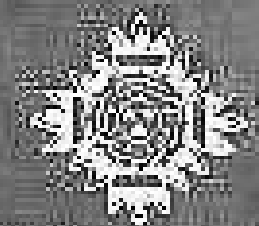


# together

we can make our  
community  
a safer place



THE METROPOLITAN POLICE  
100 YEARS OF SERVICE

POLICE INITIATIVES • HOME SAFETY • SANGE • SAFER COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

# Foreword

WE CAN make a difference when we work together to make our community safer. That's the message from this booklet on crime prevention and home safety. The Police recognise they cannot solve the problems of society alone; nor do they wish to. It is in the communities of New Zealand that the real efforts are being made and results achieved, in partnership with the Police and Government agencies. Communities are working as never before in a way that suits their particular needs and circumstances - no longer saying that "something must be done", but actively doing something themselves. Community support groups not only help identify and report crime, but also promote programmes that make people feel more confident about where they live. And everyone is involved - Police, local authorities and businesses, schools and community organisations. We have no reason to fear crime in New Zealand. Crime happens, but we do not need to limit our lifestyle because of fear. We are probably safer than we think. Senior citizens, for example, are the group most fearful of something happening to them, yet crime is least likely to directly affect them. Why - because they take good care of themselves and their property. This common sense approach to caring for ourselves and our property - and looking out for others in our community - is also highlighted in this booklet. The booklet gives lots of common sense tips about keeping our homes safe and stresses the importance of giving our children a safe environment in which they respect themselves and the community in which they live. We're in this together - together we can make our community a safer place.

*Brian Hartley*

President

The Police Manager's Guild

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# SAFE AS HOUSES

## MAKING OUR HOMES SECURE

IT'S said that your home, if you own it, is your greatest asset. It is certainly worth looking after and keeping safe from burglary and damage, but what are you and your family worth? A home and possessions can be replaced; you and your family are unique, irreplaceable.

This chapter looks at how you can look after your home, the things you treasure within it, you and the people you might live with. Most of this information might seem to be common sense, but the Police are constantly amazed at the lack of common sense displayed when they see the results of break-ins. Doors and windows are left unsecured, keys are left under the door mat, mail accumulates in the letterbox when homeowners go on holiday.

The more secure you and your home are, the less likely you are to attract trouble. A safe, secure home not only brings peace of mind, but can also save you money in insurance premiums.

Apart from family violence (see separate chapter), most violence in the home is likely to occur when a burglar is disturbed. It is unlikely to be their primary intention, but burglars can become violent in an effort to avoid being caught. It is, therefore, important that your home is secure from burglars - limit their chances of getting inside in the first place.

The single greatest contributor to the incidence of burglaries is the householder. If you leave opportunities for burglars to do their work, sooner or later they will. The houses of greatest "opportunity" are the ones burglars like most.

Most burglars are amateurs and none is a hard worker. They want easy jobs, jobs that can be performed with little risk, in the minimum time and with the greatest rewards for effort expended.

Don't make it easy for burglars - if your home is a tough job, they'll go somewhere else.

It's a fact that burglaries occur in New Zealand at the rate of about one every six minutes. They can occur at any time of the day or night, but most likely (in about 75 per cent of cases) during the day, when there is less chance of people being at home.

Modern burglars are not generally professionals, it's most likely they are young, unemployed and supporting a drug habit. They are not likely to have sophisticated equipment or the skills to break into well-secured homes. It stands to reason that in most cases, you can deter burglars with some simple and relatively inexpensive precautions.

It's not necessary to make your home into a fortress to feel secure. Some simple and effective solutions to home security are available from the Police or from qualified locksmiths (for best results, ensure your locksmith is a member of the Master Locksmiths Association). Your insurance agent may be prepared to assess your property and recommend security improvements - you might be pleasantly surprised by a lower insurance premium if you make your home more secure.

The Police say the three most important steps you can take to maximise home security are:

- Fit reliable locks to all doors and windows.
- Put security markings on all property.
- Join your local community support group (contact your local Police community constable).

## SECURITY CHECKLIST

HOW can you prevent a break-in? Where is a burglar likely to look for your home's weak point?

Take time to look around your house. Try the following simple test.

Lock up your house as you normally would when you leave home. Put your keys in your pocket and forget about them - in fact, imagine you no longer have them. Consider that you have effectively locked yourself out. How are you going to get in, assuming you cannot call a locksmith, your neighbour or another member of the family who might have a key? Perhaps there have been occasions when you have locked yourself out and you just had to get in quickly. How did you do it?

Consider that your potential burglar is a lot younger and more nimble than you. They could, perhaps, clamber quickly and quietly on to the roof and in through a skylight.

If you manage to get back inside successfully, you have a security problem. Get it fixed. Now systematically check each part of your home.

1. Front door. Burglars have no respect for property. If they cannot fiddle the door lock, it is just as likely they will try to force it open by kicking or levering with a jemmy. You can limit the chances of successful entry by making sure your front door has a double deadlock so it allows locking from both inside and outside. This prevents burglars breaking door glass and reaching inside to unlock, or opening the door from inside to take out large items that would not fit

through windows. A five-lever mortice lock (that is a lock set into a hole cut in the door) is recommended. Also, fit bolts to the top and bottom of the door, add a security chain and insert a door viewer for extra safety.

2. Other doors. Many back and side doors have two-lever mortice locks - replace them with five-lever locks or a double-cylinder deadbolt and add bolts to the top and bottom of the door. Patio or conservatory doors are often glass and usually open outwards or are slide-opening. Fit hinge bolts to outward-opening doors to prevent doors from being forced open and fit patio bolts to the top and bottom of the doors. Sliding doors can be protected with anti-lift deadlocks.
3. Windows. Most burglars gain access through windows, and most of those entries are through windows at the back of the house where there is less chance of being seen. Windows are usually easier for a burglar because householders generally overlook windows in their security plan. In fact, most homes do not have locks on the windows. Locked windows are a serious deterrent for burglars. Of course, a window can be broken, but that makes a noise and if a lock is in place, the burglar will have to clamber over jagged glass to get inside. A wide range of locks are available, depending on whether you have wooden or metal windows, how they open and where they are located. A range of secure window openers is also available. Consult your Master Locksmith for the right types of lock and openers. The most vulnerable windows are at ground level, so when you do your home security assessment, give them priority. If you have upstairs windows, put locks on all those that can be accessed up a drainpipe or from a flat roof. Louvre windows are a burglar's dream because they are easy to remove. Make it more difficult by gluing the glass slats in place or installing security bars.
4. Skylights. Often overlooked - if a burglar can reach it, fit an appropriate lock.
5. The garage. Fit a deadlock or padlock and locking bar to the door. Remember to fit a lock to any door that provides direct access to the house.
6. Shed. Burglars travel light, so they sometimes make use of your tools to get into the house. Make sure your shed has a padlock and strong hasp on the door and locks on all windows.
7. Gates. Where appropriate, secure gates with a padlock and padbolt to prevent burglars even getting near the house.

## **ALARMS**

THE presence of an alarm system is often enough to deter intruders. Most alarms operate by detecting heat or movement in your house when you are away. If set off, a siren will alert neighbours and, if connected, a security firm. The sound of an alarm will quickly see a burglar off the property. Most alarm products also provide a highly visible alarm box on the outside of the house that will not only make a noise, but also flash a light. It has the added effect of alerting a potential burglar that the house has the alarm. Alarms are more expensive than locks, but when added to locks, they are very effective deterrents.

## **GENERAL SAFETY TIPS**

INSTALLING the proper security equipment is a large part of home safety, but you must also remember to use it effectively. A deadlock is useless if the door is left open, as is an alarm system that is not switched on. As part of your home security routine, have a plan when you leave the house, go on holiday and go to bed at night. Make a checklist if necessary, so you secure all doors and windows, switch on any alarm and outdoor lights. Other general precautions you can take are:

- See who is at the door through a door viewer or secure window before opening. Ask for identification from anyone you do not know or trust. To be sure, ask for a telephone number you can ring to verify their identity before allowing them entry. Don't let anyone in the house you are unsure of.
- If you must let a worker into your house while you are out, leave a key with a neighbour and ask that it be returned to the neighbour when the work is done. Get your neighbour to check the house is secure after the worker has left. Don't leave a key in the letterbox, under the mat or "hidden" somewhere outside.
- Don't leave a note on your door - it's a sure sign you are not in.
- Make sure your key ring does not identify you, your vehicle or where you live. Join a security firm that will provide you with their telephone number on a keyring attachment so your keys can be returned to you safely if lost, or simply attach a small plate with your telephone number on it.

- Engrave all your valuable possessions, preferably with a personal number such as your driver's licence.
- Take a note of the serial numbers on all your appliances and electronic equipment.
- Photograph valuable items, particularly antiques or paintings, so they can be identified if found.
- Invest in a safe (available from qualified locksmiths and security firms) that you can put your valuable items in, or put them in a bank.
- Make sure your house address is clearly visible so Police and other emergency services can find you quickly. The permanent reflective attachments on footpaths that are now available are ideal.
- Install external lighting under the eaves of your house. Don't forget the dark areas at the side or rear of the house.
- Lock your letterbox with a padlock.
- Lock ladders and other useful burglary tools inside the garage or shed.
- Keep shrubs and trees trimmed so intruders have nowhere to hide.
- Display warning signs indicating you have tight security, and indicating that you are a member of a Neighbourhood Watch or other community support group (contact your local community constable for details).

## **WHEN YOU ARE AWAY**

USE this common sense checklist, where appropriate, when you go on holiday or leave your home for any lengthy period of time.

1. Lock all the doors and windows. Don't forget the garage, garden shed and gate.
2. Cancel the mail, newspaper and milk deliveries.
3. Lock up all your tools and ladders. Make sure nothing else is lying about the house that might help an intruder break in.
4. Get your lawns mowed while you are away.
5. Check that you have marked all your valuable possessions with your own security mark, such as driver's licence number.
6. Make sure your "beware" signs are clearly visible if you have a dog, alarm system or you are a member of Neighbourhood Watch.
7. Leave a radio on quietly in the house.
8. Leave your curtains open all the time, or get a neighbour to close bedroom curtains each night and open them in the morning.
9. Use a timer or sensor switch that will turn on some internal lights at night.
10. Tell your neighbours where you are going, how you can be contacted and when you will be back.
11. Consult your community support group.

# FLAMING DANGER

## FIRE SAFETY

FIRE is energy. Harnessed and controlled, its warmth sustains us through cold winter months. However, unleashed and uncontrolled, it can be both fascinating and frightening. Its fascination to many children and not-so-careful adults has led to countless tragedies in New Zealand. Many people fear fire. They might well be justified in that fear, considering the speed with which it can engulf a home, belching smoke into rooms, depleting the oxygen in the air and creating toxic fumes. Fire can destroy and kill - it certainly deserves a healthy respect. For any questions about fire safety, consult your local Fire Service fire station.

There are several things you can do to minimise both the likelihood of fire occurring and risk to life.

8. Install smoke alarms. They are not expensive and can save lives. They provide early warning of fire and can give you vital time to escape safely. Smoke alarms are usually powered by battery, so mark your calendar for a battery replacement date (about once a year). Two alarms per house is recommended, and one on each level of multi-storey homes. The priority location is in the hallway near sleeping areas. Don't install standard models in kitchens, bathrooms or garages - they will drive you around the bend because the steam and fumes will set them off constantly.
9. Connect a hose to an outdoor tap, leave the hose connected and check the hose and tap regularly. Make sure the hose is long enough to reach all areas of your home.
10. Buy a fire extinguisher (consult the Fire Service for the correct type for your situation), but remember extinguishers have limited uses. It could be fatal if you use valuable time with a fire extinguisher when you should be concentrating on saving life and calling the Fire Service on 111. The Fire Service suggests fire extinguishers should only be used when:
  - Everyone has been evacuated and accounted for at a safe meeting place.
  - The Fire Service has been called.
  - It is safe to do so considering the size and position of the fire.
  - Access to the fire is not restricted and a quick, safe retreat is possible (stay between the door and the fire).

Before rushing for the fire extinguisher, consider whether you can reach it without going near the fire; whether the fire is small and contained; whether you have a clear, safe exit. If the fire gets out of hand, leave immediately and close a door behind you.

## AREAS OF CONCERN

THE New Zealand Fire Service suggests you check three key areas:

- Electrical
- Heaters
- Open and free-standing fireplaces

### *Electrical*

Check cords and plugs for cracks, breaks, fraying and any exposed wiring. Test plugs and/or power points for overheating. Replace broken or damaged power points. Don't overload them - the ideal is one plug to one power point.

Switch off power points before unplugging an appliance. Use the plug piece to unplug rather than pulling on the cord.

Use extension cords for temporary purposes only. Don't run them under carpets or rugs, where walking over them might cause wear on the cord. Don't join pieces of flex.

Avoid overloading by not running several high wattage appliances on the same circuit.

Make sure appliances, such as heaters, televisions, stereos and computers have plenty of air space to prevent overheating. Don't cover the vents on stereos, computer processors, videos and televisions etc, and never place vases or other containers of water on them.

Never run an iron or other appliance from a light socket.

Switch off all electrical appliances if there is a power failure. Switch off appliances at the wall when they are not being used.

Fuses and circuit breakers are safety devices. If a fuse blows or a circuit breaker trips, look for the problem and fix it before you replace the fuse. Make sure you replace blown fuses with the right size fuse.

### *Heaters*

Fit guards on all heaters.

LPG gas heaters should only be operated in a room with plenty of ventilation - they can rapidly deplete the air of oxygen. Some modern LPG heaters have cutout switches that work when oxygen is depleted, but not all LPG heaters do. They can be particularly dangerous in small rooms (such as bedrooms) with the door shut. Gas heaters produce greater heat than electric heaters, so keep furniture and other items well clear. Test what is a safe clearance by standing in front of the heater for a couple of minutes - if you cannot stand there comfortably, it is too close.

When lighting a gas heater, if it requires a match to light, strike the match before turning the gas on.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintaining and repairing kerosene and gas heaters. Always turn them off and let them cool before refilling.

Put portable oil fire, gas and kerosene heaters away from draughts.

Don't dry clothes in front of any heater and keep furniture well clear.

### *Open and Free-standing Fireplaces*

Use firelighters if you need assistance to light your fire - never use petrol or other flammable liquids.

Make sure your flue and chimney are swept regularly and use a fireguard on open fires.

Put ashes in a metal container with a close-fitting lid - never wrap in paper or place in a cardboard box or put in a plastic rubbish bin. Keep the ashes away from the house until you dispose of them.

Keep furniture well away from fireplaces.

When a free-standing fireplace is installed, make sure it is sitting on a non-combustible base well clear of walls.

Where the flue of a free-standing fireplace passes through the ceiling, it should be clear of combustible material as per the manufacturer's instructions. The flue should be centrally located within, but not touching, a larger metallic pipe.

Chimney fires often occur because wet or treated wood is being burned. Residue from incomplete combustion can stick to the inside of the chimney and cause a fire.

## **GENERAL**

Children are naturally inquisitive. This inquisitiveness can be extremely dangerous when children have access to matches and lighters. It might be that a child has grabbed a packet of matches or simply helped mum or dad by taking a lighter from one room to another.

Children should never have unsupervised access to matches, lighters, candles or other naked flames.

They don't realise the danger of fire or how quickly a fire can spread.

Do a general check around the house using the following checklist.

- Ensure electric blankets and heating units are checked each year and heavy objects are not placed on beds when the blanket is on.
- Don't cover lamps to dim the light.
- Don't use radiant heaters in bedrooms or portable electric heaters in bathrooms.
- Don't allow anyone to smoke in bed.
- Keep electrical cords and objects such as tea towels clear of the stove, and aerosol cans away from heat (make sure everyone follows the instructions on the cans for correct disposal).
- Don't leave pots unattended and don't allow grease to build up in any part of the stove or oven.
- Don't wear loose clothing while cooking.
- Establish a "before-bed" check routine each night - make sure someone is responsible for doing it.
- Keep halls and passages clear to allow rapid escape if necessary.
- Never leave appliances running while no one is home, and never leave an iron unattended.
- Make sure irons are unplugged after use and are cool before being stored.
- Clear lint from the clothes drier each time it is used.
- Keep garage floors clear of rubbish and wood shavings, and gutters clear of leaves and overhanging branches. Make sure branches don't interfere with power lines.
- Get rid of oily rags immediately after use.
- Store petrol and other flammable liquids in approved, clearly labeled containers where they are unlikely to get knocked over. Keep chlorine away from other chemical agents.
- Use only properly installed power points and transformers if necessary for power tools, and turn all tools off after use.
- Ban smoking in work areas.
- Fill mowers and other petrol-driven machines out in the open.
- Don't stack bits of timber and rubbish against the side of the house or fence.

- Make sure outside taps work.
- Keep the barbecue away from the house and other structures, where a spark could start a fire, and don't use flammable liquids to start the barbecue.

## **ESCAPE PLAN**

EDITH might be the greatest help in saving life and injury when a fire occurs. EDITH is not a person, but a fire plan - Exit Drills In The Home. The plan calls for you to think about what you and others in your house will do to escape a fire. Sit down with your family and discuss your plan, taking into account the number of people in the house, where exits are, how everyone will get out, where you will all meet and what you will do then. The first alert is likely to be a smoke alarm, which will give you valuable minutes to escape safely. If you do not have a smoke alarm, your EDITH plan should include other ways of alerting people, such as a whistle. Your escape plan should include:

- Two ways out from each room - there is an obvious way out (the door), but ensure you discuss thoroughly the alternative way out.
- Means of helping anyone who is young, old, or with disabilities. Your plan should have a designated helper for these people.
- Somewhere to meet safely outside (such as the letterbox).
- How to call the Fire Service on 111 from a safe telephone (if you have a cellular phone, leave it where you can find it quickly).
- When you have decided what you are going to do in an emergency, practise it so the drill becomes automatic. Practise it regularly and make it as real as possible by doing it after dark.

Make sure any babysitters also know your drill.

Practise:

- Crawling along all the escape routes.
- Opening the doors and windows to be used in an escape.
- Closing the doors behind you to isolate the fire and give you time (it might even starve the fire of oxygen and put it out).
- Opening locks.
- If appropriate, helping the young, elderly and people with disabilities.
- Going to the agreed meeting place.

## **RURAL PLAN**

People in remote areas have their own difficulties because of the distance the Fire Service might have to travel to attend a fire, and distance between neighbours.

It is important people in rural areas have a fire plan - work out what you will do if a fire breaks out.

The plan should not only include your family and anyone else living with you, but also your near neighbours, who may be the first on the scene to help.

Work out how you will alert your neighbours (siren, car horn, flashing lights etc). Ensure you take note of all the safety tips on previous pages (ie smoke alarms etc) and keep a hose ready that can reach all parts of your home and outbuildings.

Whatever your plan includes, always dial 111 for the Fire Service.

## **WHEN FIRE HAPPENS**

YOU will be well prepared if you have smoke alarms and you have practised your EDITH fire drill.

However, if you have a fire, consider life first. If a smoke alarm or some other alert sounds, GET OUT FAST by one of your planned escape routes. Delays to gather valuables can be fatal.

Smoke and deadly gases rise, so keep low to the ground and crawl if you need to. Close doors behind you as you leave the house if you can.

Don't use a lift if you are in a multi-storey building. Take the stairs, where special smoke-stop doors will help stop the spread of fire into stairwells.

Before you open any doors, test them to see if fire and dangerous smoke is on the other side. Look for smoke billowing around the edges and touch the door or handle with the back of your hand to test for heat. If they are hot, use your alternative escape route. If it appears to be safe to open a door, do so carefully and be ready to close it again quickly if you need to. If you become trapped in a room, plug gaps around the door with rugs or bedding to stop smoke filtering in. Escape through the window if you can, but if it is too high, wave a brightly coloured item and shout to attract attention.

Take particular note of young children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Make sure someone in the house is responsible for them during an emergency.

Once you get out of the house, ring the Fire Service on 111 as soon as possible from a neighbour's house. Then stay out of the burning house - it is dangerous to re-enter a burning building. Leave the fire for the Fire Service to deal with.

If you are in a situation where your clothes catch fire, use the STOP, DROP and ROLL rule - STOP immediately (don't run as that will fan the flames), DROP to the ground or floor and ROLL over and over until the flames are out.

# WORKING TOGETHER

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS

COMMUNITY support groups were introduced to New Zealand in 1979 with the aim of reducing crime by empowering community members to look after one another. The success of the original Neighbourhood Watch scheme led to Neighbourhood Support and later Rural Support, all of which have come under the general term of "community support".

These initiatives recognised that, in partnership with the Police, communities could reduce crime and thereby have a positive effect by fostering a feeling of security and wellbeing. It also recognised that crime was not just the responsibility of the Police.

In many areas, support groups have drawn community members together, as they discuss their own particular circumstances and methods of keeping their community safe. For some people - particularly those who might feel vulnerable such as the elderly or women living alone - support groups can provide a sense of security they would not otherwise have.

Community support groups are active throughout the country, not only ensuring the physical security of its members, but also responding to social problems. They can be instrumental in identifying and dealing with crimes such as family violence and sexual offences. And the victims of crime are offered support within the community to help them with court appearances, welfare and so on.

Support groups can be informal, such as watching out for a neighbour's house while they are away, or in the nature of a formal group that holds regular meetings and plans safer community strategies.

They are generally established from the desire of a small group of residents to strengthen their sense of security, for any number of reasons. It may be that a burglary has occurred, or that it's holiday time and neighbours are discussing how their homes will be safeguarded while they are away.

The success of these groups, like any organisations, depends on the commitment of its members. It does not usually involve a lot of work, but what is important is the desire to act together for the common good.

A small group of 10 to 12 houses in a street is a good number to start a community support group. Ring a community constable and arrange a time for the group to get together with the Police officer to discuss how best to set up the group, the issues that concern you and the best way to look after each other. A meeting at someone's house is ideal. Make the meeting informal and relaxed.

Other support groups may be operating in your area. Find out where they are and link up with them.

Appoint a street co-ordinator for your group who can arrange meetings and liaise with other groups. If there are other groups in your street, liaise with them and appoint a street co-ordinator, who can provide a link between the groups and a larger neighbourhood-wide group. This neighbourhood-wide group might also have an area co-ordinator who can liaise with the Police and distribute information back to street and group co-ordinators.

Some support groups hold public meetings and distribute regular newsletters to get information out to the community.

In rural communities, a support group might be just a few houses but cover a wide area. Groups can be established for much the same reasons as those in suburban areas, but lines of communication are likely to be different because of the physical distance between properties. Work out with those in the group how you will call each other for help and when each of you are home. If properties are within sight and sound of each other, consider ways of alerting each other such as fog horns, sirens, electric bells, car horns, flares, torches or flashing vehicle lights.

Don't go alone if you respond to a call for help. Get another neighbour to meet you there, or at least let them know where you are going and get them to come and help if they have not heard from you within a specified time. Rural groups should contact elderly neighbours or people with disabilities regularly to see if they are OK.

The network philosophy of neighbourhood support groups has also worked well in civil defence emergencies. They can act firstly to make the community aware of its responsibilities, prepare the community for an emergency, and then act as the first response team if an emergency occurs. It is likely that in a big event such as a severe earthquake or flooding, communities will have to look after themselves for some time before rescue teams can be activated and services such as water and power can be restored.

A well co-ordinated support group could be the difference between life and death in such situations.

## **SAFER COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

THE Government recognised in 1992 that crime prevention and community safety was an issue that had to be tackled with a holistic and pro-active approach - the involvement of not only the Government and its agencies, but also communities and the members that lived within them. In 1993, a long-term Crime Prevention Strategy was issued from the Crime Prevention Unit of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It was based on the premise that a partnership between central Government and the community was critical to the success of any moves to stop crime.

It aimed to better co-ordinate efforts and resources of both the Government and individual communities to develop positive solutions to the problems of offending and anti-social behaviour. As a result, more than 50 Safer Community Councils have been established throughout New Zealand.

The councils have been entrusted with putting in place social crime prevention strategies, which have been identified in seven key areas:

- Supporting "at risk" families.
- Reducing family violence.
- Targeting youth "at risk" of offending.
- Minimising the formal involvement of casual offenders within the criminal justice system (diversion).
- Developing an approach for the management of programmes that address the misuse and abuse of both alcohol and drugs.
- Addressing the incidence of white collar crime.
- Addressing the concerns of victims and potential victims.

Most community councils are sponsored by local authorities, but some are iwi sponsored. They receive Government funding. They are made up of people who have expertise and an interest in community crime prevention, including business people, health and education workers, iwi representatives and Government agencies such as the Police and Social Welfare.

The councils co-ordinate existing crime prevention programmes and help develop new initiatives (see separate section Older and Safer). They work with community groups to plan solutions to local problems, put individuals in touch with services, groups or agencies that can meet their needs, ensure people get the right help when they need it, and put resources where they are needed most.

They also network with services to help victims of crime and those who fear crime; with services for disadvantaged families whose members might be more likely to offend; with groups working with perpetrators of crime to help change behaviour; with "at risk" youth; and with people who have drug or alcohol problems.

# IT'S A CRIME

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

FAMILY violence has, until recent years, been a difficult issue for the community and the Police to deal with. While the cost to our families and the country is immeasurable, it has in the past been considered a problem best sorted out in the home.

That is no longer the case. The Police treat family violence as a crime; the community is accepting that women, children and the elderly in particular need to feel safe in their own home; and the law has encouraged offenders to change their behaviour and given victims greater rights under the new Domestic Violence Act.

Family violence is an insidious cancer in society. While the "community" is seen as the key to preventing crime, and thereby reducing crime on a national basis, it is the families within the community that ultimately determine the nature of the community. It is the families' values and attitudes to crime that determine the community's values. We cannot hope to eradicate crime and violence in our community if crime and violence is occurring in our homes.

The Domestic Violence Act marks a new era in dealing with violence in the home. It was passed in 1995 and came into force on July 1, 1996. It recognises that not only individual victims suffer from family violence, but also the wider community. It aims to state clearly what the law regards as unacceptable behaviour, which will help society develop a clearer understanding of the need to eliminate such violence.

The Act has overhauled the Domestic Protection Act 1982 and the Guardianship Act of 1968. Its primary objective is to give greater protection for victims of family violence. It provides more protection for a much wider range of people in close relationships - including co-habiting partners (heterosexual or same-sex), family members, household members and people in close personal relationships that may or may not be sexual - allowing them to apply for protection orders.

It also makes provision for people to make applications on behalf of children and young people. Psychological violence has been clarified. People who incite violence can be the subject of a protection order.

The Act introduces one protection order to replace the non-molestation and non-violence orders. This order caters for those who wish to continue the relationship as well as those who do not. It automatically protects any named children of the applicant's family. The order will prohibit any type of family violence, regardless of what prompts the application for a protection order, and it lasts indefinitely unless challenged by the respondent (the abuser).

Another feature is that anyone served with a protection order is not allowed to possess or control any weapons, including firearms, without an exemption from the Family Court.

The Act places considerable emphasis on programmes, not only to help victims but also to rehabilitate abusers. Programmes aimed at helping abusers change their behaviour are compulsory in most cases - research has shown that abusers believe such programmes are useful in providing a long-term solution to their problem. The Act also provides for programmes to be made available for victims and affected children, recognising they also need support and assistance to rebuild their life.

The penalties for breach of an enforcement order have now risen to a maximum of six months jail or a \$5000 fine, with persistent breaches carrying a two-year maximum sentence.

Police policy is that when an arrest is made, the offender should be kept in custody until the next available court hearing, to ensure the safety of the victim. However, Police are still required to bring that person before a court as soon as possible. The court may bail that person, even if it is within 24 hours of his or her arrest.

Custody and guardianship provisions of the Guardianship Act 1968 have also been tightened considerably. If an allegation of violence is made in a custody and access hearing, the court is to determine promptly whether the allegation is valid. If an allegation of violence against a child or a party to the proceedings is substantiated, the violent person will not be given custody or unsupervised access unless that person can satisfy the court that the child will be safe.

Available statistics indicate family violence is widespread, occurring largely against women and children in the home (though recent debate suggests women may also be significant perpetrators of family violence). Violence is as likely to occur in a wealthy suburb as a depressed country town and is common in all families, religions, races and cultures. In most cases of abuse, the abuser is well known to the victim - a family member, close relative or friend of the family.

Fortunately the public is showing more confidence in reporting family violence as the message that it is a crime gets through. Police have also been dealing differently with family violence - where previously

mediation was often used to defuse a violent situation, family violence is now treated like other cases of violence; arrests are made where sufficient evidence of violence is obtained.

Family violence, in whatever form, is typically not random, but more likely to be part of a pattern of systematic violence that gets worse over time. And it is not just about physical attacks or sexual abuse - family violence also includes a range of emotional or psychological acts. Violence against women is seen as a form of humiliation for women, a lowering of self-esteem to make a man (who is likely to be generally insecure himself) feel more powerful. It blocks women's personal ambitions and sense of purpose, preventing them from reaching their full potential.

Children, however, are just as vulnerable, perhaps more so if both parents are abusing them. In some cases there is collusion between the adults, causing confusion and despair for children who may feel they have no one to turn to. It is critical that the community, the Police and the legal system support such children so they feel they have someone to turn to. Children can be subjected to not only physical abuse, but also sexual abuse, neglect - when they are deprived of such necessities as food, shelter and essential medical care - and even emotional abuse which can severely hurt the child's emotional and physical development.

The elderly (defined as those over the age of 65) can also be victims of family violence. It is often unreported because of the victim's fear and embarrassment. In many cases, the abuse could have been occurring for years.

While abuse can typically be physical, sexual or psychological, it can also be financial. It might not necessarily be a partner who is abusing financially; younger family members might be responsible for the illegal or improper exploitation and/or use of senior citizens' funds or other resources. The retirement nest egg may even be taken.

## **EFFECTS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE**

WHATEVER form it takes, family violence has a debilitating effect on the family group. In the most severe cases, the victim has died from the injuries.

Physical injuries, the most obvious signs of abuse, can have long-term effects, but the emotional trauma of living in an abusive family can also be long lasting.

Women and children subjected to constant abuse might feel powerless. They are likely to want to please the abuser, despite being terrified, and hide the abuse from friends and neighbours. They can become emotionally and physically exhausted. They might feel violated and degraded, with a corresponding loss of self-esteem. Suicide can result.

As both victims and witnesses of family violence, children can be severely damaged. Children can suffer horrific injuries as the result of violence in the home. Adults, because of their usually dominant physical strength, can hurt children more than they ever mean to. If their mother is subjected to violence, most children will know. They often witness the traumatic beatings or the humiliation.

Sometimes they get involved, trying to help the victim by stopping the violence themselves. They can get hurt, too, either by accident or as a side product of the attack on another victim.

The greatest long-term danger is perhaps that children accept that violence is normal behaviour - that when an adult is angry or frustrated, violence is an answer.

Girls who see their mother abused can model their mother's behaviour, becoming fearful, withdrawn and distrustful. Overseas studies indicate girls who have been in abusive families are more likely to accept victimisation and violence from their friends and partners in adulthood.

Boys might model their behaviour on that of their violent father. Boys can become aggressive, bullying not only their friends and siblings as youngsters, but also their mother. Studies have shown that, as adults, they are more likely to beat their partners and commit violent crimes.

## **RECOGNISING ABUSE**

YOU might be a parent, friend, relative, neighbour, teacher, church minister or doctor. You might suspect abuse, but do not know the signs. The following tips give some indication that abuse might have occurred, but interpret these signs with care, because they can be signs of other conditions. However, whether through fear, shame or any other reason, a victim can become very good at hiding the signs of violence in the home. Some of the indications a victim might show are:

- Non-specific complaints.
- Depression that she or he won't explain.
- Taking more pills or alcohol than normal.
- Bruising or difficulty moving.
- Excessive concern with housework or the relationship.
- Tiredness.

- Becoming isolated from people close to her or him.
- Making last-minute excuses not to see people close to her or him.

For children, general signs of physical abuse can include upset such as:

- Moodiness, irritability, excessive crying.
- Loss of appetite - changes in eating habits.
- Changes in behaviour at school, or towards other people, regularly missing school.
- Personality changes.
- Dirty appearance, inadequately dressed for the climate.
- Withdrawing into themselves.
- Being afraid to go home, running away.
- Undernourished and not taken to the doctor when ill.
- Inability to concentrate.
- Having unexplained fears - of the dark, of being alone, of specific people (even relatives and friends), of places (bedrooms and toilets).
- Sleep disturbances - nightmares, fear of going to bed or sleeping alone.
- Unsupervised for long periods.

It can also be indicated by physical signs: bruises, burns, fractures, scalds or grazes. The injuries might be accidental, but if a child seems to be hurt often, the injuries are getting more serious, or there's something odd about them, it could be abuse.

Emotional abuse is more difficult to identify, but children might:

- Tend to believe they are bad and worthless.
- Have problems getting on with others, or be hard to live with.
- "Shut off", or become too good.
- Have difficulty controlling anger.

With sexual abuse, children might:

- Complain of pain or irritation in the genital area, or get infections and urinary problems.
- Start doing something they've grown out of - such as crying, wetting or soiling their pants, or clinging.
- Have inappropriate sexual play.
- Give a coded message, or they might say directly they are being abused.

## **GETTING HELP**

WHETHER it is happening to you or you are a witness, in a crisis, dial 111 and ask for the Police. If it is happening to you or your children, look for safety first. Run outside or head for a public place, scream for help or call the Police. Emergency calls are free from all telephones, including payphones and cellular phones. Remember that if violence is occurring, whether in the home or on the street, it is a crime. You have a responsibility to report it.

The Police will act to ensure the victim, and children where they are present, are safe.

If you suspect a close friend or relative is being abused, you could start by talking to them. Some tips that will help when you do that: Become informed - learn to recognise family violence when it occurs. Think about the causes and effects of family violence. Reading this section of the booklet thoroughly will help your understanding of the problem and offer some solutions.

Listen to your family and friends when they want to talk about their problems.

Encourage the person to talk, but don't pry.

Believe what you hear and do not underestimate the danger for the victim. Be willing to talk about the emotional and physical harm that can result from remaining in, or returning to, a violent relationship. Stress the serious nature of family violence.

Help them develop a safety plan, and work out what to do in a crisis. Explain to them that ignoring a beating is dangerous. The beatings usually get worse as time goes on. Let them know about the facts you have found in this booklet about abusive relationships. Offer practical support. Tell them about the agencies available to help and about the steps to take if there is a crisis. Offer help with any other matters, such as child care, transport, financial assistance.

Reassure them that they are not to blame, that they are not alone, and that leaving is not desertion.

Help them come to their own decisions about what to do. Show them that you support them no matter what they decide.

Do not judge them. Their beliefs and values might be different from yours. Show them you accept these differences.

Help them identify their options and the consequences.

Let them know their feelings are normal - many women experience family violence.

Go with them if they need your support.

Do not confront the other partner.

Show them respect and your belief in their ability to cope with change.

It is vital that you assure victims that the information they give you won't be repeated to anyone else.

Discuss their situation with mutual friends only if you have the victim's approval and you want to enlist practical help. The only exception to this confidentiality rule is if the victim has disclosed that children are being or have been abused.

The victim, of course, might not want to talk about the problem, or even recognise that it exists. If you are not able to gain their confidence, talk to a help agency in your area. They have trained staff who can advise you what to do or make discreet inquiries about the victim's welfare. The Department of Social Welfare and Te Puni Kokiri have produced an excellent directory called Reach Out Toro Mai which lists agencies available to help. You can get a copy through most Citizens Advice Bureaus. In the case of children, it is advisable to take action if you know or believe a child is being abused. Children need special support, as they are often unable to take action to keep themselves safe. You might be able to offer help and support to the family. If a child is at risk, contact the Police or the Children and Young Persons Service. A Police officer or social worker can then take appropriate action to protect the child.

If you merely suspect family violence or abuse is occurring, should you report it?

The first question to ask yourself is: Is the victim safe? If the answer is "no", take immediate action by contacting the Police or the Children and Young Persons Service.

If the answer is "yes" but you are still worried about their wellbeing, contact a help agency. You can talk confidentially with them about what you know. They will probably have a better idea whether abuse is occurring and will certainly know what can be done to help.

People, especially those not close to a victim, might be reluctant to report violence or abuse because they feel it is none of their business or they might be wrong.

If you are a victim, you can stop the violence, despite the powerlessness you might feel. It is not your fault - you do not deserve to be subjected to violence in your home.

Remember:

- You have the right to live free from violence in your own home.
- You have the right to choose a life free from violence, as do your children.
- You are not to blame for the violence.
- You do not deserve to be abused.
- You are the victim of a crime and have legal rights.

Many victims of family violence feel isolated and alone. They are often unaware of the options available to them and do not have enough information to make important choices.

Whether you stay in the relationship or leave, you will need support and assistance. The Police can ensure you and your family get proper help in dealing with the situation. They can refer you to support agencies such as Women's Refuge, Victim Support, Citizens Advice Bureau, Relationship Services or Age Concern. Any of these groups might refer you to another group that might be more appropriate to your situation, such as Rape Crisis, Salvation Army, Alcoholics Anonymous etc.

Whoever you seek help from will treat your needs as special and talk to you in confidence.

You will get information and practical help with protection orders, benefits, housing, and how to deal with the effects of the abuse on your children and yourself.

Every year Women's Refuges throughout the country support more than 15,000 women and children.

You do not have to leave home and go to a refuge to receive support. Information and practical assistance is available from the workers on the end of the telephone.

You can try friends and relatives - but be aware that some of them might be uncomfortable talking about family violence, particularly if they have never heard about it. But they might be able to help you find out what help there is in your area.

You might find though, that some family members will put pressure on you to stay in the relationship for the children's sake. Be strong; keep in mind that it is not healthy for children to continue to witness family violence. Even though your children may love their abusive father or mother, they certainly don't approve of the abuser's violent behaviour. In fact most children experience a sense of helplessness and hopelessness at being unable to stop the violence.

Remember when you choose a family friend or relative to talk to, their response might surprise you; it could include shock, disbelief, pity, anger, frustration, sadness, fear, hopelessness, rejection, as well as empathy and understanding.

It might take several attempts to get the support you need, but it's important you don't give up. If the violence continues after you have sought help from family or friends, then seek help elsewhere.

There are community services who can provide confidential support and advocacy for you. These services are experienced in the area of family violence and can provide you with information so you can make informed decisions about your future. The Police will help you contact these agencies. You can also stop the violence if you are an abuser. Facing up to what you are doing is the first step to fixing things. Going to the Police might be the best thing you have done for a long time. Many other agencies can help, including Stopping Violence Services (formerly Men for Non Violence). However, there are some common sense tips on a day-to-day basis that you can follow in situations you feel are getting out of control. They apply as much to women as men.

- Walk away.
- Call a friend or someone you trust.
- Get someone to look after the children while you calm down.
- Go to the movies.
- Go for a walk somewhere quiet - the beach, the park.
- Take 10 deep breaths.
- Listen to some music.
- Work on a hobby.

# DANGEROUS ACQUAINTANCES

## FIREARMS

FIREARMS are not dangerous. That might seem a far-fetched statement in light of New Zealand's recent history of violent deaths, but it is nonetheless true. Like most man-made inventions, it is the use of them that makes the difference.

Firearms safely stored and in the hands of fit and proper people with appropriate knowledge and skills, will hurt no one. The risk of injury or death is remote. It is more likely that injury from violence will be the result of a knife or fist attack, and injury from firearms is certainly less likely than that resulting from a motor accident. However, though the risk is minimal, everyone needs to be aware of common sense firearms storage and what to do if they are concerned about someone in their household or neighbourhood who should not have access to firearms.

Be aware that you face the greatest risk of violence from people you know, either within the family or other acquaintances. Such violence could involve a firearm, so common sense precautions should be taken. While a large number of firearms exist in New Zealand, it approximates only three or four for each licence holder. Each, on average, will have a .22 rifle for rabbit shooting, a shotgun for game bird shooting and one or two hunting rifles.

You must have a firearms licence to own or possess a firearm - it is not possible to walk into a firearms dealer's shop and buy a pistol, for instance, over the counter without a licence or permit from the Police. Many households have firearms stored somewhere on the premises. Most owners hold licences. They will have, since 1994, been checked by Police as part of the relicensing project.

If you have a firearm in the house, think about safety.

Firearms - just like any other item that requires safety precautions in the household, such as knives, poisons, petrol, stairways, electricity and fire - must be treated with care. It makes sense to store firearms securely (see next heading, Firearms Regulations).

And only fit and proper people in your household or neighbourhood who hold a firearms licence should have access to firearms. You have a responsibility to report to the Police any concern about this issue.

Consider these important points:

- Do you have a firearm in the house?
- Does the owner have a firearms licence?
- Is anyone in the house prone to violence or unstable mentally?
- Does anyone outside the family know there is a gun in the house?
- Do you know anyone who has had their firearms licence revoked and still has possession or easy access to firearms?
- Is the firearm stored under lock and key, with the firearm disabled or the ammunition stored separately?

If you have a firearm in the house, the owner must have a firearms licence that allows possession of that firearm (some licence holders have firearms they are not permitted to have). The licence not only ensures that the owner knows how to use firearms properly, but also that they are "fit and proper" - in a state of mind unlikely to pose any risk if they have a firearm. Licences are issued by the Police. Even if the owner is licensed to own a firearm, you might need to decide whether there is a risk. That person should be a "fit and proper" person to own the firearm, but others in the household might not be as careful or responsible.

Be particularly careful if someone in the house, or a regular visitor, has a mental problem or is violent. These people can often act irrationally. If you do not have a firearm available, they cannot use it. Don't make it easy for irresponsible people to use weapons - play it safe and get rid of them.

The community has a responsibility to stop violence. The Police will act if they are aware of a concern, even if it is third or fourth hand. If you are concerned about someone who has access to firearms or just someone who is violent, please tell the Police as soon as possible, for the safety of the community. You will receive a prompt response. It is likely the Police will confiscate any firearm that is readily accessible to such a person. It is then up to the owner to convince the Police that it will be stored safely or that they are a "fit and proper" owner and should keep the firearm.

### *Arms Regulations*

The Arms Regulations require owners of firearms to keep them out of the reach of children and to either store ammunition separately or ensure the firearm can not be fired. Owners must also take reasonable steps to stop firearms being stolen.

If you own a firearm you must have somewhere to lock it away. It could be:

- A lockable cabinet or container, such as a gun case, that is stout enough to deter children or an opportunist thief.
- A display cabinet or rack that locks in and immobilises firearms so they can't be fired.
- A lockable steel and concrete strongroom.

You must keep the firearm locked away at home, unless you, as the licence holder, have it under immediate and personal supervision. You should never leave a firearm unattended in a vehicle.

Owners of military-style semi-automatic firearms have additional security requirements. Call the Police for details.

Failure to abide by the regulations could result in charges being laid and the licence being revoked for a lifetime.

A booklet, What you need to know about Firearms Laws is available from the Police. They also have copies of the Arms Code, which outlines firearms safety procedures.

# LOST OPPORTUNITIES

## DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

DRUG and alcohol abuse is a serious problem in New Zealand, particularly among young people. The tragedy is that youths who have a world of opportunity can destroy their future very rapidly with drug and/or alcohol dependence.

It is, therefore, critical that unhealthy exposure to these substances is limited in the formative years of youth, when young people will be making judgments and decisions about their involvement. It is why the law does not permit shops to sell cigarettes to those aged under 16, or liquor outlets to sell alcohol to anyone under the age of 20.

Programmes such as DARE (see separate chapter) emphasise that parents and caregivers cannot ignore the fact that children are going to be exposed to drugs and alcohol. However, these programmes give young people accurate information about drugs and alcohol, and show them they can make the right choices when confronted with difficult situations.

Drug and alcohol abusers are likely to come from unhappy home environments. It is simplistic to say that society could solve the problem by providing all youngsters with a happy home, but that is the reality. Schools, welfare agencies, the Police and community groups can offer limited help - it is the responsibility of parents and caregivers to look after and respect their children. Most of all, talk to your children, show them you are interested in their life and that you care what happens to them.

Young people need role models - who better to look up to than those who are responsible for their care. The example set will determine what children consider is normal. If a child witnesses regular alcohol or drug abuse in the home, it seems "normal". If it is good enough for mum and dad, it's likely the children will feel it's good enough for them.

## THE SIGNS

Behavioural or personality changes that could indicate drug or alcohol abuse might include:

- Uncharacteristic moodiness or outbursts of anger.
- Withdrawal from normal activities such as family time or sport.
- A disinterest in achievement.
- Loss of appetite.
- Lack of respect for authority.
- Lying.
- Truancy.

Parents and caregivers who suspect children have a drug problem should contact their local Police DARE officer. An organisation called PRYDE (Parents Reaching Youth Through Drug Education) also publishes leaflets on drug abuse which are available through PRYDE or local Police stations.

If you or someone you are close to has a problem with alcohol or drugs, consult a help agency soon.

Organisations such as Alcoholics Anonymous or the Salvation Army will treat you with respect and in confidence, and give you the tools to get your life back on track.

## COMMON DRUGS

- *Alcohol*  
Alcohol is the most widely used drug. While society generally accepts alcohol consumption as a harmless, relaxing and pleasant activity, it is dangerous when taken in large quantities. In cases of over-consumption in one session it can lead to toxic shock and death. The same effect can result from long-term consumption, as the body physically deteriorates with poisoning of vital organs. It leaves the body more vulnerable to disease and illness. Alcohol reduces people's ability to think quickly and logically, creating serious social problems such as violence and road crashes.
- *Tobacco*  
Tobacco is likely to be the first drug children experiment with, as it is the most easily obtainable. It is, however, becoming more and more socially unacceptable. Public buildings and workplaces are mostly smoke-free as the dangers of smoking become beyond dispute. Passive smoking, however, is still a significant danger to children. Health professionals are encouraging parents and caregivers to give up smoking not only for the obvious benefits to themselves, but also for the children who have no choice but to breathe the smoke. Children's development can be seriously affected by inhaling cigarette smoke.

Make your home smoke-free if you have children and discourage visitors from smoking inside. Don't put ashtrays out for visitors and place "smoke-free" stickers at your front door. And never smoke in a vehicle when you have children with you.

- *Cannabis*

Cannabis (or marijuana) is an illegal drug full of harmful chemicals. It is used in several ways, the most common of which is by smoking the dried flowers and leaves. They can also be eaten. Cannabis resin, a stronger substance and usually contained in blocks or cakes, is smoked, eaten or inhaled. Cannabis oil, or hash oil, is the strongest cannabis derivative and is usually smoked or inhaled. It is often sold in medical capsules.

- *Inhalants*

These are chemicals, usually from spray cans, that can hook children from an early age. They include adhesives (hence the term "glue sniffing"), solvent and thinners such as nail polish remover or even type correction fluid. Using inhalants can lead to hallucinations, aggressive behaviour, loss of appetite but insatiable thirst, vomiting and diarrhoea. Long-term users can suffer serious liver and brain damage.

- *Others*

Drug abuse can also take the form of:

- Amphetamines - White to yellow stimulants manufactured synthetically in laboratories.
- Barbiturates - The most dangerous widely used drug because it progressively requires greater consumption to achieve the same effect.
- Homebake - Manufactured from common pain killers. A brownish-white powder usually taken intravenously.
- Morphine sulphate - Contained in tablets of varying colours, depending on strength, with NAPP written on one side. Often prescribed to cancer patients.
- LSD - Can be supplied as tablets or capsules, as a white crystalline powder, on gelatine sheets or on blotting paper. Taken orally.
- Heroin - A white or brown powder that can be injected, eaten, sniffed or smoked.

# THEIR FUTURE IN OUR HANDS

## KEEPING KIDS SAFE

THE hope for safer communities in the future lies with our children. Their attitudes and behaviour will determine the kinds of communities New Zealand will have into the next century. With this in mind, the Police and other agencies have invested considerable time and resources in programmes that encourage young people to take a responsible role in society, and to contribute positively to the community in which they live.

A major initiative developed by the Police is the Law Related Education Programme. Specially trained Police officers, in partnership with teachers, social workers and community workers, use nationally produced resources to educate children about such topics as crime prevention, traffic safety, community policing and victim support.

Two of the biggest programmes under the Law Related Education umbrella are Keeping Ourselves Safe, a very successful programme for children about the dangers of sexual abuse, and DARE, which looks at drug and alcohol issues.

The Police have also been involved in programmes such as: The Role of the Police; Safe Walking; Safe Cycling; Safely Home; Minder (babysitting); Fingerprinting; Emergency Situations (dial 111); Keeping Law and Order; Lost; Search and Rescue; Stealing; Vandalism; Kia Ka Ha (bullying).

## TIPS FOR PARENTS

Abuse of children is a crime. Tell the Police if you know it is happening - call 111 if it is urgent. Sexual abuse is the most difficult abuse to identify. Abusers are usually known to the child, often a father, mother, other relative, babysitter or friend of the family. Both girls and boys are abused. As a parent, you are responsible for keeping your children safe from abuse. There are some signs to look for if you suspect abuse (see separate section on Family Violence).

A pamphlet for parents from the Keeping Ourselves Safe programme in schools outlines what parents can do to prevent abuse. It says the best way you can protect your child is to make sure your own relationship with them is considerate, warm and caring. This will make your child more able to talk about problems, or describe things that happen to them they don't understand. Only leave children with people you can trust. Teach them safety strategies so they can face new situations with confidence, but do not scare them. Let them know it's OK to say "no" when they are uncomfortable about what an older person is doing.

Encourage children to tell you about anyone offering gifts or a ride in a car.

Give them adequate sex education so they understand what is happening if someone approaches them sexually. Answer questions honestly and accurately, appropriate to the child's age - hints will only turn children to others for the answers they seek and increase the risk of them receiving the wrong information.

Talk about sex in a positive manner and counter the images sometimes created in advertising, television and films of acts of violence and other abuse. Ensure children do not see television and movies that are not appropriate to their age - censors have made decisions on restrictions such as R16 and R18 for good reasons.

## BELIEVE YOUR KIDS

If your children say they have been abused, believe them. While you might initially feel fear, shock or anger, keep calm - your children will need your love, support and reassurance. Tell them it is not their fault and that you are pleased they have told you about what has happened. Reassure them that they are now safe and that you will help them. Then get help or advice immediately. You can contact any of the following:

- The Police;
- your family doctor or nurse;
- The Children and Young Persons Service of the Social Welfare Department;
- The principal of your child's school or someone who has worked on the Keeping Yourself Safe programme;
- A help agency such as Parentline, Lifeline, The Samaritans, HELP, Rape Crisis.

If you don't get the help you are looking for, talk to someone else.

## **KEEPING OURSELVES SAFE**

SEXUAL ABUSE of children is of concern to many parents and caregivers, but is a subject fraught with difficulties simply because it is a sensitive topic. Parents often prefer not to think about it or discuss it with their children, and if it is occurring, a parent could be the abuser or does not want to believe it is happening.

Fortunately, the Keeping Ourselves Safe programme is operating in schools. This home-grown programme has been developed by the Police and Education Ministry to help children protect themselves from abuse. The programme aims to:

- Teach children safe practices they can use when they meet other people.
- Encourage children already involved in abuse to seek help.
- Contribute to community prevention by increasing parents' and teachers' awareness of the need to help children avoid abuse.

To be successful, however, Keeping Ourselves Safe requires the trio of support - from child, teacher and parent. Parents are encouraged to help with activities that are designed to be done at home. Parents should discuss the issues with their children to reinforce the message received at school.

Keeping Ourselves Safe covers junior, middle and senior primary ages. The programme starts with general safety issues with which the children are already familiar. Later, children learn the skills they need to keep safe when they meet other people, and finally children are shown how to react in situations where abuse might occur. Any child who is approached in a sexual way is told to get away quickly, to yell and struggle if they are held and then to tell an adult they trust. Children are told they are never to blame for any abuse that occurs.

## **THE DARE PROGRAMMES**

DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) is an education programme that has been running since 1989 in New Zealand. It is based on a concept that originated in the United States which has grown and been accepted in countries around the world.

The programme is aimed at school children of all ages and is co-ordinated by the Youth Education Service of the Police and the DARE Foundation of New Zealand, through more than 50 local DARE support committees.

The various education programmes within DARE have been adapted from the American model to meet the needs of New Zealand youngsters. Consequently, they have been written and designed in consultation with local community and professional groups.

Most DARE programmes are taught as part of the health syllabus in schools and are delivered in partnership with Police education officers and teachers. Others who help may be public health nurses, retired people, parents, or social workers.

The DARE Foundation says it aims to:

- Develop an effective drug education approach for local communities that focuses around young people at school and their families.
- Develop the programmes in a consultative manner; and associate the development of drug education with credible and independent research and evaluation.
- Mobilise local communities to involve themselves in education programmes that meet their particular needs.
- Provide complementary and mutually reinforcing programmes for young people, Police, teachers, parents and community groups.
- Operate as a partnership between Police and the community, particularly the school community.

DARE enjoys considerable support from the community and schools. Teachers are seen as partners in the drug education programme - working alongside the Police. Teachers know the students well and have an ongoing relationship with them, while the Police education officers know about and present community concerns about drug abuse.

One of the key features of DARE in New Zealand is the excellent relationship Police have with teachers and students.

Professor of Psychology at Florida State University Dr Steve Rollin commented on a visit to New Zealand recently that he was impressed with that relationship. "The Police are not unwanted in the classroom and the children listen and are excited by the programme," he said.

DARE's biggest programme, Dare to Make a Choice, reaches tens of thousands of children every year in schools.

A Massey University evaluation of Dare to Make a Choice said: *"Drugs and violence seem to be a 'growth industry' in most Western countries. Dare to Make a Choice is at the forefront of contemporary*

*knowledge and research in fighting these problems in society. We do not believe that there is a more effective programme in New Zealand, or indeed in the world."*

DARE Foundation acting national co-ordinator Marie Palmer says the programmes have been developed in response to an increasing awareness among schools, Police and the community of the need to protect young people from drug misuse.

The programmes aim to encourage young people to make responsible decisions about drug and alcohol use, and their behaviour as citizens within the community.

*"Decision making is an important factor in the programmes," Ms Palmer says. "Kids discover there are consequences for their actions, and that what happens to them depends on the decisions they make.*

*We want young people in New Zealand to live happy, fulfilling lives, to develop their potential and take an active role in the community," Ms Palmer says. "Self-esteem is also a very important aspect of the DARE programme."*

There are several DARE programmes operating in the community.

- *Dare to Make a Choice*

This programme is a drug abuse resistance programme for children aged 8 to 12. It is taught in classrooms for a full school term, in partnership between the teacher and a Police education officer. It is activity-based, with print and video resources, and focuses on developing children's decision-making skills.

It shows children how they can be assertive and handle peer pressure (choose to say no) when illegal drugs are offered. It looks at the dangers of illegal drugs and the sensible use of legal drugs.

A Maori language version, designed to be used in kura kaupapa schools and Maori language classes, is also available. Tena Kowhiria is taught by Maori language teachers in partnership with Maori-speaking Police officers.

The objectives of Dare to Make a Choice are to get students to:

- Feel good about themselves and be confident they can handle drug-related situations.
- Use drug-free alternatives to cope in a range of situations such as handling stress.
- Make responsible decisions about the appropriate use of legal drugs.
- Develop positive relationships with many different people to build a support network that can help with drug-related problems.
- Set and work toward goals that will help them lead healthy lives without resorting to drug misuse.
- Participate in a range of interesting, rewarding and drug-free physical and cultural activities.
- Resist pressure to use drugs.

- *The Dare Report*

This is a short refresher course that gives students who have completed the Dare to Make a Choice or Tena Kowhiria a chance to revisit what they have learned. They can look at what changes they might have made by applying new skills and knowledge.

- *Dare to Make Change*

This programme is aimed at encouraging youngsters in trouble to think about their behaviour and make positive personal changes. It recognises these young people (generally 10 years and older) are often most at risk from misusing drugs, especially alcohol.

They could be performing badly at school or having difficulty at home, violent or having feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness or despair or be misusing drugs

A trained facilitator will work with a group of four or five youngsters, meeting for 20 one-hour sessions. The sessions can be several times a week or spread over a longer time. The meetings focus on the story Gem of the First Water, a story about the journey of a young boy from childhood to adulthood. As he makes the journey, the boy identifies things about himself that he does not like and decides on a new way of behaving.

Participants begin to identify with the boy and take responsibility for their behaviour. Other group activities include creative writing, drawing and an outdoor challenge.

Parent involvement is seen as important for the programme's success. Parents are encouraged to take part in some activities and provide positive feedback for their child's changed behaviour.

The facilitators are community people interested in the wellbeing of young people. They might be teachers, public health nurses, Police, retired people, parents, social or youth workers, or from a range of community groups.

Local DARE support committees arrange training for the facilitators.

- *Dare to Support Your Kids*

This programme recognises that parents and caregivers often need help with the tough job of

bringing up kids.

Misuse of drugs is a big fear. The programme is aimed at parents of children in the 9-12 age group - the so-called pre-drugs age.

Parents will learn about common drugs, how to notice possible signs of drug misuse, how to support their kids as the kids make their own decisions about drugs, how to act as positive role models, and how to build sound relationships with their children.

The atmosphere at the Dare to Support Your Kids workshops is welcoming and informal. It is an opportunity to share ideas with other parents. Schools sometimes offer the programme, developed by the DARE Foundation and the Police, to parents at the same time as the Dare to make a Choice programme is being offered to their children.

- *Dare to Drive to Survive*

Perhaps more than ever, teenagers are required to make for themselves many critical decisions about their lives. Social pressures related to drinking and driving, and the use of alcohol in social situations, can be intense. Teenagers have to decide what action to take to avoid danger. Dare to Drive to Survive is designed for senior secondary students and is taught by teachers in partnership with Police education officers. It fits in with the drug and alcohol component of schools' health education programmes.

Students not only learn how to make informed decisions about drinking and driving, but also identify hazards and prevent accidents on the road, accept responsibility and increasing independence as new drivers, find out about agencies that can offer help (such as SADD) and be informed about drink-driving legislation.

## **MINDING OUR KIDS**

MUCH has been written in recent years about home-alone cases, which appear to be occurring more frequently as the pressures on parents and caregivers to leave children alone increases. It may be parents need to be at work or simply want time to themselves.

Most parents take their responsibilities seriously, and children in their care are justifiably a priority. Some do not, however.

Children are, by nature, inquisitive and adventurous. Without supervision, they can injure or even kill themselves or other children. Parents and caregivers are responsible for supervising or arranging suitable supervision for them at all times up to the age of 14.

Section 10B of the Summary Offences Act 1981 states:

*"Leaving child without reasonable supervision and care - Every person is liable to a fine not exceeding \$1000 who, being a parent or guardian or a person for the time being having the care of a child under the age of 14 years, leaves that child, without making reasonable provision for the supervision and care of the child, for a time that is unreasonable or under conditions that are unreasonable having regard to all the circumstances."*

It is an offence the Police take seriously.

If you need to leave your children for any time - and remember a spark can start a fire in a split second and we know how quickly children can injure themselves - then ensure they are being looked after by someone capable and trustworthy. Children are vulnerable and trusting - don't leave them with just anyone. They are also intuitive - you should be wary if they seem uncomfortable with someone. If you have doubts about a neighbour or even a family member, don't use those people as babysitters.

## **BABYSITTERS**

GET to know a potential babysitter before you use them. Invite them over when you are there for the first occasion, so you can introduce the children and get details without having to rush out the door.

Make sure they know where they can contact you and what to do in an emergency. Keep emergency numbers near the telephone and show the babysitter where your emergency and civil defence supplies are kept. If any of the children are on special medication, ensure the babysitter knows how to administer it if necessary.

Be sure the babysitter gets home safely.

Babysitters should take note of exit doorways and ask about the family evacuation plan in a fire or other emergency. Practising the exit drill (see separate section on fire safety) can be a fun activity for the babysitter and the children.

Make sure the house is secure when the adults have left, checking all doors and windows. Don't open the door to strangers and tell any telephone callers that the parents are not available, but don't say they are away and you are alone with the children.

If you feel uncomfortable babysitting because of unwelcome advances or suggestions from a parent, tell someone you trust and don't return.

# OLDER AND WISER

## SAFETY FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

HIGH-PROFILE media reports tend to magnify the risk older people face. While senior citizens have been identified as a section of the community most fearful of crime, it rarely happens to them. They generally take good care of themselves and their possessions. In fact, they are more likely to die or be injured by fire.

It is tragic that many elderly people unnecessarily lock themselves away from society and enjoyment of life through fear.

However, they still need to follow common sense safety procedures. Read the sections in this booklet on home security and fire safety - they apply as much to older people as the rest of the community.

In an effort to allay some of the fear and worry of senior citizens, several Safer Community Councils have initiated programmes that encourage confident lifestyles. A programme in Christchurch, called Confident Living, aims to *"enhance the dignity, security, independence and quality of life of Christchurch's senior citizens"*.

The programme, supported by the Police, Age Concern and Christchurch City Council, encourages older people to view life positively and look after themselves physically by keeping fit to improve a general feeling of wellbeing and alertness. Physical activity provides more energy, greater strength, flexibility and mobility, improves circulation and posture, and brings greater vitality and better sleep patterns.

Other suggestions in these Safer Community Council programmes suggest senior citizens:

- Maintain a well-balanced and nutritious diet that includes calcium and fibre.
- Stop smoking - it is never too late (within a year of stopping, the risk of sudden death from heart attack will be almost half that of a continuing smoker, and after five years the risk of lung disease is within half of a continuing smoker).
- Drink alcohol in moderation and take care when also taking medications - as a rule, don't mix the two, but consult a doctor or pharmacist to see if it is safe.
- Take medications correctly.
- Tell the doctor when visiting about all medications or other preparations, review them regularly with the doctor, call the doctor if you get an unusual reaction to medicines and make sure you understand what the doctor tells you. If you are not happy with the doctor's analysis, get a second opinion.
- Get help when you need it to allow you to stay at home independently. Home help for everyday household and personal tasks is available from many sources (Age Concern is an ideal agency that can advise about who to call).
- Keep in touch with family, friends and neighbours, and maintain links with your church, special interest and sports groups as long as possible. Age Concern can put you in touch with other groups that will get a volunteer to call you regularly, or help you maintain contact with social groups.
- Avoid falls by ensuring walk areas around the home are free from obstruction. Keep loose carpets and rugs tacked down. Install handrails where mobility or balance is a problem. Use a rubber non-slip mat or anti-skid strip in the bath and shower.
- Keep frequently used items such as food containers stored between hip and eye level.
- Beware of advertising an address for wedding or funeral notices - you will be giving a burglar an open invitation to strike while you are attending.
- Hang up if you receive an obscene or abusive telephone call. If the call persists, keep a record of the times and then contact the telephone company and the Police.
- Plan what to do if an intruder breaks in or an intruder is suspected in the house - think about activating the burglar alarm, how to call the Police (a telephone in the bedroom is a good idea). Don't confront an intruder, but be assertive - they have no right to be there! Consider investing in a personal alarm, which can be worn around the neck. Some firms will rent the alarms.
- Keep active with interest groups and consider continuing education.
- Know where you can get help - start with Aged Concern or Citizens' Advice Bureau.

# COMMON SENSE AND CONFIDENCE

## SAFETY FOR WOMEN

WHEN crimes against women occur, they can have traumatic consequences for the victim.

Whether it is a crime of theft, violence or sexual assault, women can justifiably feel violated and vulnerable. However, by using a common sense approach to protecting themselves from crime, they can feel confident they are safe.

Confidence is often the key. Confidence shows a potential burglar or rapist that you are not prepared to tolerate abuse. And confidence comes with self esteem. Many of the most vulnerable members of society are those with little self esteem - those who either do not care what happens to them, or those who are constantly fearful of something happening.

Confidence is not foolhardiness. A confident person has reason to be so, because they have taken steps to limit risk. Women can limit the risk and build confidence with some simple steps:

- Keep your home safe by reading the section in this booklet on home security.
- Be aware that most cases of violence and sexual assault are perpetrated by someone you know. Be wary of anyone you do not trust and read the section in this booklet on family violence.
- Attend self defence courses or learn a martial art. Recent debate about girls learning a martial art in schools has highlighted the fact that to be most effective, training should be a routine.
- Keep fit.
- Don't advertise it if you live alone - use only initials and a surname in telephone listings and on the letterbox. Fool strangers into believing you are not alone by leaving items such as large gumboots near the front door.

# PROFITING FROM INTIMIDATION

## ORGANISED CRIME

ORGANISED crime in New Zealand has become quite diverse. Where previously groups were mainly motorcycle-based, they are now just as likely to be styled on the American "street" gang or be a white-collar Asian syndicate.

Some have young teenagers as members, others consist of grandfathers and grandmothers who have retained their gang affiliation well into their middle age.

Many crime groups hide behind a facade of respectability; owning businesses, running work programmes and even receiving grants while their primary motive is still the intimidation of others in the quest of power and profit.

While these groups can be broadly categorised as "gangs", they fall into three main groups:

- Motorcycle gangs;
- Ethnic-based gangs;
- Asian crime syndicates.

While it can be unnerving to have gang members living in your street, it is unlikely, however, that "ordinary" residents have anything to fear. Organised crime requires above all secrecy - intimidation of neighbours is not a wise option for gangs who prefer to keep a low profile. Drawing attention to themselves by getting into disputes with other residents is counter-productive. Much of the gang-related violence that occurs is a result of inter-gang disputes.

Gangs are not above the law. The Police will deal with gangs in the same way as any other citizen who breaks the law. If you have any concerns about gang activities or witness a crime, the Police's advice is not to be intimidated. Report it.

The Police will deal with organised crime efficiently and effectively when it is brought to their attention. They also have various strategies to discourage young people from joining these groups, or to entice them out of the groups.

Gangs usually have a structure that looks to the leaders for guidance and imposed respect. Where this respect is diminished because a leader's credibility is in doubt (the Police might show he is unreliable or deceitful, or the court might impose a jail sentence), young people have less reason to see membership as a favourable option.

Police education officers also make it clear in schools that gangs work against society; that membership can only lead to a life on the wrong side of the law.

Parents also have a critical role in discouraging their children from associating with gangs. Parents who talk to their children, who care about what they are doing and give their children time to listen rarely have these problems. Gangs are often seen as substitute families for children and youths. While they are involved in illegal activities and know they are acting illegally, they also feel part of a group that cares about them. That is unlikely to happen in a caring family relationship.

# KEEP YOUR CAR

## AVOIDING VEHICLE THEFT

THIEVES target vehicles for several reasons - it might be they have a ready market for their stolen-to-order merchandise, a specific crime they wish to commit that a stolen car would be useful for, or simply that they want to go for a joyride.

Whatever the reasons, it's no fun for the victims of vehicle theft. Modern society relies on independent transport to get us to work and to play, so when a vehicle is stolen it can be frustrating and often expensive.

Keeping vehicle thieves at bay requires similar common sense as that for home security. Consider the following tips:

- Keep the vehicle locked when you are not in it and always remove the keys.
- Don't keep a spare key hidden somewhere on or in the vehicle - there's not many places a thief will not think of.
- Park in busy areas where a thief is more likely to be noticed, specially at night, and use busy parking buildings that are supervised.
- Install a car alarm.
- Get the windows etched with the chassis number of the vehicle to deter thieves, who, to be successful, would have to replace the windows.
- Use a steering wheel locking device.
- Don't leave valuable items, including important documents and credit cards, in the vehicle. If you have to leave anything in the vehicle, lock it in the boot.
- Ensure you have a locking petrol cap to deter petrol theft and locking wheel nuts to stop your wheels being stolen.

# THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

## SAFETY STRATEGIES BRING ROAD TOLL DOWN

IT'S a fact - the road toll has come down. In 1987, 795 people died on New Zealand roads. By 1995, the toll was down to 581, a reduction of 27 per cent. Provisional figures for 1996 indicate a further significant improvement, to 515.

This remarkable achievement - given that traffic volumes have grown on state highways by about 5 per cent a year - has not been by chance. The reducing toll has been brought about by carefully targeted strategies aimed at increasing awareness of road safety issues. Alcohol campaigns that have emphasised the blunt message "If you drink and drive, then you're a bloody idiot", and television advertising that graphically hits home the results of drink-drive crashes have firmly stated the position of the New Zealand Police - drinking drivers will not be tolerated on our roads.

Excessive speed and seatbelt use have also been specially targeted.

Some campaigns have been deliberately aimed at rural drivers. Research has shown that travel on country roads is about 50 per cent more risky than in towns or cities. Although fewer accidents occur in rural areas, they are more serious because speeds are higher on open roads. Groups concerned with road safety issues - including the Police, Land Transport Safety Authority, community groups and local authorities - are, however, not content with achievements thus far. They are pushing the road safety message harder than ever.

While it is heartening to see a reduction in deaths and injuries, the toll is still too high. In fact, New Zealand's road death performance per 10,000 vehicles is still poorer than all other non-European members of the OECD (see diagram). In Australia, the death rate per 10,000 vehicles was 1.84 in 1995, compared with 2.5 for New Zealand.

The economic cost is also huge - estimated at \$3.4 billion a year. Of course the social cost is impossible to estimate. How can anyone quantify the waste of life and high social and emotional costs of death and injury?

The Police have improved their focus and commitment to road safety as a core business. They see it as a balance of enforcement, education, prevention and deterrence.

Enforcement strategies aim to be firm, but fair and aimed at making positive changes in driver behaviour. Police Commissioner Peter Doone says the Police approach to enforcement needs no apology, because coupled with publicity and education, it means saving lives and reducing injuries.

The use of speed cameras is a case in point. It has significantly reduced speeds in "black spot" areas.

While many usually careful drivers have been caught by the cameras, and might feel aggrieved at having to pay a fine, the speed cameras have nonetheless improved safety. It is a small price to pay.

In the short term, the Police have some key enforcement initiatives in place:

- Delivering a high profile compulsory breath testing campaign using a "booze bus" concept.
- A specialist compulsory breath test group in Auckland.
- A rural drink-drive initiative in Te Awamutu District.
- A national drink-drive campaign to reduce re-offending.
- Introduction of laser speed guns.
- Dedicated traffic safety groups in every region.
- More visible Police patrol cars.
- More focused and targeted road safety patrols, specially on highways.

## GOALS

The New Zealand Road Safety Programme 96-97, prepared by the Police and Land Transport Safety Authority, has set out several medium-term goals. Foremost among them is a reduction in the annual road toll from 510 in 1996-1997 to 420 by the year 2001. Significant improvements are also sought for the number of people killed with excess blood/alcohol levels; speeds on open roads; seatbelt use (by both adults and children, in front and back seats); and the number of cyclists and pedestrians hospitalised.

# A SAFER FUTURE

## POLICE INITIATIVES

THE New Zealand Police not only have hopes of a safer community, but also have in place a tangible, accountable strategic plan to create a better future for all citizens.

Introduced in 1993, the plan has already brought significant progress in focusing Police operations where it is needed most in the community. The Police recognise they must be efficient, effective and responsive.

The strategic plan and the Policing 2000 initiative provide the framework for the Police and local community organisations to increase their effectiveness in meeting the needs of "at risk" groups particularly, and the community generally.

Policing 2000 is a project designed to focus Police strategic directions, to look at the roles and relationships the Police have within the community, and how they deliver the service. It aims to ensure:

- Increased levels of personal safety and security.
- Quality customer service.
- Stronger key partnerships.
- Greater community capability.
- Best value for money.

Policing 2000 is improving operational and business strategies. New information and technology services have provided challenges and opportunities. The Police are taking advantage of this technology with the introduction of the INCIS computer programme, which will reduce the time frontline staff have to spend completing correspondence. The result will be that more Police time will be available for enforcement, education and other non-clerical activities.