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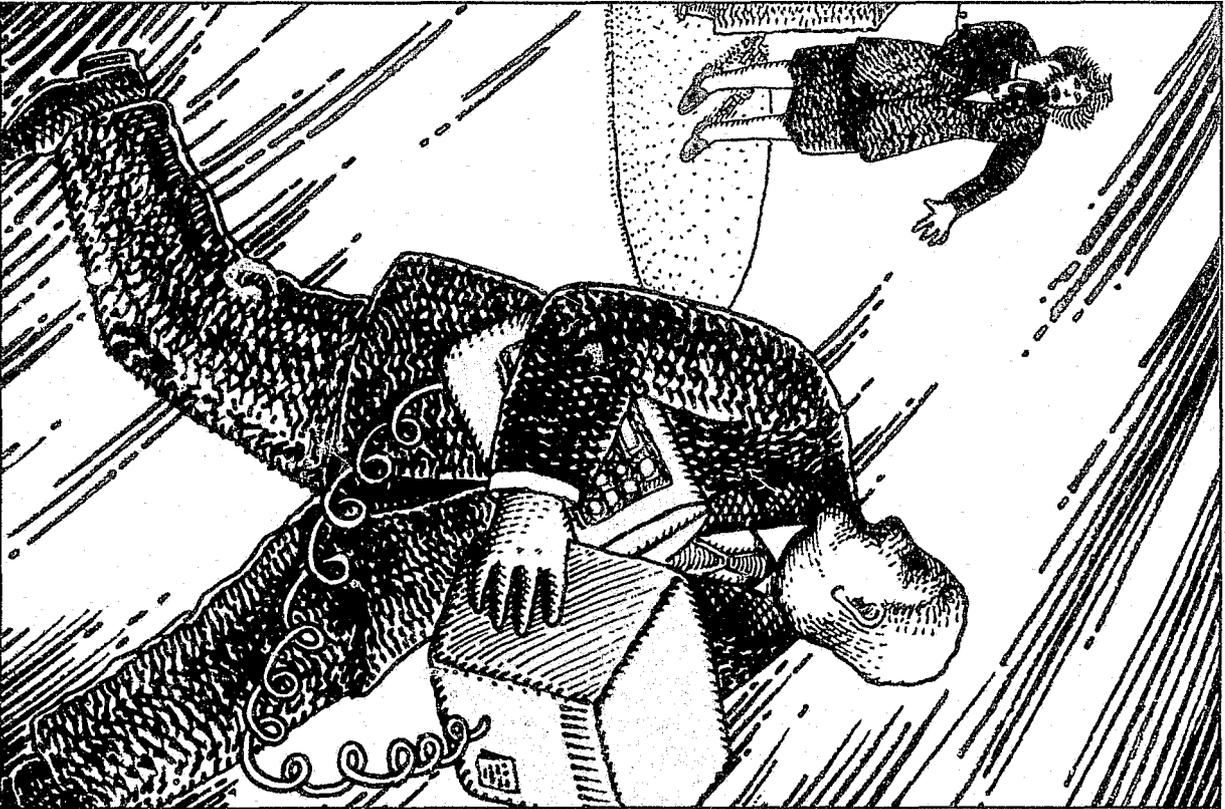
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Federal Protective Service
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Administration

What You Should Know About Preventing Thefts in the Federal Workplace



Many of us think of our office as a "home away from home" and we want to believe that our personal possessions, and the Government equipment we use, will be safe at work. We don't want to think that our personal items or work tools will "walk off." But office security, like personal health, is often lightly regarded until something happens.

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) considers office security an essential part of the healthier, more pleasant, efficient, and productive work environment GSA is trying to create for Federal employees nationwide.

The men and women of GSA's Federal Protective Service also consider office security an important part of their duties in Federal buildings coast to coast. But they cannot monitor every office every minute of the day.

That's why GSA prepared this pamphlet for you on *What You Should Know About Preventing Thefts in the Federal Workplace*. By using the common sense suggestions in this pamphlet and working together with the Federal Protective Service, we all can help prevent thefts in our offices — and keep our "home away from home" the kind of place in which we want to work.

U.S. General Services Administration



A Crime-Free Workplace Begins With You

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is the Federal agency that oversees the protection and safety of Federal Government employees nationwide. The men and women of GSA's Federal Protective Service, Public Buildings Service, want you and your fellow employees to work in a crime-free workplace. But we need your help.

Some Federal employees think that crime in their workplace isn't their problem. They expect professional law enforcement officials — Federal Protective Officers, contract guards, or city police officers — to prevent workplace crimes.

However, this attitude of "it's not my problem" isn't realistic or practical — there are too many places to patrol and too few officers for the job.

To help you as a Federal employee to keep your office crime free, GSA has prepared this pamphlet, which covers one aspect of office crime — theft. The first part of the pamphlet has a short quiz to help you find out what you don't know about theft prevention tactics. The next section gives the right answers to the quiz and explains that what you do can either hinder or encourage office thieves. There is also a coupon for a free FPS Crime Prevention Assessment Survey for your office.

Finally, to test your new theft prevention skills, try to spot all the "wrong" things in the puzzle drawing on the last page — don't look at the answers! Does your office look like the drawing? If so, you'd better go back and take the quiz again.

While taking the 10-question quiz and trying to figure out the puzzle drawing are fun things to do, office thefts are serious business.

GSA's Federal Protective Service has had a national Crime Prevention Program since 1979, and even though by 1986 cooperation by Federal employees had cut crimes in Federal buildings by 35 percent, much remains to be done.

For example, in Fiscal Year 1986, thefts from Federal offices cost the Government \$1.2 million and Federal workers \$700,000. But the cost of time lost in replacing stolen items, and in the disruption of work, plus the price of personal stress, is immeasurable.

We all — Federal Government employees, Federal Protective Officers, and others within GSA who are responsible for protecting your workplace — must work harder to keep our work environment crime-free. This pamphlet will tell you what you can do to help.

Keep this FPS Emergency Calling Card by your phone at work.

GSA — Federal Protective Service

In my building, I should call:

Telephone Number: _____

Officer's Name: _____

Location: _____

What's Your Theft Prevention IQ?

To find out how "office smart" you are about preventing office thefts, take the following quiz. Check the answer(s) you think best — but watch out! Some answers may be only partly right, or all the answers could be wrong.

1. If you leave your office, what should you do with your purse or wallet? What about other "valuables?"

- a. Put your purse under your desk or your wallet in your jacket and hang it on a coatrack.
- b. Keep your purse or wallet with you or locked in a secure drawer or cabinet.
- c. Carry extra cash and credit cards with you.

2. When something happens — a theft, a burglary, or an act of vandalism, what should you do?

- a. Nothing; it's not your problem.
- b. Call the local police.
- c. Call the emergency FPS telephone number for your building.

3. If you'll be away from your desk for a few minutes, or out of the office for meetings or lunch, what's the best procedure?

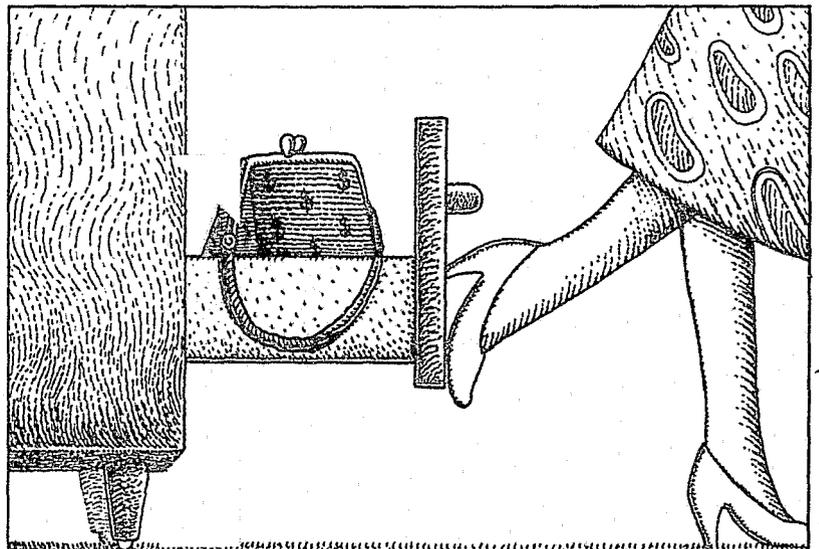
- a. Shut and lock your office door; let the telephone ring.
- b. Arrange for someone to sit at your desk and answer the phone.
- c. Leave the door open and forward your calls to another office.

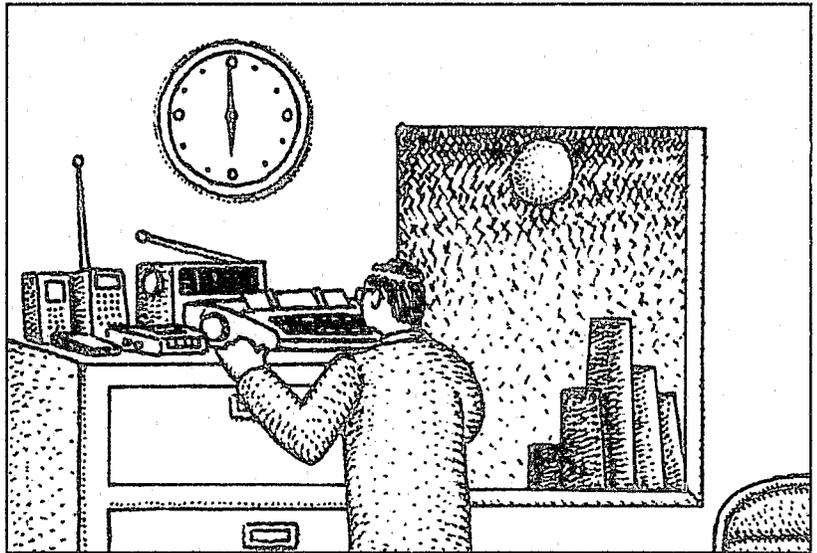
4. To always know where office/personal money, office credit cards, and Government Travel Requests are, you should:

- a. Keep change or cash out of sight in a desk drawer.
- b. Leave the coffee fund jar next to the coffee pot.
- c. Lock all money in a secure desk or cabinet.

5. If you discover that something's missing from your office — a typewriter, or your purse or coat — what steps should you take?

- a. Call the local police and explain in detail what's missing.
- b. Call the building manager or send him/her a memo.
- c. Call the Federal Protective Service and report a missing purse or coat.





6. When a repairperson shows up to work on equipment in your office, or to take the equipment away for repair or replacement, what should you do?

- a. Welcome the repairperson with open arms — it's been weeks since you called.
- b. Ask for identification — unless the repairperson is wearing a uniform.
- c. While the work is being done, go for coffee.

7. What's a good method of keeping track of your office equipment and furniture?

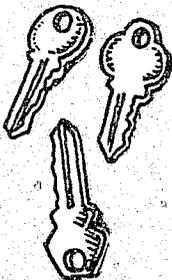
- a. Leave all small equipment on top of your desk or a file cabinet so you will know if anything's missing.
- b. Mark identifying numbers or symbols on equipment and furniture.
- c. Keep a list of all equipment and furniture in a safe place.

8. What's the best way to remember the unclassified safe and vault combinations or computer passwords for your office?

- a. Write them on a slip of paper and tape it on your phone.
- b. Type the combinations or passwords on an index card and tape it on the side of the safe or computer.
- c. Memorize the combinations and the passwords.

9. How can you guard against losing your office keys?

- a. Put the keys on a ring, with an identifying tag, giving your office name, room number, and building location.
- b. Carry all your office and personal keys on one ring.
- c. Always leave your office keys in the same place on top of your desk or in a drawer.



10. Which of the following should you report to your FPS Office and/or building maintenance office to help prevent crime in or near your building?

- a. Broken or flickering lights; dimly lit corridors, stairways and restrooms; and unlighted parking lot areas.
- b. Doors and windows that won't lock or broken glass panes.
- c. Overgrown shrubbery near doorways.

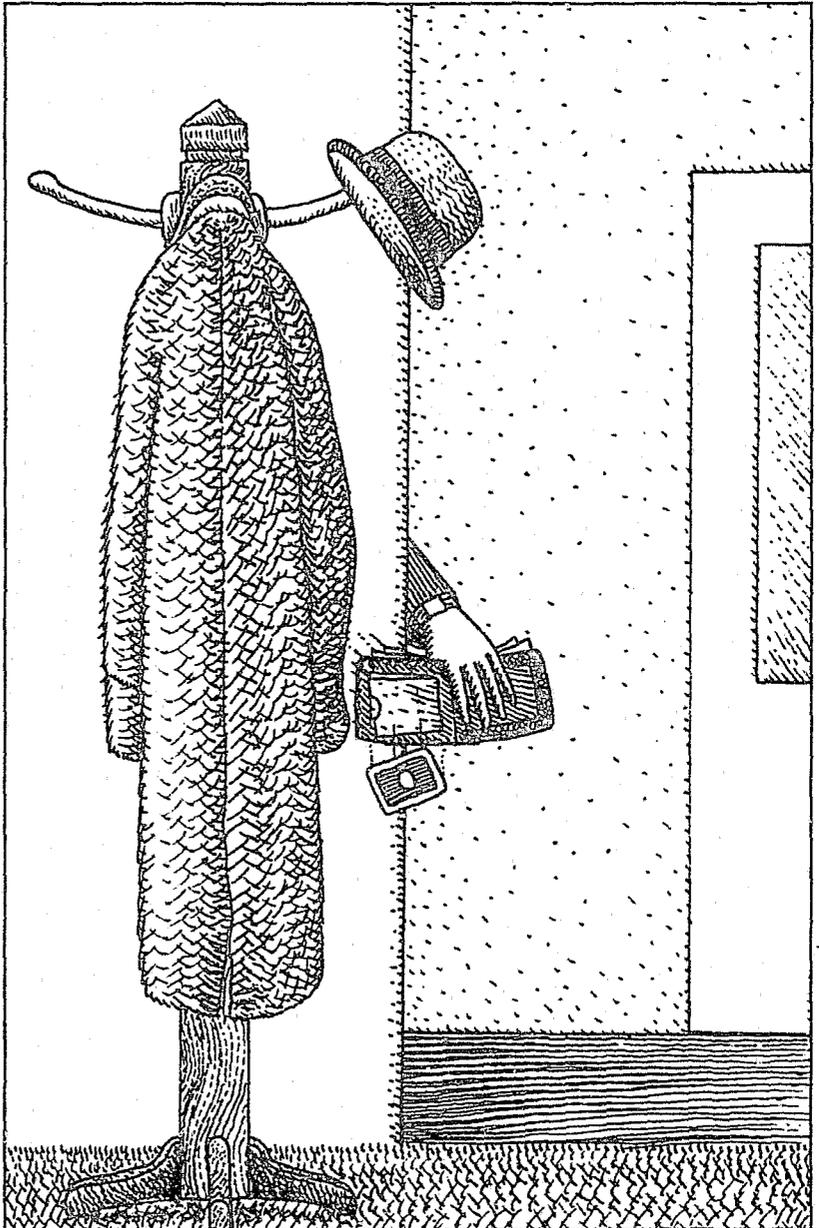
And the Theft Prevention Answers Are . . .

You can find out what your theft prevention IQ is by reading the following section. Questions are repeated for your convenience and the right (or in some cases, partly right) answer is in italics.

Along with the correct answers, we have included theft prevention advice and some commonsense hints that will help you and your co-workers, working together with GSA's Federal Protective Service, to cut down on crime in the Federal workplace.

1. If you leave your office, what should you do with your purse or wallet? What about other "valuables?" a. Put your purse under your desk or your wallet in your jacket and hang it on a coatrack. *b. Keep your purse or wallet with you or locked in a secure drawer or cabinet.* c. Carry extra cash and credit cards with you.

"b." is the correct answer for the first part of the question. Many women "hide" their purses under their desks or in an unlocked drawer. A lot of men think their wallets are "safe" in their jacket pockets — but desks, drawers, and jackets are the first place thieves



look — and it only takes a thief a few seconds to cause you a lot of grief. Incidentally, move your office coatrack away from the main office entrance.

As for the “valuables” — treat them the same as you would cash. The best location for any extra credit cards, excess cash, and your checkbook (if you don’t plan to use them that day) is at home. When you think about the time it would take you to replace your driver’s license, credit cards, checkbook — a few seconds of caution will save you hours of problems.

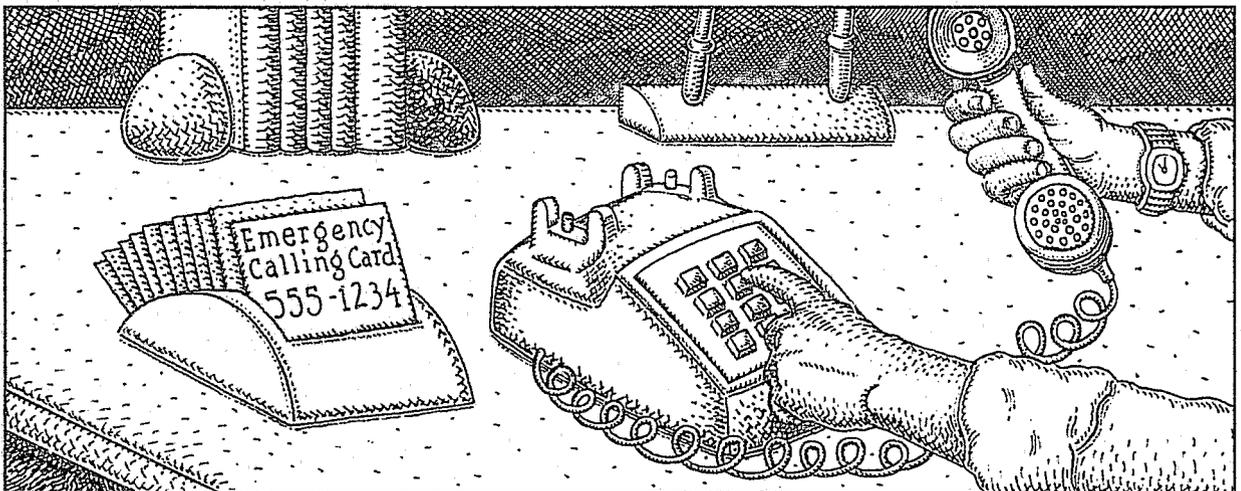
When you travel on official business, keep your government charge card, excess cash, credit cards, and traveler’s checks with you or locked in a hotel safe. *Never* leave “valuables” in your suitcase, under the mattress, or in coat or jacket pockets.

2. When something happens — a theft, a burglary, or an act of vandalism, what should you do? a. Nothing; it’s not your problem. b. Call the local police. **c. Call the emergency FPS telephone number for your building.**

“c.” is the correct answer for most GSA-controlled buildings. Keep the emergency calling card from this brochure at your desk — or write down the number. “a.” is never right — crime in your workplace *is* your problem. As for “b.” — in some locations, you will have to call the local police (or your building manager). To make sure you know who to call *before* something happens — check with your local PBS office now.

If you see a burglary, a theft, or vandalism being committed,

- Stay calm.
- Call your FPS Office *immediately!* FPS emergency numbers should be posted near every phone, together with the address of your building.
- Jot down a description of the person you saw. **Important things to remember and write down are:** height and weight, race, sex, age, color of hair and haircut, complexion, facial hair (beard, mustache, sideburns), eyeglasses, color of eyes, scars or other unusual marks. Also describe clothing, jewelry, any weapon, and — if a vehicle is used — its color, make, and license number. Information on the direction of escape may help law officers find the thief or the stolen goods.

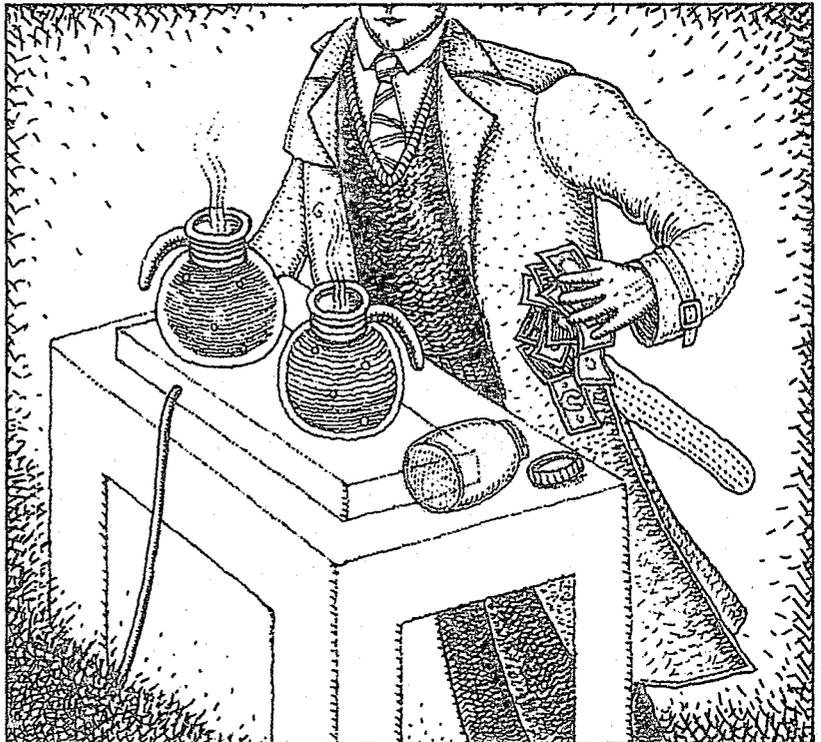


3. If you'll be away from your desk for a few minutes, or out of the office for meetings or lunch, what's the best procedure? a. Shut and lock your office door; let the telephone ring. b. *Arrange for someone to sit at your desk and answer the phone.* c. Leave the door open and forward your calls to another office.

"b." is the best answer. And if you volunteer to return the favor, you shouldn't have any difficulty finding someone to help. Or, another answer would be a combination of the first part of "a." and the second part of "c."

If you just lock your door and let the phones ring, that alerts potential thieves that your office is unoccupied and ripe for picking. If your phone system allows it, forward your calls to a neighboring office.

Even if you're only going to be gone "for just a few minutes," and you can't find someone to office sit, forward your calls and shut and lock your door. Remember, it only takes a few seconds for a thief to rip off office equipment and personal belongings.

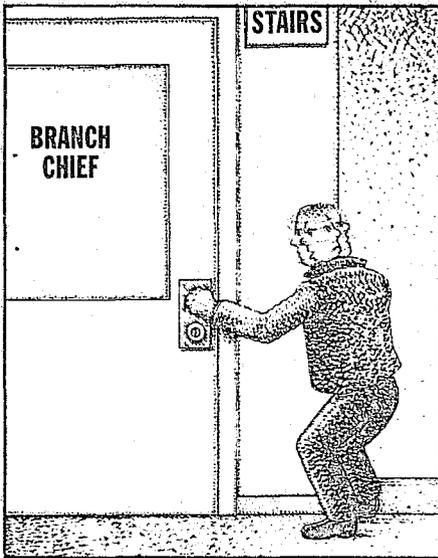


4. To always know where office/personal money, office credit cards, and Government Travel Requests are, you should: a. Keep change or cash out of sight in a desk drawer. b. Leave the coffee fund jar next to the coffee pot. c. *Lock all money in a secure desk or cabinet.*

"c." is partially correct — but go back and read the answers to question 1. "a." and "b." are both wrong.

Never leave money, office (or personal) credit cards, or Government Travel Requests (or anything else of value) in an unlocked desk or cabinet. Why make it easy for potential thieves?

If you have a large amount of coffee fund money open a credit union or bank account — earn interest! *Never* put up a sign with the person's name who collects coffee money — that leads thieves to the right desk.



5. If you discover that something's missing from your office — a typewriter, or your purse or coat — what steps should you take? a. Call the local police and explain in detail what's missing. b. Call the building manager or send him/her a memo. c. Call the Federal Protective Service and report a missing purse or coat.

Either "a.," "b.," or "c." may be the right answer — depending on your location. But make sure you report *anything* that is stolen — government or personal property — to the Federal Protective Service, local police, or building manager. Check with your local PBS office to find out where you should call to report thefts in your building.

When you find anything missing from your office, call your FPS Office *immediately!* Try to remember the day and time you last saw the item and where you saw it. Describe the item thoroughly. If it is marked with an identification number or symbol, give that information to the FPS Officer (or local police or building manager). (See crime prevention tips for identifying property in the answers to question 7.)

5. When a repairperson shows up to work on equipment in your office, or to take the equipment away for repair or replacement, what should you do? a. Welcome the repairperson with open arms — it's been weeks since you called. **b. Ask for identification** — unless the repairperson is wearing a uniform. c. While the work is being done, go for coffee.

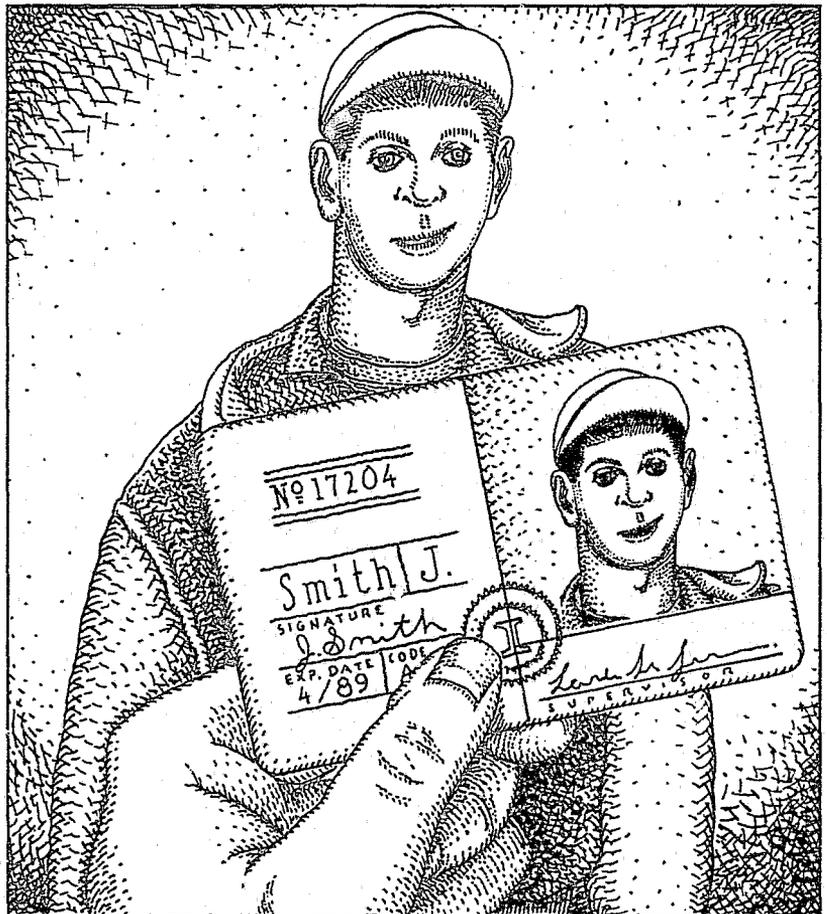
"a." is up to you! "**b.**" is *partly correct*; but just checking identification is not enough — neither is just looking at a uniform. "c." is always wrong — *never* leave any repairperson in your office or work area alone — even if it's someone you know.

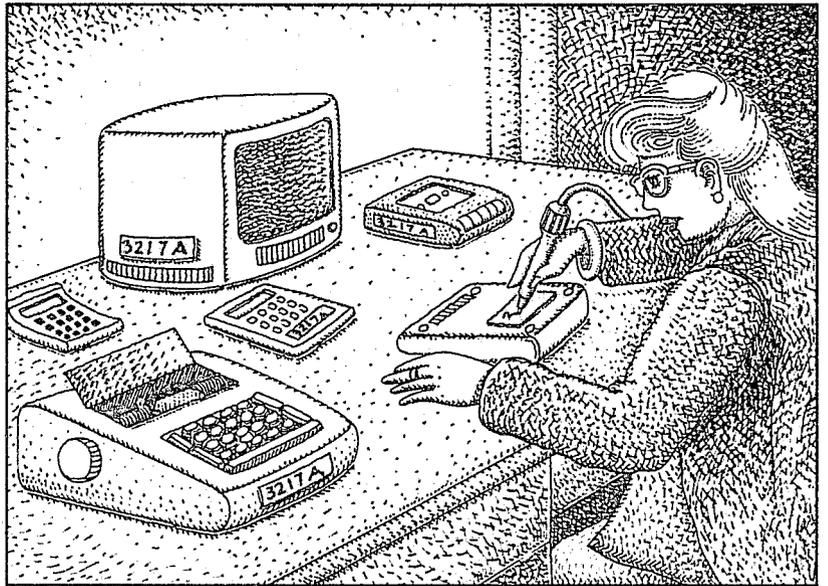
Always check the identification of any stranger who comes to your office to do repair or other type of service work. If you think it's necessary, call the repair company and ask if they have a work order for your office and who is authorized to do the work.

Be cautious . . . uniforms, or patches with a company or a person's name, can look authentic but can be stolen or imitated by determined thieves.

Don't allow government property to be removed "for repairs" without a written order including the repair company's name, address, and telephone number, plus the name of the person in your organization who requested the repairs. Before you let a repairperson remove equipment or furniture, verify the repair request with the person who authorized it.

And *never* allow unauthorized repairs on an alarm system. Always check the work request with your head office and with the repair company.





7. What's a good method of keeping track of your office equipment and furniture? a. Leave all small equipment on top of your desk or a file cabinet so you will know if anything's missing. **b. Mark identifying numbers or symbols on equipment and furniture.** c. Keep a list of all equipment and furniture in a safe place.

Both "b." and "c." are the right answers. But be sure to follow these steps: Mark all office equipment and furniture in a prominent spot with a symbol, such as "GSA" (or whatever your agency/department is), and an identifying property number; the model and serial numbers. Also, mark any personal property with your initials and/or an identifying number.

Markings can be made with engraving pens, decals, or paint. (If decals are used, the adhesive should be difficult to remove and require scraping.) Most office thieves won't bother with items that require a lot of work to remove marks before the items can be sold. But without identifying marks, government-owned furniture and equipment looks the same as items from commercial offices and is easy to sell.

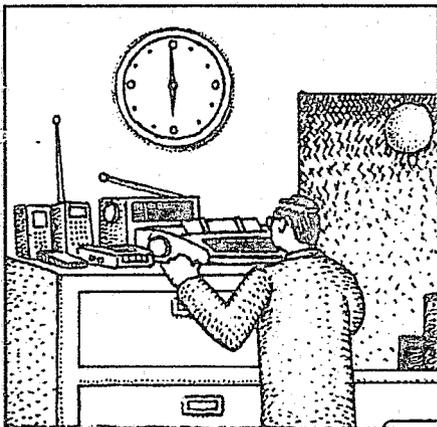
Keep an up-to-date inventory of your office furniture and equipment (and a separate list for personal property) in a locked drawer or cabinet. For each item, list the symbol; the property, model and serial numbers, and a thorough description.

Do regular inventories of equipment and furniture that is not used daily. Call your FPS Office about **Operation ID**, a system to mark and identify your office furniture and equipment. Also send the coupon in this brochure to your local FPS Office for a free "Crime Prevention Assessment Survey." FPS officers will show you what you can do to help cut down on office thefts.

Never store unused equipment (typewriters, cassette recorders) on top of cabinets, under tables, or in isolated areas. Lock the equipment in a cabinet or closet and make sure all items are marked and listed.

Never put keys to locked cabinets or closets in unlocked desks or under typewriter pads. Keep the keys in a safe place.

Attach larger equipment (a typewriter or personal computer) to a desk or table with a locking device.

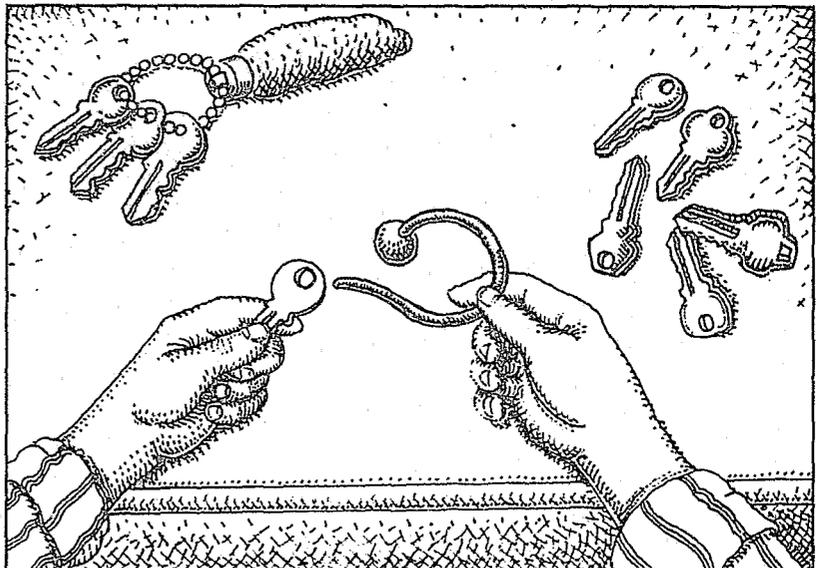


8. What's the best way to remember the unclassified safe and vault combinations or computer passwords for your office?

a. Write them on a slip of paper and tape it on your phone. b. Type the combinations or passwords on an index card and tape it on the side of the safe or computer. c. **Memorize the combinations and the passwords.**

"c." is the best answer. But you should also have a backup system for use when a co-worker is on leave or moves to a new job and no one remembers the combinations and passwords. Here's one easy and safe method.

Write or type the **unclassified** safe and vault combinations and computer passwords on a piece of paper and put it in a folder. Label the folder with an employee's name or codeword and put the folder in a lockable file cabinet. (If your safes or vaults contain **classified** material, or you enter **classified** information in your computer, talk to your local security officer.)



9. How can you guard against losing your office keys? a. Put the keys on a ring, with an identifying tag, giving your office name, room number, and building location. b. Carry all your office and personal keys on one ring. c. Always leave your office keys in the same place on top of your desk or in a drawer.

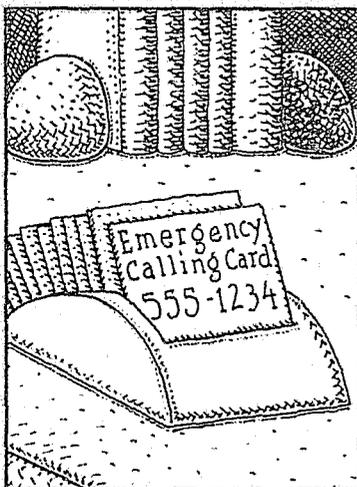
None of the answers is correct. Never put an identifying tag on your office key ring — if lost, it's an open invitation to thieves.

Keep your office keys on one ring and personal keys on separate rings (house/apartment on one, car on another). Don't tag your personal keys either — that leads thieves directly to your door or car.

Don't leave office keys on your desk, under a typewriter, or in an unlocked drawer where they can be easily taken and copied. Never put office, car, or home keys in your coat and leave it hanging on a coatrack or draped over a chair. Keep office and personal keys with you or lock them in a secure desk or cabinet.

Only loan office keys to persons who have a legitimate need — and make sure the keys are returned.

If your office keys are missing, immediately call your FPS Office; have your office locks rekeyed and new keys issued.

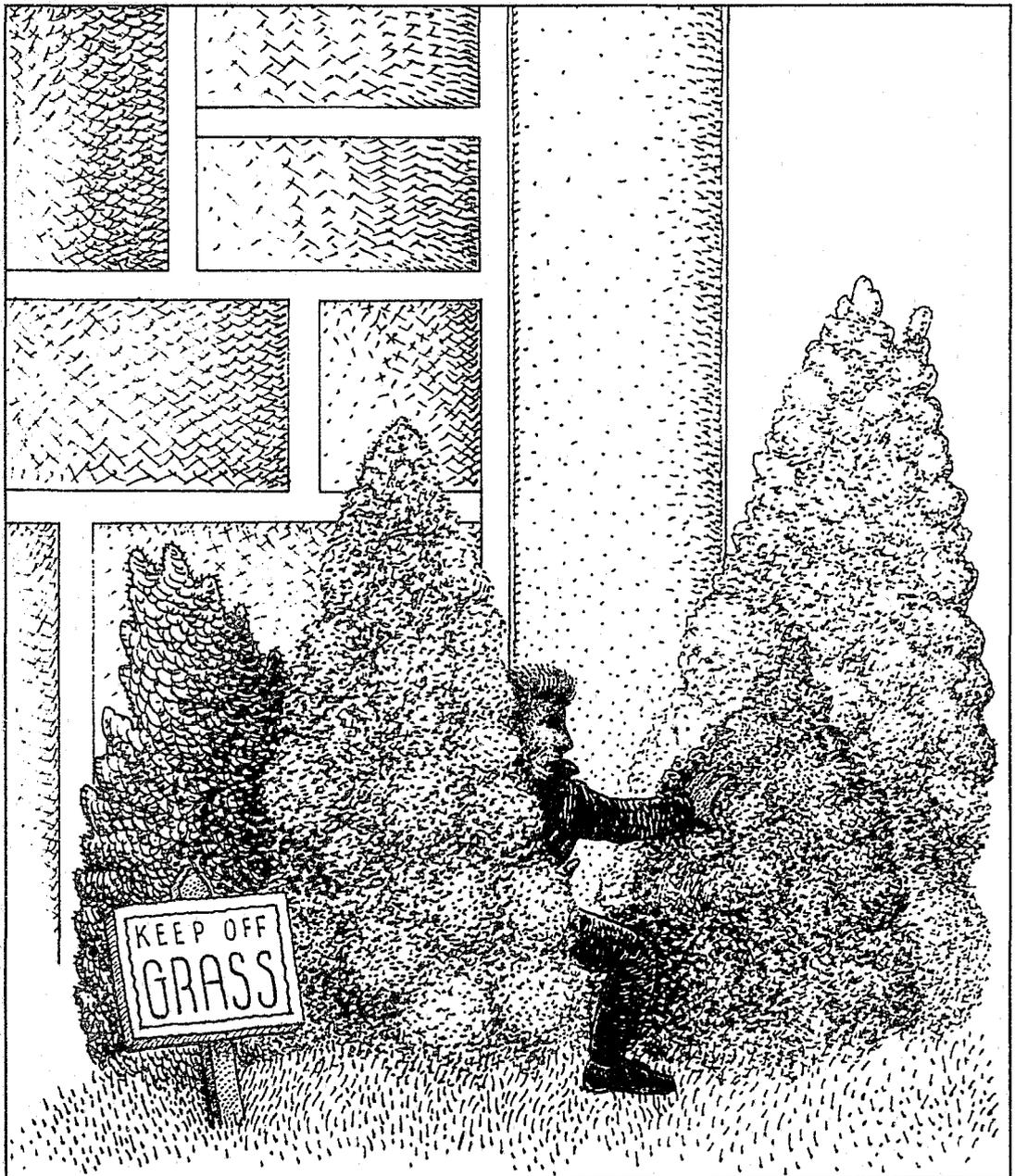


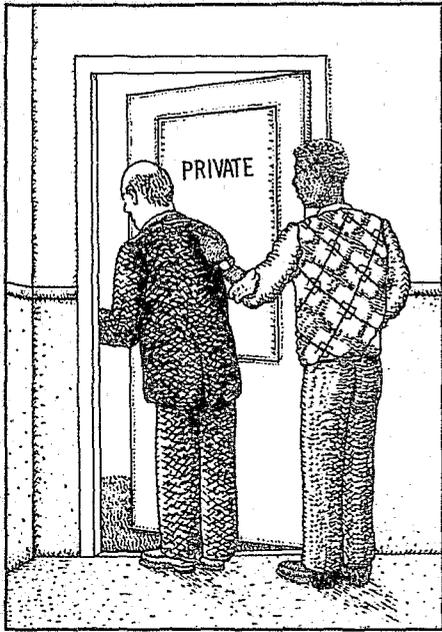
10. Which of the following should you report to your FPS Office and/or building maintenance office to help prevent crime in or near your building?

- a. Broken or flickering lights; dimly lit corridors, stairways, and restrooms; and unlighted parking lot areas.
- b. Doors and windows that won't lock or broken glass panes.
- c. Overgrown shrubbery near doorways.

"a.," "b.," and "c." are all correct. As a further crime deterrent, set up a notification system with your FPS and building maintenance offices to provide prompt response for any of the potential hazards listed under question 10.

You and your co-workers also may want to establish an "Office Watch Program" for your building – by office, section, or floor – to help alert each other to unauthorized visitors or potential crime threats. The





“Office Watch Program” can be set up along the lines of a Neighborhood Watch Program. Call your FPS Office for assistance in setting up your program.

By following these other simple precautions, you can help prevent burglary, theft, or vandalism — often committed by strangers posing as repair, pickup and delivery, cleaning, or other types of service people:

Escort wandering or “lost” visitors to the right office. If you find strangers roaming the halls, ask “May I help you find an office?” Go with them to the right office or call the person they’re looking for and ask that person to come get the stranger.

Watch out for “head poppers”—people who open the “wrong” door and pretend they’re looking for a specific office or person. If the visitor acts nervous or heads for the nearest exit, remember his or her description and immediately call your FPS Office.

Be discreet — don’t advertise your vacation plans (or those of your co-workers) to strangers visiting your office.

Here are some other precautions you can take to keep your office crime-free:

- When you’re working before or after normal hours, keep your office doors locked. Notify your FPS Office who you are and where you’re working.
- Lock all offices or conference or storage rooms that are regularly unoccupied.
- If you’re the last person to leave at night (and especially before weekends or holidays), secure all computer systems, critical files, and copiers. If your office uses any electrical appliances, make sure they are unplugged. And, the most important thing to do — close and lock all windows and doors.

**This Coupon Good For One Free
FPS “Crime Prevention Assessment Survey”**

Cut on dotted lines

Name of Person
Requesting Survey: _____

Telephone: _____ Office Hours: _____ Room No: _____

Department/Agency: _____

Division: _____ Branch: _____

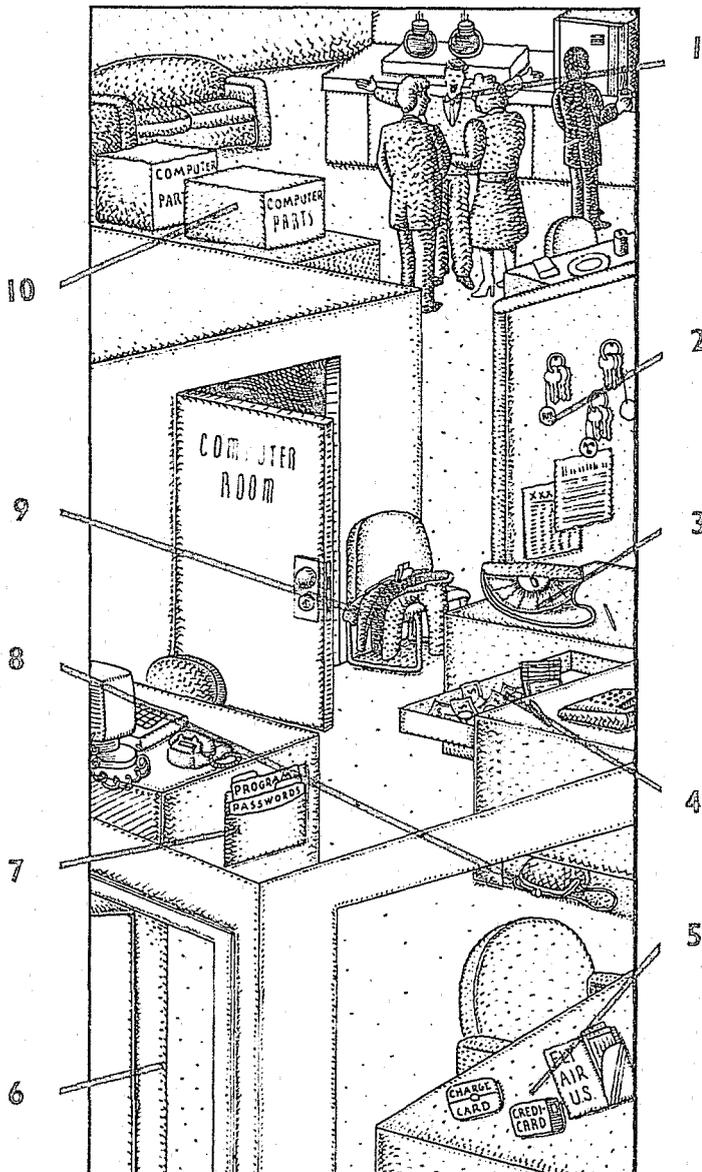
Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Deliver or send this coupon to the FPS Officer whose name is on the business card you received.

Did You Find These Common Faults?

1. Workers gathered in a back room with no one in the outer office.
2. Labeled keys hung where they can be seen from the office entrance.
3. Purse left unattended on top of a desk.
4. Money stored in a desk drawer and the drawer not locked.
5. Airline tickets and credit cards set aside on top of a desk instead of in a locked drawer or safe.
6. The entrance door to the office left open when the office is unattended.
7. Computer passwords and instructions left in plain view in an empty office.
8. Purse "hidden" under a desk.
9. Man's coat (probably with a wallet in the pocket) draped over a chair.
10. Computer parts stored on top of file cabinets.



**U.S. General Services
Administration
Public Buildings Service
Federal Protective Service**