

# Robbery and Property Crime

## What Is It?

Robbery is when someone takes something you own from you by force or by threatening you. Because of the use or threat of force, robbery is considered a violent crime (even if you are not physically hurt in the act).

Theft is when someone takes something you own away from you without you knowing it, like stealing something from your locker or picking your pocket. Theft is called a "property crime." If someone breaks, damages, or vandalizes something of yours, that is also a property crime.

## If You Are a Victim of Robbery or Property Crime, You Might:

- Feel shocked, confused, angry, sad, powerless, or embarrassed.
- Be very upset, even if what was taken wasn't worth a lot of money.
- Feel hopeless about whether anything can be done to get your property back.
- Be afraid to go back to (or near) the place where the crime happened.
- Feel suspicious of everyone around you.

## You're Not Alone

One study found that for every 1,000 teens, 166 had reported a property crime, compared to 118 adults.<sup>1</sup> More than half of property crime doesn't get reported at all.<sup>2</sup>

## Get Help

Being robbed or having your property stolen or damaged is not your fault. Nothing you say or do gives anyone else the right to take or destroy your stuff.

- Tell a trusted adult or report the crime to the police. The person might be punished and you might get your stuff back. These things are not guaranteed, but if you don't tell anyone, you may never recover what was stolen or hold the offender accountable.
- If you are experiencing any of the reactions listed previously, a victim assistance professional or counselor might be able to help you. If you don't know who to

call, call the National Crime Victim Helpline at 1-800-FYI-CALL (1-800-394-2255), and we will give you the names and phone numbers of people in your community who can help.

## Help Yourself

- Do not carry lots of money or expensive things with you.
- Try to stay in areas where other students and teachers are around.
- Keep your locker locked. Double-check the lock before you walk away.
- Don't keep money or valuables in your locker, especially overnight or over the weekend.
- If you have a bike, get a solid U-shaped lock, and lock it in an area with other bikes. If one of the tires is removable, secure it to the U-lock with a chain or extension lock. If the seat is removable, you might want to take it off and keep it in your backpack or bag.
- Be aware of what you are carrying, and hold your purse or backpack close to your body.
- Be aware of your surroundings, especially if you are walking down the street by yourself. If you see someone suspicious, cross the street or go into a store.
- Do not try to get revenge. This could very well make things worse, and you might end up in trouble.

## Help Someone Else

Share this information with your friends.

### If someone takes or destroys something that belongs to your friend:

- Encourage your friend to report it to school authorities or the police.
- Let your friend know that it is normal to feel upset, angry, or sad. Tell him or her that help is available if he or she wants it (1-800-FYI-CALL).
- Do not try to help your friend get revenge—this can get you both in trouble and make a bad situation worse.
- Listen to your friend and be supportive.

## If You Want to Read More...

...about robbery or property crime, see our GET HELP series at [www.ncvc.org/gethelp](http://www.ncvc.org/gethelp).

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- 1 D. Finkelhor and R. Ormrod, "Juvenile Victims of Property Crimes [Abstract]," Proceedings of the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, (San Francisco: 2000).
  - 2 Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 2005: Statistical Tables*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 2006), Table 93a.