

PERSONAL SAFETY IN YOUR HOME

Our community is full of people who have a strong desire to help others. Unfortunately that can lead them to make decisions about who they let into their home and under what conditions. When anyone comes to your door and asks to use the phone, the restroom etc., you must ask yourself several questions: "Am I putting myself in danger by letting this person into my home?" "Just because they look like a nice person, am I sure it is safe?" "Is there another way I can help them without letting them in?" "If they are a criminal, will I be able to protect myself from injury and harm?" "Is it worth the risk?" If a person is truly in need of assistance, you can make the emergency phone call for them. Or you can call law enforcement if it seems to be a situation involving a violation of the law. Even in cold weather, a person can spend a few minutes on your porch waiting while help is summoned. If you choose to take action on behalf of another person, be sure you do it in a way that keeps you safe. Lock your door before you go to the phone and leave your porch light on if the person is waiting. If an individual comes to your door looking for money to cover what they describe as an 'emergency situation', be very wary. If you know them, you may want to take the risk but expecting to get your money back is probably futile. If a person says they live 'down the block' or claims a relationship with a neighbor or someone you are supposed to know, always check out the story first. Many frauds have been carried out by people claiming to need help when all they wanted to do was take your money.

SAFETY AND THE HOME REPAIR PERSON

An area of concern for Puebloans centers on hiring someone to do work for you on your home. Whenever you are having work done on or in your home, there are guidelines to follow to protect yourself. Of course, the beginning step must be to thoroughly investigate the company or person with whom you want to do business. Whether you use the Better Business Bureau or check with the City or County for business licenses and permits, it is important to know who the workmen are. Once you have completed your investigations, then be sure you get **everything** in writing. The agreement should include price, start and completion dates, materials to be used, clean-up, warranties and payment plans. Having all of the information in writing can help to prevent misunderstandings and problems. Once this is completed, make your arrangements for the workmen. If the workers must come into your home, make it clear where they may be and what parts of your home are off-limits. Close doors to rooms that are off-limits. Put away valuables and be sure your purse or wallet is secured. If the company is one with whom you have done business

before, you may feel more secure. If a person or company needs to give you an estimate, stay with them while they are in your home. Don't let them send you to another part of the house. If they have a professional attitude about their job, they will be able to handle an estimate by themselves...or they will bring along a helper. Plan ahead for these kinds of events and you are doing your part to promote your personal safety.