

- Be wary of ordering goods and services online; if you do so, request that the company not release or sell your private information.
- Avoid completing surveys or signing up for free promotions online.
- Never respond to a request for information received in an e-mail message that supposedly came from your banking institution. When in doubt, call your bank at the number you have on file for it.
- Talk to your family about the inherent risks of being a judicial officer.

*Government Code section 6254.21(c)(1) states: “No person, business, or association shall publicly post or publicly display on the Internet the home address or telephone number of any elected or appointed official if that official has made a written demand of that person, business, or association to not disclose his or her home address or telephone number.”*

The AOC’s Emergency Response and Security (ERS) unit has developed the Opt-Out Program to help judges remove their personal information from Internet sites; if you are interested in participating in this program, please contact ERS at 415-865-8991 or [ers@jud.ca.gov](mailto:ers@jud.ca.gov).

## THREATS AND INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS

- Threats to judges may come in many different forms: in writing, by telephone, verbally, through an informant or a third party, or through suspicious activity.
- Threats and inappropriate communications can be anything that harasses or makes ominous or unsettling overtures of an improper nature and can include inappropriate pictures or drawings.
- Any received threats should be reported immediately, even if they appear minor or inconsequential. Your security provider will determine whether a threat is valid enough to warrant investigation.
- If you receive a threat:
  - ▶ If you feel you may be in imminent danger, call 911 immediately.
  - ▶ If the threat is not imminent, inform your court security provider as soon as possible.

- ▶ All threats to judicial officers in the state of California must be reported to the California Highway Patrol (CHP) Dignitary Protection Section, Threat Assessment Unit. Reports should be made to the CHP at 916-327-5451 by your local investigating agency.

### Questions or comments?

E-mail us at [ers@jud.ca.gov](mailto:ers@jud.ca.gov)  
or call 415-865-8991.

The primary purpose of Emergency Response and Security is to address emergency planning and security for the AOC and all courts statewide.



## PERSONAL SECURITY FOR JUDICIAL OFFICERS

Take steps to ensure your personal safety

## HANDLING MAIL SAFELY

If a package or letter looks unusual or suspicious (e.g., powder coming out of the sides, oily residue, excessive tape wrapped around it, a return address that does not match the postmark), do not open it. Leave the package or envelope where it is, clear the area, shut the door to the room where the package is located (if possible), and contact local law enforcement. Keep in mind, however, that packages or letters may not always display obvious signs of being unsafe.

Once a package or letter has been opened, if a powder or some other suspicious substance is noticed inside, the individual handling the item should:

1. Immediately put it down on a hard surface and avoid touching the face;
2. Evacuate the area and close any doors leading into the area, alerting others as to why the area needs to remain sealed;
3. Shut off the ventilation system (if possible); and
4. Call or have someone call local law enforcement (this should be done concurrent with items 2 and 3, if possible).



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Administrative Office of the Courts  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, California 94102-3688  
415-865-4200  
[www.courtinfo.ca.gov](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov)



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
OF THE COURTS  
EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND SECURITY

The best way to safeguard the personal security of judges and justices is to take practical safety measures. The tips outlined here will help you be more aware of personal security and increase your safety at home, while traveling, and at the office.

## AT HOME

- Make sure all doors and windows to your home, including your garage door, are locked when not in use.
- Do not put your name or title on the outside of your residence or mailbox.
- Make sure the area around your home is well lit.
- Install motion detector lights for exterior protection.
- Ensure that landscaping is cleared from 3 to 10 feet around your home.
- Find out if your court security provider or other local law enforcement will conduct a security review of your home.
- Do not leave keys to your home anywhere outside the house, such as under doormats, over doors, in mail slots, or in any other obvious place.
- Have a planned escape route from your residence in case of fire or attack.
- Do not answer the telephone by giving your name or official title.
- Have the police emergency telephone number, 911, and the police or sheriff's non-emergency telephone number available next to your phone for immediate use; program these numbers into your phone if possible.
- Consider installing a home alarm system in your primary residence. If you do so, make sure you use it regularly (usage rates for home

alarms vary widely depending on a number of factors; make sure the alarm you install is easy to use). Consider these options when shopping for an alarm:

- Alarm can be monitored by a local alarm company with unarmed response available.
- Alarm annunciations may go to local law enforcement—find out if law enforcement responds to all alarms.
- Alarm is audible only.
- Consider holding title to your property in trust—not using your family name.

## WHILE TRAVELING

- If you have a garage, always park your vehicle inside.
- If possible, always enter your vehicle from inside your garage.
- If your vehicle is parked outside, make sure the area where it is parked is well lit.
- Do not use vanity license plates.
- If possible, vary times and routes when driving to and from the courthouse.
- Drive with your doors locked.
- Always lock your vehicle when it is parked.
- Leave only the ignition key with parking attendants, if possible.

- Be alert to the possibility of being followed. If you suspect you are being followed:
  - Make four successive right-hand turns and see if the suspicious vehicle follows.
  - Do not confront the followers.
  - Do not drive home or stop in an unprotected area.
  - Drive immediately to a safe place, such as a police station.
- Avoid using the term “judge” or “justice” when making hotel reservations.
- Familiarize yourself with escape routes in case of fire or other catastrophe.
- Use the chain or bolt lock in rooms whenever possible.
- Use the door viewer (peephole) before opening the door to visitors.

## When traveling for an extended period of time

- Stop deliveries, such as mail and newspapers, or have them sent to a neighbor's home.
- Use a timer to turn lights on and off in your home at varying times and locations.
- Ask neighbors to check the house for flyers, newspapers, or other items left on the porch or in the yard.
- Secure your valuables and important papers in a hidden safe or off-site safety deposit box.
- Arrange for your yard to be mowed or snow to be shoveled regularly.
- Leave contact numbers with your neighbor and the police in case of an emergency.

- Notify your local sheriff or police and a trusted neighbor of your absence.

## PERSONAL SECURITY

- Change your mailing address to your work address.
- Do not use your home address on any public records or publicly accessible records.
- Use a post office box or business address and telephone number on your personal checks.
- Apply for DMV confidentiality on drivers' licenses and vehicle registrations owned or leased by you, your spouse, and your children. Forms can be obtained from your local security provider or the CHP.
- Do not include your social security number on checks, business cards, or other identifying documents.
- Review the Judicial Privacy Protection Training available on Serranus at [http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/education/jbradio/5628\\_video.htm](http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/education/jbradio/5628_video.htm)
- Refuse unordered packages.
- Never eat candy, cookies, or other foodstuff that is delivered to your residence or office from an unknown source.
- Have caller ID for incoming telephone calls to your residence, and use caller ID blocking to prevent your phone number from being displayed on outgoing calls.
- Make sure your phone number is unpublished and unlisted.
- Do not give out identifying information such as home address or telephone number unless absolutely necessary or required for governmental purposes.



**DID YOU KNOW THAT 40 PERCENT OF HOME INVASIONS OCCUR BECAUSE A DOOR OR WINDOW WAS LEFT UNLOCKED?**



**CONSIDER TAKING A COURSE IN PERSONAL PROTECTION AND GET YOUR FAMILY INVOLVED IN PERSONAL PROTECTIVE MEASURES.**