

PRESS RELEASE

**Banks: a safe summer for the elderly thanks to ABI's guide**

*The OSSIF guide, which is now available at bank branches, provides 10 useful tips for avoiding being a victim of fraud and theft, especially in the summer, when cities empty out.*

Enjoy a safe summer. ABI's guide to avoiding fraud and theft, especially dedicated to the elderly who use banking services, is now available at Italian bank branches. The guide, issued by OSSIF – ABI's security research center – in collaboration with the Public Security Department of the Italian Ministry of the Interior, provides ten tips that are useful all year long, but especially in the summer, when cities empty out. A brief outline of ABI's ten tips is provided below.

- 1. Use cards.** Don't carry large sums of money, use your payment cards (ATM or credit cards) for shopping; they're safe and easy to use. If your card is lost or stolen, you can cancel it by making a simple call, instead, if your cash gets stolen, it's gone.
- 2. Using the Internet is easy.** Internet banking allows you to make a variety of transactions (for example, bank transfers, payments and checking your current account statement) without having to leave home. Using online banking is easy but you can ask a friend or a relative to help you, at least for the first few times. Ask your bank about this service.
- 3. Less cash.** If you can, try not to make more than one cash withdrawal at the same time and on the same day. You can ask someone you trust to come with you to your bank, especially if you have to withdraw large sums of cash. Moreover, if you have to deposit large sums of money, it's safer to use a machine that's inside a bank branch and avoid machines in busy areas.
- 4. Be aware of the people around you.** Pay attention to what is going on around you while you're on line at the bank; usually thieves target victims who use no precautions or who are careless.
- 5. Spread your cash around your person/belongings.** If you receive a large sum of money, don't put it in your pocket or wallet in front of everyone. Move to a spot where you're out of sight to put away your cash; you can also ask the teller to help you. Spread your cash around in different pockets; it's safer to keep money in zip-up pockets (you could also use small bags that you can hide under your coat, which are available at stores). Anyway, try to avoid keeping a lot of cash in your handbag.
- 6. Avoid crowded areas.** Pay attention to what is going on around you and avoid quiet roads. Avoid crowded or busy areas, as they are ideal places for pickpockets, where they can easily steal your valuables without you noticing them.
- 7. Watch out for pickpockets.** To reduce the risk of having one's bag snatched, it's safer to keep your bag under your arm, on the side furthest from the road, with the fastening near your body; watch out when you cross the road. If your bag is snatched or if you are a victim of assault, you should immediately call the police.
- 8. Don't let anyone distract you.** There are all kinds of tricks meant to distract an intended victim from his/her belongings. For example, someone may spill something on your jacket to convince you to take it off and allow him or her to clean it for you. Never allow anyone to distract you.
- 9. Unmask impostors.** Criminals pretending to be police officers may approach you while you are walking on the street. Don't trust anyone. Always ask them for identification.
- 10. When you are driving your car.** Avoid leaving bags unattended on view on car seats when you are driving your car. Always carry your cash with you and lock your car doors.

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