

## Multifamily residential safety tips

### Prior to renting:

- Research the neighborhood, address of location and crime statistics. This can be done by contacting the property owner and speaking with neighborhood residents, the city and local police. The police department can be contacted at 952.924.2661 or [slppdoutreach@stlouispark.org](mailto:slppdoutreach@stlouispark.org).
- Evaluate the building's physical appearance. Landscaping, fencing, lighting, signage and overall condition of the property should be in good, working condition. If it is not, this could be a sign of a less than desirable owner and/or manager who may not have their tenant's safety and security in mind. Make sure to evaluate during the day and night; pay particular attention of loitering in or around the property.
- Look for residences that have locking exterior main entry/exit doors.
- While touring a prospective residence, watch common areas. They should only be accessible by tenants and building representatives with a key, proxy card or fob.
- Speak with management about what safety and security measures they have in place to prevent or mitigate unwanted activity. Ask about the property's fire alarm/suppression system, which should have undergone a recent inspection to ensure everything is in proper working condition.
- Ask management if they change the locks to a unit when a new tenant moves in. Main entry doors to an individual unit should be equipped with a deadbolt. Sliding glass doors should have a security bar or other device that prevents the door from moving if the main lock is broken or if the door is lifted off its track.
- Ask if there is on-site management and/or a caretaker. Their on-site presence and continued monitoring add additional protection. Be sure to get emergency contact information.

### Once you are renting:

- Practice situational awareness. Be mindful of your surroundings and who or what is in your general area, especially when entering or exiting your building and vehicle. Report all suspicious activity to local authorities and management.
- Never allow any unknown people or vehicles to follow you through entry doors or vehicular entryways. This is commonly known as tailgating.
- Never let in people or vehicles you do not know.
- Don't prop open entry doors. If you notice any that are propped open, close them.
- Report safety, security and maintenance issues to management so they can address or fix them in a timely manner.
- Lock your unit entry door when you are gone, even if it is for a short period of time.
- Lock windows and sliding glass doors when you are gone. If you are going to be gone for a long period of time, close all blinds and consider having devices that can turn lights or electronics on and off, giving the appearance someone is home.
- Notify management if you are going to be gone for a long period of time.

- Don't use your balcony as a storage area. Items can be easily accessed by thieves. Secure your items in your unit or a supplied personal storage room. Don't leave items unsecured in front of your vehicle in your assigned parking stall(s) in an underground parking garage.
- Consider purchasing a safe to protect important personal belongings and documents. A safe can protect these items from theft and fire and/or other incidents.
- Remove personal belongings from your car. Make sure your car windows are closed and doors are locked.
- If the building or complex doesn't have a secure means to accept packages, consider having packages delivered when you know you will be home, delivered to your work or delivered to a UPS, FedEx or USPS facility where it can be picked up later.
- Get to know your neighbors. Multifamily housing residents can become their own community watch group and provide assistance in an emergency.
- Invest in renter's insurance to maximize personal protection. The building or complex owner's insurance may only cover the buildings and grounds, not your personal items. Renter's insurance may also cover liabilities and medical expenses if you or a guest were to get injured in your unit.

Renting can be fun, but also challenging. By incorporating these safety tips in your initial search and when you are renting, you can lessen the likelihood of falling victim to criminal behavior or an unforgivable lease agreement.

If you have any questions, contact the police department's community outreach at 952.924.2661 or [slppdoutreach@stlouispark.org](mailto:slppdoutreach@stlouispark.org).