

## October as Crime Prevention Month

In 1984, the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) designated October as Crime Prevention Month. Every year since then, government agencies, civic groups, and organizations have used this month to educate the public and provide resources to help communities address crime trends locally. October is the official month for recognizing the importance of crime prevention practices, and bringing awareness toward significant matters such as victimization, volunteerism, and community safety. In honor of Crime Prevention Month, we will be sharing new themes each week corresponding with the NCPC, each with relevant information and insight into pressing crime prevention issues. Now is the best time of year to discover new strategies, safety and prevention tips, and safety recommendations for your home, workplace, and community.

### Week 4: Gang Prevention

As we near the end of Crime Prevention Month, we will discuss the importance and relevance of Gang Prevention. NCPC provides training and strategies aimed at reducing gang presence, promoting safe environments, and re-directing youth away from gang activity. Though some regions in the country are more affected by gang crime than others, it is more widespread of an issue than most people realize. Larger cities and suburban communities are the primary sites of gang activity, but smaller cities and rural communities can be affected as well. In 2012, there was an estimated 850,000 gang members a part of nearly 30,000 gangs across the country. They often share a common purpose, such as engaging in criminal or violent activities, drug dealing, property crime, and gun violence. There are factors that are likely to lead to gang involvement, including emotional disorders, school failure, low socioeconomic status, and early involvement in minor crimes. Youth in particular primarily join gangs for protection, respect, or money. It is necessary for communities and law enforcement agencies alike to work together to prevent gang violence and protect the communities affected by it.

The NCPC provides comprehensive resources with information regarding gang violence and prevention. They made [seven strategies](#) that integrate gang prevention education and positive alternatives to gangs:

1. Educate young people about the costs and consequences of gang involvement.
2. Keep youth in school and enrolled in positive activities when the school day ends.
3. Raise awareness among parents and students of the signs of gang activity.
4. Provide students with opportunities to practice refusal skills.
5. Make sure your school is designated drug-free zone and that your students are aware of this status.
6. Engage students in community service or service-learning projects.
7. Encourage youth who want to leave a gang to talk to an adult they trust.

Integrating these strategies along with other resources within a community can be helpful in preventing crime, helping affected individuals, and stopping the problem at the source. If gang violence is an issue in your area, consider working within your neighborhood and greater community, contacting local law enforcement agencies, and seeing how you can involve yourself

to better protect the place that you live. One of our most popular products is our [Gabriel Compression vest](#), an ultra-concealable and lightweight base-layer vest that can be worn under clothes, or as a stand-alone shirt. Like all of our products, the Gabriel is equipped with NIJ IIIA bulletproof material, making it the most concealable piece of body armor on the market today. Its custom built design provides uninhibited mobility throughout the day, ensuring comfort during long-term wear. The vest is available for both men and women in two colors. It is an ideal garment for any individual who wants to take proactive measures in protecting themselves while at work, at school, travelling, or simply on the go.

Though Crime Prevention Month nears its end, the importance should not be understated. Its themes and strategies should be implemented not only through the month of October, but also throughout the year. Working with your neighborhood, greater community, law enforcement agencies, and organizations to help combat crime of any type is an important way to involve yourself directly in preventing crime and helping to make a difference in the place you live.

### **Week 3: Living Safer, Being Smarter**

Many individuals in the 18-24 year-old range are generally not concerned with crime prevention or aware of its incidence. But time and time again, research has shown that young adults are being victimized by crimes like credit card fraud, identity theft, burglary, and assault at alarming rates. The NCPC has dedicated itself to teaching young individuals about crime prevention, and equipping them with specific [prevention strategies](#) to use throughout their life. Luckily, there are steps that young adults can take to help prevent them from becoming a victim of crime in their workplace, social atmosphere, and on the internet.

#### **Workplace safety**

- Secure your valuables by keeping your belongings close to you or locked in a drawer at all times.
- Be aware of your environment: report any doors that don't lock properly, broken windows, or any other hazard if you see it.
- Be discreet: don't advertise your social life or outside plans to people visiting/calling your place of work.

#### **Social Safety**

- Don't drink & drive: though it may seem like common sense, have a designated driver if you plan to drink.
- Call for help: If there is a threat or suspected threat of violence, call the police immediately—don't wait for someone else to make the call
- Always be aware of your surroundings: know where you are and who is around you. Remain alert. Stay with your group and never leave a social function alone.

#### **Internet Safety**

- Choose a strong password & protect it: do not use the same password for multiple sites. This leaves you at a high risk of your password being hacked across multiple sites. Change your password every few months and make sure it is not easy to guess.
- Review financial statements regularly: look over your credit card & bank statements every month. If you notice any unusual charges, immediately report them to your credit card company or bank.

The NCPC developed a more comprehensive list of prevention strategies on their [“Living Safer & Being Smarter”](#) Campaign website. The campaign emphasizes the importance of using crime prevention strategies throughout all aspects of your life. At BulletBlocker, we offer physical protection solutions to keep you safe while at work, school, travelling, or on the go. For young individuals who are gaining independence and beginning to branch out on their own, it is increasingly important to stay proactive in personal safety strategies. Our NIJ IIIA [bulletproof backpack panel inserts](#) are an ideal solution for individuals who want to add a level of discreet protection to their backpack or bag. The panels come in multiple shapes and sizes, ensuring that they will fit into any pre-owned bag with ease. They are lightweight at only 10-20 ounces to maintain comfortability for all-day wear. The insert offers a convenient solution to young commuters, students, and travelers who want to stay discretely protected without sacrificing on concealability or comfortability.

### **October Week 2: Safe Firearms Storage**

According to the NCPC, the second week of National Crime Prevention Month focuses on safe firearms storage. Responsible firearms owners use their firearms safely and understand the need to prevent them from getting into the wrong hands. But even still, 1.4 million homes have firearms stored in a way that makes them most accessible to about 2.6 million children. According to Business Insider, criminals steal nearly 250,000 guns from legal American gun-owners every year, exemplifying the severity of the crime. The problem is exacerbated by legal gun-owners who fail to secure their firearms, making it easy for thieves to steal them. As gun theft increases across the country, violent crime increases as well. When guns get into the wrong hands, it can lead to tragedies on both a community-wide and national scale.

Firearm safety should be a priority in order to better protect our children, prevent avoidable injury, and keep our communities safe. There are a variety of different locking and storage solutions available to firearms owners. If you own a gun, consider the following to better protect your home from accidental misuse or theft:

**Trigger lock:** a trigger lock can be used to keep someone from being able to pull the trigger. They are available in a variety configurations, from basic key lock options to ones that require combinations to open.

**Cable lock:** These can be used on most firearms, commonly place through the gun barrel. The locks generally impede loading and firing of the gun.

**Storage case:** The cases come in various sizes and styles, and can be used for both storing and locking of a firearm. The case can be locked, but often the lock must be purchased separately.

**Lock box:** a lock box is similar to a small safe that allows you to safely store your firearm via a key or combination lock by a digital keypad. This prevents unauthorized access.

**Locking safe:** Safes come in a variety of sizes to accommodate long guns such as rifles and shotguns, and also include space for handguns as well. Similar to the lock box, safes have the option of a combination lock or digital keypad.

At Bullet Blocker, we offer a wide variety of tactical gear for storing and transporting your firearms and ballistics. In addition to our tactical backpacks and range bags, we also offer a NIJ IIIA-level [Bulletproof Pistol Case](#). The case was designed to meet the needs of shooters, featuring enough storage space to securely carry three handguns, while also giving you an anti-ballistic advantage. The fully-padded interior guarantees maximum shock absorption and safeguards weapons from damage during transport. The case features sewn, reinforced handles, and a lockable zipper. Practicing safe firearms storage by locking up your guns not only eliminates the threat of a child or burglar accessing your firearm, but is also a great way to protect your 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights by demonstrating responsible gun ownership. If you own a firearm, consider taking steps this month to better protect your home from gun theft or misuse.

## **October Week 1: Fraud & Identity Theft**

The first week of Crime Prevention Month focuses on Fraud and Identity Theft. When most people think about crime, violence or robbery typically come to mind—but identity theft is more commonplace of a crime than many think. According to an online survey by The Harris Poll from this year, 60 million Americans reported that they had been affected by identity theft in their lifetime. In 2014 alone, nearly 18 million Americans suffered incidents of identity theft. Many well-known corporations fall victim to data breaches, which expose millions of sensitive records in the process. Just last year, there were over 1,500 data breaches, which altogether left 179 million records vulnerable to fraud. Many people feel safe on the Internet and trust that their personal information will remain confidential. But criminals have been able to adapt to advancements in technology, allowing Internet crime to evolve and grow. Once identity thieves have access to your information, they can drain your bank account, run up charges on your credit cards, open new utility accounts, or receive medical treatment on your health insurance. Obviously, this type of crime is common and not one to be taken lightly. The NCPC maintains that anyone can become a victim, but how can you better protect yourself?

### **How to Prevent Identity Theft**

- Secure your Social Security Number. Don't carry it in your wallet or give it out, unless absolutely necessary
- Enable the security features on your mobile devices
- Pay attention to your billing cycles. If bills or financial statements are late, contact the sender

- Store personal information in a safe place
- Shred receipts, credit offers, account statements, and expired credit cards
- Review your credit report once a year to be certain that it doesn't include accounts that you have not opened

### **Warning Signs of Identity Theft**

- You don't get your bills or other mail when you usually do.
- There are withdrawals from your bank account that look unfamiliar
- You find unfamiliar accounts or charges on your credit report
- You receive a bill for a service you didn't use
- You get notice that your information was compromised by a data breach at a company where you have an account

As you can see, identity theft and fraud are serious crimes that anyone can fall victim to. Because of this, it is necessary to take the steps to better protect yourself and loved ones. We offer multiple products to store and keep your information protected from thieves. Our [Passport Wallet](#) is a great option for individuals looking for a way to keep their documents safe while traveling or on the go. The wallet features several micro-mesh slots to hold identification cards, credit cards, and your passport. It also has a document holder with RFID-blocking technology to prevent unauthorized access to personal information. In addition to having ample storage for your documents, currency, and credit cards, the wallet is also equipped with a NIJ IIIA bulletproof liner to use in the event of an emergency to protect yourself. We also offer portfolios and tactical organizers, all of which are NIJ IIA-level bulletproof and a perfect place to store and transport your important documentation.