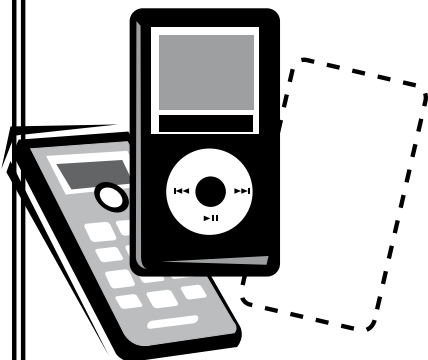


# PREVENTING THEFT OF PERSONAL PORTABLE ELECTRONICS



Who hasn't heard the ring tone of a cell phone while on a bus, in a subway car, or even while walking down the street? Doesn't almost everyone have a cell phone these days?

Portable electronics are more popular than ever. Surveys show that more than 270 million Americans have a cell phone and Americans own more than 100 million iPods. Teens in particular carry all types of electronic devices including cell phones, portable music players, digital cameras, calculators, and laptop computers with them every day. What you may not know is that young people ages 12 to 17 are far more likely to be victims of property crimes and specifically the theft of personal items than adults, according to figures from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Follow the tips below to help keep your property safe.

- Don't show off your property. Keep electronic devices hidden from view when not in use.
- Don't make yourself a target. When using cell phones or music players in public, stay alert to what else is going on.

## Don't Let e-Thieves Ruin Your Day

- Leave valuables at home. If you don't absolutely need one of your portable electronics during the school day, you should leave them at home. Most schools don't accept responsibility for stolen personal property.
- Never leave valuables unattended. Most items are stolen because they are left unattended. Tossing a backpack on a table while getting in the lunch line or leaving it on the bench next to a gym locker may lead to theft of the backpack or something inside it. Ask a friend to watch your things until you return.
- Secure lockers at all times. Many students report that their belongings are stolen from lockers. Lockers can be broken into easily, especially if they are not properly closed. Make sure your locker is shut tightly at the top, middle, and bottom. Don't share your combinations with anyone. Gym lockers are the most vulnerable to theft because they are often left unlocked, and changing rooms are not usually monitored by security guards or cameras.
- Protect valuables that are left in a car. If you drive to school, never leave valuables in plain view inside the car, even when it's locked. Valuables should be placed in the trunk, or at least out of sight. Buy car radios and CD players that can be removed and locked in the trunk. Remember, school parking lots are often deserted during the school day, and car thieves know it.

- Report thefts immediately. You should immediately report any theft to your school resource officer, security staff, or to law enforcement. When reporting a theft, you will be asked to state the date, time, and location of the incident. Prompt reporting is an important factor in recovering stolen items and in catching the thief.

## Recovering Stolen Items

Stolen items may seem gone for good, but sometimes they can be recovered. It all depends on what steps are taken before the theft. Keep a record of all of the valuables you take to school. This includes each item's color, make, model, serial number, and any other identifying information.

It is important to remember that everyone can play a role in preventing theft of personal electronic devices in schools and communities by making sure that personal property is carefully watched or secured at all times.



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