information ready:
 - age of person and weight
 - your name and phone number
 - name of product and ingredients
 - amount involved
 - time the poisoning occurred
 - any symptoms
3. The Poison Control Center or your doctor will give you instructions on what to do next.
4. Be sure you know how to give first aid.
5. Purchase Syrup of Ipecac at any drug store. **HOWEVER, USE IPECAC SYRUP ONLY IF INSTRUCTED BY THE POISON CONTROL CENTER OR YOUR DOCTOR!**

How You Can Tell if Your Child is Using Drugs

Identifying illegal drug use may help prevent further abuse. Possible signs include:

- Change in moods - more irritable, secretive, withdrawn, overly sensitive, inappropriately angry, euphoric.
- Less responsible - late coming home, late for school or class, dishonest.
- Changing friends or changing life styles - new interests, unexplained cash.
- Physical deterioration - difficulty in concentration, loss of coordination, loss of weight, unhealthy appearance.



DON'T DRINK & DRIVE!

Preventing Assault

- Be alert! Walk with confidence and purpose.
- Be aware of your surrounding - know who's out there and what's going on.
- Don't let alcohol or other drugs cloud your judgment.
- Trust your instincts. If a situation or place makes you feel uncomfortable or uneasy, leave!
- Avoid walking or jogging alone, especially at night. Stay in well-traveled, well-lit areas.
- Wear clothes and shoes that give you freedom of movement.
- Be careful if anyone in a car asks you for directions - if you answer, keep your distance from the car.
- Have your key ready before you reach the door of your home, car or office.
- If you think you're being followed, change direction and head for open stores, restaurants, theaters or a house that's well-lit.

NEWS YOU NEED TO KNOW...

***Clients ... Don't forget to use the "Gift Certificate"** we gave you with our Holiday card. You'll get 10% off your next purchase of any product that we carry. If you misplaced your Gift Certificate, call us at **518-523-1600** (or stop by Mon. - Fri. **8:30 am - 4:30 pm**).

***Thanks for 20 Years of Business...since 1982!** We couldn't have done it without You! To show our appreciation you can receive 20% (up to \$500) off any new security system (or on any upgrades or additions to your existing system) anytime this year! Call or see us for details.

***Our Security Associates (SAI) Central Station is Consolidating.** Up to now, the monitoring operations were staged from six separate central stations, including the one we use in Cleveland, Ohio. Soon, those six will be consolidated to two fully redundant, technically advanced "host" centers in Arlington Heights, Illinois and Pompano Beach, Florida. COMSEC'S founder, Lee Borland, was an original investor (and SAI Board Member) and was instrumental in starting the SAI Command Center only ten years ago. In fact, COMSEC SECURITY was it's first member client company. Today, over 3,000 alarm companies call it "home" for their central monitoring.

***COMSEC is upgrading its Accounting / Business software** to Quick Books Pro. It's a major project for us but hopefully a "seamless" one for you. Your future Invoices / Statements will look somewhat different, so call us if you have any questions. Thanks again for your business!

Well, that's about it for this issue. We would like to hear from our readers comments, suggestions, criticisms, whatever. We want to reflect the feelings of not only our Company, but of our clients and friends as well. Send your comments, letters and suggestions to us at : 43 Saranac Avenue, Lake Placid, New York 12946 OR call us at 518-523-1600 (8:30 AM-4:30PM Weekdays). Thank You!