



CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS AND SERVICES

Office of the Victim Advocate



What is the Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA)?

- Independent state agency, within the Office of Governmental Accountability
- Protect, enforce and promote the constitutional and statutory rights of crime victims in CT
- Accept complaints regarding alleged violations of victims' rights
- Advocate in proceedings for the enforcement of crime victims' rights
- Systemic review of the policies/procedures of entities that provide services to victims of crime
- Identify gaps in services to crime victims
- Recommend changes in policy and legislation for the advancement of crime victims rights
- Conduct programs of public education and outreach

What are the rights of crime victims?

NOTIFICATION and INFORMATION

- Informed of court dates
- Informed of any proposed plea
- Informed of the arrest, conviction, sentence, imprisonment and release

TREATMENT AND PARTICIPATION

- Attend court proceedings
- Request protection
- Communicate with the prosecution
- Be heard at the plea & sentencing of the defendant
- Request restitution

Where do I go for help if I become a victim of crime?

- **Office of Victim Services, Judicial Branch (OVS)**
 - Compensation Program
 - Victim Services Advocates
 - Notification
- **Department of Correction, Victim Services Unit**
 - Notification Program
- **Non-profit Victim Services Organizations**
 - CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence
 - CT Sexual Assault Crisis Services
 - Mothers Against Drunk Driving
 - Survivors of Homicide

**WHY IS THIS
INFORMATION
IMPORTANT FOR
ME?**

Robbery/Home Invasion/Assault

NBC Connecticut; June 25, 2014

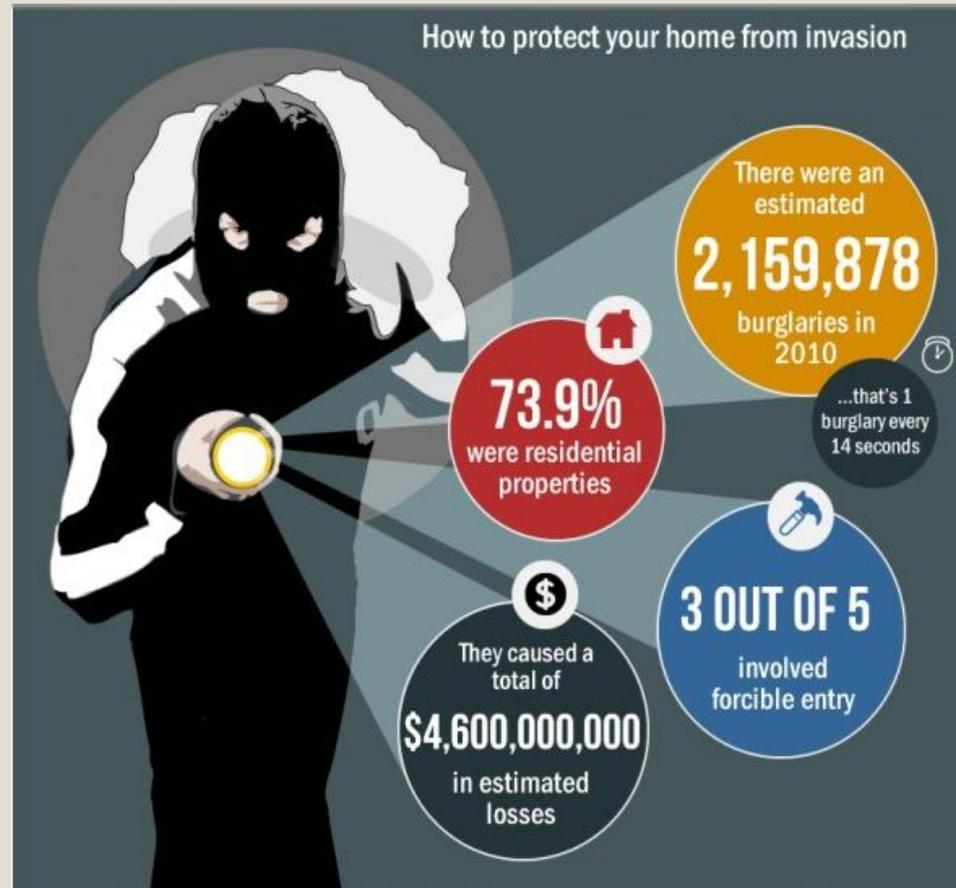
Police Arrest Suspect in West Hartford Break-In, Assault

Luis M. Ortiz, 29, is charged with home invasion, first-degree burglary, third-degree robbery, sixth-degree larceny, assault of an elderly person, third-degree criminal mischief and interfering with an officer.

"I'm mad," said the victim, identified only as Estelle. "I'm very angry... that that man came into my home, but I'm fine."

Estelle said she was in the bathroom and her husband was mowing the lawn when the intruder entered their home. "She turned and ran," said West Hartford police Lt. Stephen Estes. "He chased her through the house, grabbed her and threw her into a table. He stole some items and from there he fled the residence, and that's when the foot chase started."

How BIG is the problem?



Opportunity makes the thief

- Open windows and doors
- Distracted homeowner
- Objects left in yard
- Unlocked car
- Large purchase packaging
- Visual from the road into the house
- Tall bushes / trees
- Full mailbox
- Special occasions



PROTECT YOUR HOME / CAR

- Keep doors locked; use a chain when answering the door
- Trim bushes and trees around the front of house
- When you leave, turn on the radio, television and/or lights
- Get to know your neighbors
- Do not keep large sums of money in the house
- Leave a spare key with a trusted neighbor
- Lock car doors and garage doors
- Never leave valuables (GPS) in car in plain sight
- Consider alarm system/motion lights
- Don't advertise large purchases at the curb
- Report any suspicious activity



Door to door scams

Most Common Scams

Magazine sales

Meat sales

Free energy audits

Outdoor home maintenance

Voter surveys

Medical wellness



Helpful tips

- Never fully open the door; use a sturdy chain when answering the door
- Never let a "salesman" into your home
- Ask for official photo identification
- Never give personal information (SS#; DOB)
- Be suspicious of anyone wanting to start work immediately or limited time offers
- Don't engage- Say no
- Ask for brochures or other printed information
- Verify information with company
- **Buyer's remorse:** Federal law provides for a 3 day, no penalty cancellation option for any contract you sign immediately at your home

WHO CAN YOU
TRUST?

PROTECT YOUR PURSE/WALLET

- Unnecessary contents in your wallet (birth certificate/social security card)
- “Check ID” on your debit/credit cards
- Take a picture of the contents of your wallet
- Small amounts of cash
- Closed purse, carried in front of you
- Wallet in the front pocket
- Carry keys separately
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Never leave bag unattended in shopping carriage



Financial crimes and Fraud



What is financial crime or fraud?

When a person or business intentionally deceives another with promises of goods, services, or financial benefits that do not exist, were never intended to be provided or were misrepresented.

Example: You receive an email that informs you that you have won the Australian Lottery.

Example: You receive a telephone call from someone at the electric company promising you lower rates if you switch to them.

Example: You receive a notice in the mail that you've won an all expense paid trip to an exotic destination.

Example: You are introduced to a financial advisor that has big plans for you and your money.



Fraud with emotions



Example: You receive a telephone call from someone claiming to be your grandson and that he needs you to wire money to him right away.

Example: You receive a telephone call that a loved one has been in an accident and you must wire money or they will be hurt.

Example: You receive a telephone call that a loved one has been kidnapped and is being held for ransom.

Example: You receive a call from someone claiming to be from the IRS. If you don't pay right now you will be arrested.



On the rise: Pet Scams

- Dognapping
 - Some are even held for ransom
- Pet flipping
 - Stealing your dog and selling it to another person
- Classified con
 - Using classified ads to lure you in
- Animal Control Imposters
 - Threats of taking the pet or other legal action
- Rescue Charity Rip-offs
 - Check it out before you shell it out



Identity Theft



Types of Identity Theft

Using YOUR personal information- name, address, social security number, date of birth, mother's maiden name- without your knowledge or permission, for the thief's personal financial gain.

Credit Card: Use existing accounts to make purchases or open new accounts in your name.

Bank Account: Open bank accounts in your name; apply for mortgage, car or student loans; and write bad checks.

Utilities: Open accounts for power, cable, telephone, or internet service.

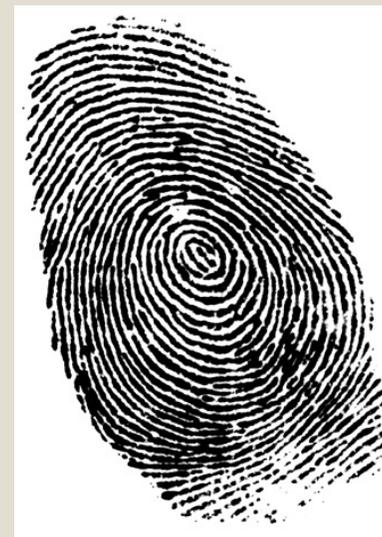
Tax Returns: Filing false tax returns to gain refunds.

Government benefits: Apply for food assistance, housing assistance, unemployment or other services.

Jobs: Use your name to secure employment.

Criminal arrest: Use your name in the course of an arrest.

Medical: Use your name to get medical treatment/services.



How do they get my information?

Dumpster Diving: Someone goes through your trash to obtain personal information.

Shred everything before throwing it away or sign up for paperless statements from your bank and/or credit cards.

Mail Theft: Someone steals mail with personal information out of your mailbox.

Monitor your mail to ensure you are receiving what you are expecting and notify the post office if you suspect your mail is missing. Never put outgoing mail in the mailbox for the postman to take- the red flag is a sign for thieves to "come and get it."

Social engineering: Someone either in person, over the telephone or computer manipulates you into giving your personal information to them.

Be suspicious if someone is asking you for personal information that, if legitimate, would already be known to them. Get their name and phone number and verify their identity and the company they are representing.

Shoulder surfing: Someone is standing close enough to you as you enter passwords at the ATM or checkout.

Be aware of your surroundings; if someone is too close, ask them to move back.



Technological Schemes

Skimming: When your credit card is read on an electronic device and replicated.

Monitor your accounts and credit report routinely.

Phishing: Most common on the computer and texting when you are tricked into giving personal information to someone you believe is legitimate, like your bank. You may receive an email with your bank's logo on it requesting that you update your information.

Never give personal information on a website unless it is a trusted site and has the gold lock symbol in the website scrollbar. Never click on a link in an email unless it is from a trusted source.

You should always maintain security software on your computer to help guard against these common schemes. And remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't. Use common sense.

Financial Exploitation

The caregiver of an elderly patient with dementia is accused of using the man's credit card and making around \$15,000 in unauthorized expenses for her personal use.

Farmington police arrested Carrie Cooper, 33, of New Britain, on Saturday and said the charges stem from a case in February 2014. The family hired Cooper to care for the man on Sundays and those were the days the charges were showing up, according to police.

NBC Connecticut, June 23, 2014

- 18 counts Identity theft 1st
- 18 counts of illegal use of credit card
- Larceny 2nd
- 18 counts of Illegally receiving goods
- 2 counts Forgery 3rd



Elder Abuse and Neglect

All forms of elder abuse can occur at home or at a senior living facility

Financial Exploitation

The unauthorized use of the elderly person's funds or property

Physical abuse

Non-accidental use of force that causes injury, pain or impairment (and includes improper use of medication or restraints)

Emotional abuse

Speech or behavior that causes emotional pain or distress, including intimidation, humiliation, isolation or terrorizing

Sexual abuse

Contact with an elderly person without their consent

Neglect

Failure to fulfill a caretaker obligation

Often unreported crimes

- Shame
- Embarrassment
- Guilt
- Pride
- Fear of retaliation
- Dementia
- Dependent on caretaker
- Don't think anyone can help
- Afraid of being put "in a home"





Warning Signs

- Unexplained bruises, burns, welts or other injuries
- Unexplained withdrawal from normal activities, sudden change in mood or depression
- Sudden changes in financial situations
- Bedsores, poor hygiene, unattended medical needs, weight loss
- Increase in anxiety and fear
- Sudden tension between elder and caregiver

Report elder abuse / neglect

To report suspected elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation in Connecticut:

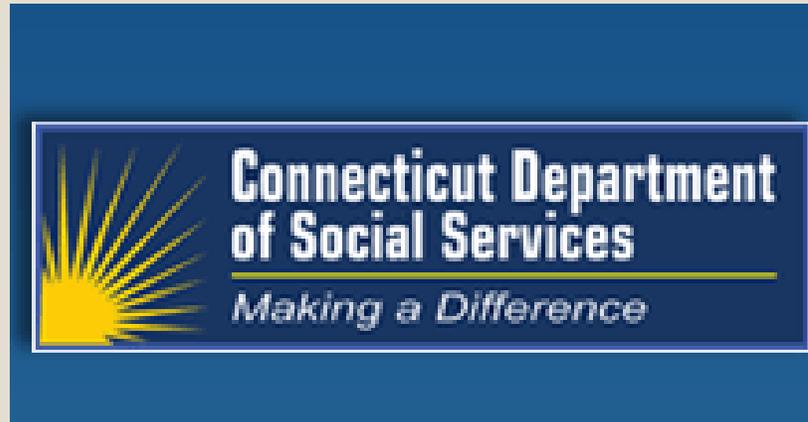
211 (For Suspected elder mistreatment, in state, after hours)

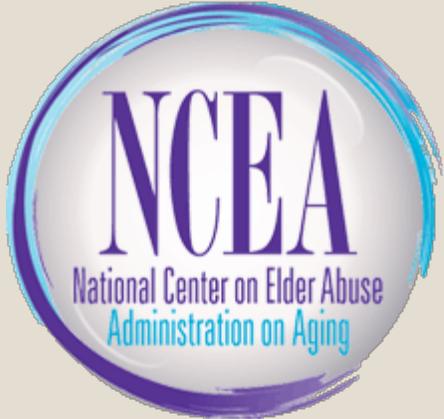
1-888-385-4225 (For suspected elder mistreatment, **in state** line).

1-800-203-1234 (For suspected elder mistreatment, **out of state** line).

Emergency reports: Call 911







QUESTIONS?



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(860) 550-6632
(888) 771-3126 (TOLL FREE)