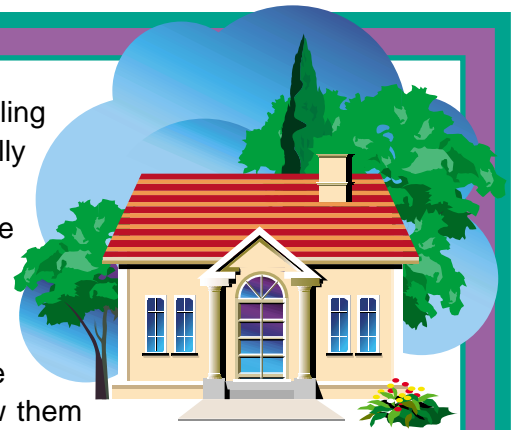


as gates, and make sure they have been secured. Consider installing exterior lighting around your home. Make sure that your home is fully secured before you go to sleep and items, such as ladders, have been stored inside. Prepare a plan to vacate your home in case of **any** emergency. This should include but is not limited to a fire. Have a plan if an intruder tries or gets into your home.



7. **Make your children part of securing your home.** If you have installed an alarm system, demonstrate it to your children and show them how to make certain that doors and windows are locked. This will not only help calm their fears but will also help make them part of your “safety plan” at home.
8. **Have a list of family members who could be contacted in case of an emergency.** Designate a family member or close associate who would be able to fill the role of advisor in case of an emergency.
9. **Be alert to and aware of your surroundings.** Know the “escape routes” and plan what you would do in different emergencies. Practice “what if” scenarios, so **you** will be well prepared. Know the location of local hospitals and best routes to take to reach them. Know how to reach the nearest local law-enforcement agency or sub-station.
10. **Know your employees and coworkers.** Do background screening and reference checks on everyone who works at your home, particularly those individuals who care for your children. Their knowledge of your family is extensive so make sure that you have an equivalent understanding of who they are.
11. **Consider varying your daily routines and habits.** Do not take the same routes or go at the same time on your regular errands. If you take your children to school, change that route as well.
12. **Take steps to secure personal information about yourself.** Consider getting a post office box and registering everything you can there including your vehicles and drivers’ licenses. Have personal bills sent to your place of work or the post office box. Be discreet about your possessions and family’s personal habits and information.



13. **Report any suspicious persons or activities to law enforcement.** If you feel that you or your children have been targeted or are being stalked, report this information to law-enforcement authorities immediately. Do not wait.

14. **Remember that you are your best resource** for better safeguarding your family. Do not become complacent about personal security issues.

¹ Kenneth A. Hanfland, Robert D. Keppel, and Joseph G. Weis. *Case Management for Missing Children Homicide Investigation: Executive Summary*. Olympia, Washington: Office of the Attorney General State of Washington and U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, May 1997, page iv.

For more information about child-safety topics, please visit our web site or contact us at

1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)

www.missingkids.com

Copyright © 2002 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). All rights reserved.

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children is the national clearinghouse and resource center funded under Cooperative Agreement #98-MC-CX-K002 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this work are those of NCMEC and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® is a registered service mark of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.