



Back to school safety

Help your children prevent theft while away at college

When a child leaves for college, it is an exciting and hectic time, both for the parents and the young adult. Independence is both given and gained. With this new-found freedom, it's important for college students to keep security in mind. Most campus crimes are crimes of opportunity. According to the U.S. Department of Education, there were about 14,000 reported burglaries on U.S. college campuses in 2014.¹

Your student and his or her property can be kept safer by engaging in frequent and open safety discussions with your child and by following some common-sense tips.

Residence safety

College students live in close quarters that can quickly feel like home. They can easily let down their guard and become complacent. Criminals can come into campus areas with ease and blend in with the student population. Most thefts occur when a room is unlocked or unoccupied. Whether the student lives on campus in a residence hall or off campus, basic steps can be taken to help ensure the safety of their student and their property.

Encourage your child to:

- Get to know the resident assistant (RA) or other person in charge of the resident hall.
- Promptly report any lost keys, broken locks or defective security items. Regularly verify that the unit has functioning smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Do not prop open exterior building and area doors.

- Lock the door at all times, even when going to the restroom or on a quick errand.
- Lock the door when inside of the room, especially while sleeping. Do not open the door unless he or she knows who is on the other side.
- Lock windows and limit the opening of accessible windows to a space of about four inches or less. This can be done with specialty locks or cut pieces of broom handle on the inside of the window.
- Keep valuables out of sight and as secure as possible.
- Do not keep large sums of cash on site. Regularly visually inspect checkbooks for missing checks. If possible, use pre-paid debit cards or credit cards with limited withdrawal amounts.
- Do not loan keys or have his or her name, address, student ID or other personal identifier on the keys.
- Never hide a key outside of his or her room.
- Have locks replaced should a key ever be lost.
- Report any suspicious activity and all thefts to the campus safety department.

Property safety

Students will bring personal computers, televisions, electronics and other valuables to campus with them. It is best to leave valuable jewelry, artwork and heirloom pieces at home.



Encourage your child to:

- Keep valuables secure and out of sight, and avoid keeping large sums of cash.
- Never leave purses, back-packs or other valuables unattended in common areas, such as in the dining hall or library.
- Always secure lockers when in use.
- Make sure bikes are always kept locked through the frame and wheels with a high-quality lock.
- Store bike inside of his or her room if possible.
- Use laptop locks, securing brackets and other protection devices on valuables.
- Keep vehicles locked, even when driving, and keep valuables out of sight.
- Never leave vehicles running and unattended.
- Take valuables, such as personal computers and stereo equipment, home during breaks.
- Keep a recorded list of valuables, including photos and a detailed description of each item.
- Use an engraver (frequently available at the campus security office) to engrave items with his or her driver's license number. This will aid with easy identification, including in the event of theft recovery by the police.
- Promptly report any thefts or suspicious activity to the campus safety department.

Campus safety departments

Colleges are generally considered private or state property, and have their own police or campus safety department.

Encourage your child to:

- Get to know the location and phone number of the campus safety office and have it and other emergency numbers in his or her phone and posted in residence areas.
- Attend campus safety presentations.
- Learn about crime trends, and be aware of any safety alerts.
- Obtain college-provided safety brochures, and learn the safety features of their specific college. Most universities will provide security patrols, on-campus escorts and emergency telephone sites. Your child should know the steps to take before the need arises.

If you have any questions, please contact your agent or Nationwide Private Client Risk Solutions professional. For more information on how you can help prevent losses, visit nationwide.com/solutionseries.

We offer this information to assist you in making decisions that can help mitigate your risk. While we cannot address every possible scenario or guarantee these tips will work for you, our goal is to support your efforts to protect yourself and your family.

fbi.org/fact-statistic/property-crime

nationwide.com/solutionseries

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