

Remember details when reporting a crime!

Facing a criminal

- Compare the assailant to yourself in terms of height and weight.
- Make as many mental notes as you can, but don't rely on your memory for too long. Write down as much as you can as soon as possible.
- Before you become a victim, practice describing passers-by when you're out shopping or enjoying an afternoon walk. The more you practice, the better you'll do if you ever find yourself the victim of A crime. Practicing can be a family game or an exercise for employees.
- Always be aware of your surroundings, always keep your head up and always make eye contact with passers-by.
- Don't resist a robber or purse-snatcher.
- Don't panic. "The most important thing is to help with your own safety," said Sgt. Pat Ross, spokesman for the Springfield Police Department. "Remain calm. As hard as it is, the benefit of that is that anything they take from you can be replaced. But if you panic, then you run the risk of having some physical harm done to you. And quite frankly, when you panic, you're not going to be able to provide as much information."

Talking with police

- The first police officers responding will want basic information so they can begin searching for the assailant. They will want to know gender, race, general clothing description, direction of travel and distinguishing marks to begin with.
- Officers then will ask a series of questions that will help victims describe the perpetrators systematically from top to bottom.
- Victims will be asked if they know the person's name, race, sex, age, height, weight, hair color, eye color and complexion. They'll also be asked about facial hair, scars, marks, tattoos or limbs.
- Police will want to know about hats, glasses, ties, shirts, coats, trousers, socks and shoes. An accurate clothing description is important.
- If the robber fled in a vehicle, police will ask for the year, make, model, color, body style, license plate number and direction of travel.
- If the robber was armed, officers will ask for a description of the weapon. If victims are unsure of the difference between a revolver, a pistol or a shotgun, officers usually have on hand drawings of common weapon types for victims to look at.