The Best Defense - YOU!

Office creepers are professional thieves who try to blend into an office building or other setting by looking and acting just like any other employee, tenant, visitor or contractor. They look for things easy to steal that may be left out in the open or left in an unsecured drawer, such as wallets, keys, cash, equipment and most commonly, laptop computers. They steal quickly and look for things that are of value and are easy to steal. And, of course, they don’t want to be observed or caught, so they prey on offices left open or where tenants and employees are in meetings or not in their offices. They even use props – like umbrellas, brief cases, fake ID’s and even business cards along with clothing and equipment commonly used in the building they are targeting – to make you think they belong and are legitimate. But make no mistake, the office creeper is a hardened criminal and who steals billions of dollars of assets each year from companies, buildings and office complexes.

YOU are the best defense against the office creeper! If you see the following, report the person to security or building management or simply ask if you can help them:

- An unfamiliar person going from room to room or office to office;
- A person standing in a hallway for a long period of time or wandering in a hallway or common areas;
- A person waiting outside of the building near the time that the building will be opening or closing;
- A person without an employee or visitor badge (If your building or office uses these)
- A maintenance employee or contractor who you have not seen before or who may not be wearing any ID;
- A person who looks lost or not sure where he or she is going and
- Watch out for the “Head Popper.” A “Head Popper” is an opportunistic thief or burglar who peers his/her head quickly into a room or opens a wrong door, pretending to look for a specific office or person. Their intention is to deprive the rightful owner of property (i.e., credit cards, money, car keys, laptop computer, etc.).

The office creeper is a very good actor and may pose as an employee, business person, job applicant and even a maintenance contractor or janitor.
Common Security Tips Everyone Should Follow

- **Keep** your purse, wallet, keys, or other valuable items with you at all times or locked in a drawer or closet.
- **Always** let someone know where you’ll be, whether it’s working late, going to the copier room or mailroom, going out to lunch or a meeting.
- **Never** leave your reception area unattended; install a door bell so you know when the door opens or secure the door when your co-workers are in a meeting, gone to lunch or are on a conference call.
- **Be Secure.** Lock office doors, cabinets, storage areas when you are not around. Secure unsupervised laptops when out of the office.
- **Don’t Assume.** Ask for ID or call building property management to confirm that a maintenance or janitorial worker is legitimate.
- **Lock** and/or put away your laptop computer when you are going to be away from it even if it’s just for lunch.
- **Secure** your laptop in your trunk before getting to your destination. Many laptops are stolen from parked vehicles either because the owner left the computer in plain view or placed it in the trunk when they got out of their vehicle.
- **Consider** installing remote laptop security (RLS) software that allows you to encrypt computer files and protect against theft and unauthorized computer access.
- **Protect** ID badges, garage and building access cards or fobs, office keys and computer and door codes; these should always be with you or secured.
- **Don’t** send confidential information over your e-mail system or place in the trash.
- **Use** a password system on your computer to prohibit unauthorized users from accessing your computer. Avoid using personal information such as a birth date maiden name, or your initials for your password, and change your password frequently.
- **Docking stations advertise you have a laptop.** Most employees will take their laptops out of the docking station and place them in file cabinets when they leave for the day. Locks on these cabinets can easily be opened. So, make sure you secure your laptop in a cabinet or room with a good lock or, better yet, take it with you.

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**Office and Building Security Websites:**
- [www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org)
- [www.onguardonline.com](http://www.onguardonline.com)
- [www.consumersreports.org](http://www.consumersreports.org)

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*If you observe It, REPORT It!*

If you see someone acting suspiciously, report the person to security, your supervisor or building management immediately. Get a good description of the suspect, such as age, height, weight, eye and hair color. Where did you last see the suspect? Where was he or she going? Look for distinguishing personal characteristics, such as scars, tattoos, and hairstyle. Observe the suspect’s jewelry, clothing, colors and style. NEVER try to physically restrain a possible officer creeper!

**Get help or call the police!**
“Tailgating” and “Piggy Backing” – The Opportunity a criminal hopes for!

**Tailgating and piggybacking** are terms associated with holding a secure door (a locked door or a door that is secured by a card reader) open for persons not known by a legitimate building occupant or allowing a potentially unauthorized person (such as an office creeper) inside a building by following a building occupant inside an access-controlled space.

**Tailgating**

The term “tailgating” is used to describe the situation where one or more people follow an authorized person through a secured door or other entrance when the authorized person opens the door legitimately, in general, without the authorized person’s knowledge and/or consent. A “tailgater” can be an unauthorized intruder, but can also be a normally-authorized person who has forgotten or lost their access key, pass or fob, or finds the access procedure inconvenient.

**Piggy Backing**

Piggybacking refers to when a person tags along with another person who is authorized to gain entry into a restricted area, or pass a certain checkpoint, in general, in collusion with the authorized person.

**Tailgaters and piggybackers have various methods of breaching security.**

These may include:

- Surreptitiously following an individual authorized to enter a location, giving the appearance of being legitimately escorted
- Joining a large crowd authorized to enter, and pretending to be a member of the crowd that is largely unchecked
- Finding an authorized person who either carelessly disregards the law or the rules of the facility, or is tricked into believing the piggybacker is authorized, and agreeably allows the piggybacker to tag along
What You Can Do to Help Stop Tailgating and Piggy-Backing

Many individuals who tailgate and piggy back are using the opportunity to do so to enter a building and commit a criminal act, such as stealing a laptop or other asset. They also can be a disgruntled former employee, customer, contractor or estranged significant other of a building occupant who seeks to commit a property or violent crime against a particular company or individual. And even more disturbing (and increasingly more plausible), they could be a terrorist who wants to enter the facility as part of their terror planning or to execute an actual terror attack.

Secured access card-protected entry points can be a lobby door, elevator or office suite. Here’s how you can help keep out unauthorized visitors:

- Never let someone you don’t know into a protected space such as a lobby door, perimeter door, lab, employee entrance, dock, elevator or other protected area
- Never hold a door open for someone unless you absolutely know the person is a legitimate tenant or employee or is someone who is authorized to be in the building
- If you are unsure as to whom someone is, politely ask them how you can help them. If they claim to be a building employee, ask them to show you their building ID card or access control card
- If they cannot produce an ID or access control card, DO NOT LET THEM IN (even if you have seen them in the building before; they could have been recently terminated); politely advise them to go to the building reception area and then call building security to let them know what just happened
- If someone looks lost or appears to be waiting for a door to be opened by a legitimate person, ask them if you can help them or inform building security of your observations
- Refer all persons or deliveries trying to enter a protected or secured door to the appropriate reception area (i.e., lobby, dock, etc.)
- Report anyone suspicious to building security immediately

Many times all it takes for an unauthorized person to leave is to be confronted by a building occupant and asked if they need assistance. Being observant and polite may all that it takes for a criminal to take flight!

Remember, you are the front line of your building’s security program. If you see anything suspicious or out-of-the-ordinary – no matter how minor you think it is – say something and contact building security or call 911!