

Prowlers on the property

Prowlers are either potential burglars or the peeping type who will peer through any window where curtains or blinds have not been drawn.

Lingerie left on a washing line overnight may attract this type of person onto the property. Check that all doors and windows are secure when you go out, and before going to bed at night.

A woman by herself in the home can place objects on a porch or similar place, suggesting the presence of another person at the address. A pair of large size boots for example may deter a prowler.

If a prowler is seen, telephone the Police immediately. A description should be provided of the person, clothing, and direction of travel if the person has run away.

After telephoning the Police remain quiet and do not alert the prowler, provided your safety is not being threatened. This will allow the Police a better chance of apprehending the prowler. However, if you think the prowler is about to break in, switch on the lights if at night, and make as much noise as possible.

It's best not to go outside even if you think the prowler has run away.

Going outside could expose you to danger if the person is still nearby or returns, and your presence could hamper Police personnel and dogs engaged on search and tracking operations.

Intruders

Having a predetermined safety plan will enable you to make the best decision for dealing with an emergency.

Making a safety plan involves consideration of the following issues:

- Whether you are alone or if there are children or other adults present in the home
- The internal layout of your home for access to any children and escape routes
- Proximity to neighbours and boundary features of your property
- An agreement with your neighbours on how they will respond
- Utilizing an existing room as a safe area, which must have a telephone installed, window security, and a door able to be securely locked from the inside
- Choosing to use a safe room or to escape from the home. This will depend on the particular situation and personal circumstances, and factors to consider may include:
 - The risks of encountering an intruder inside or outside the property during an escape.

- Whether ground floor windows are accessible if an exit door is blocked by an intruder, and physical agility to climb out and run to safety.

Emergency action

Try to avoid any contact with the intruder.

Telephone the Police on 111 at the earliest opportunity that it is safe to do so.

A quick decision must be made to either secure yourself (children) in a safe room, or to escape from the home.

If you decide to secure yourself in a safe room, telephone your neighbours as well as the Police.

If you do encounter the intruder, try and move out of the way.

Call out to somebody else in the house to telephone the Police, even if you are alone.

You can attract attention by breaking windows and shouting loudly things like "Go away", "Get out of my home", "Somebody call the Police".

If you cannot avoid the intruder and shouting and making a noise has no effect, an alternative is to make yourself calm, then in a firm manner tell the intruder to leave. Being assertive is an important self defence technique.

Display a confident manner, hold your head up, pull your shoulders back, stand tall.

Be prepared to physically defend yourself. The most vulnerable parts of an attacker's body are the eyes, nose and genital area.

You are allowed to use force against your attacker when defending yourself, but be aware that if you use something as a weapon in self defence, it could be turned against you.

You can find out about self defence classes in your area.

During an emergency activate any available, fitted, remote or personal alarm system when it is practicable and safe to do so.