



Western Springs Police Department

CRIME ALERT



November 13, 2014

The Western Springs Police Department would like to inform our residents about a **residential burglary** crime trend that has been occurring in several nearby communities. According to neighboring police departments, a majority of the reported burglaries are taking place from about 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. when a home is unoccupied. The offenders are gaining entry into the homes by prying rear or side doors that are usually obscured from street view. Stolen items typically include high end jewelry and purses taken from master bedrooms.

Please report any unusual or suspicious behavior to the police immediately by calling 9-1-1. Anyone needing additional information about these burglaries should call the Western Springs Police Department at (708) 246-8540.

With the holiday season approaching, the Western Springs Police would like to share some basic crime prevention tips -

THE BURGLARY BASICS:

- Make your home look occupied, and make it difficult to break in.
- Burglaries do happen in the daylight hours.
- Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed. Even if it is for a short time, lock your doors. Deadbolts are good for outside doors.
- Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away for a length of time, connect some lamps to automatic timers to turn them on in the evening and off during the day.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked, even when home. If you do leave your garage door open and it is an attached garage – lock the door into the house.
- Don't allow daily deliveries of mail, newspapers, or flyers build up while you are away. Arrange with the Post Office to hold your mail, or arrange for a friend or neighbor to take them regularly.
- Arrange for your lawn to be mowed if you are going away for an extended time.

- Check your locks on doors and windows and replace them with secure devices as necessary.
- Sliding glass doors are vulnerable. Special locks are available for better security. Even a wooden dowel or a track blocker will help prevent the door from opening.
- Just because it's horrible weather outside – that doesn't stop the criminal activity.

DON'T TEMPT A THIEF:

- Lawn mowers, snow blowers, grills, and bicycles are best stored out of sight.
- Always lock your garden sheds and garages.
- Use curtains on garage and basement windows.
- Never leave notes on your door such as "Gone shopping."

LOCKS.....PURCHASE THE BEST:

- No lock, regardless of its quality, can be truly effective. Key-in dead bolt locks provide minimum security. Ask a locksmith for advice on your situation.
- Push button locks on door knobs are easy for burglars to open. Install deadbolt locks on all your outside doors.
- Change locks immediately if your keys are lost or stolen.
- When moving into a new home, have all locks changed.

SECURING THE OUTSIDE:

- Adequate exterior lighting. A motion-sensitive light is recommended for front, side, driveway and backyards. Suggestion: delayed motion sensors...which may make a thief think you've just flipped a switch inside the house.
- Trim trees and shrubs so that they cannot be used as hiding places for intruders.
- Make sure your door hinges are on the inside.
- Use alarm decals, beware of dog decals, and/or community watch decals near doors.

WINDOWS:

- Some windows may need better locks. Check with a locksmith or hardware store for alternatives.
- Most windows can be pinned for security.
- Drill a 3/16" hole on a slight downward slant through the inside window frame and halfway into the outside frame - place a nail in the hole to secure the window.
- Cover windows with blinds or curtains.
- Always lock the windows, even the small bathroom window that you think nobody could possibly fit through.

ALARMS AND DOGS:

- An alarm system is excellent for home security. It provides peace of mind to homeowners, especially while on vacation. There are a variety of alarm systems on the market for house security and motion sensors for property.
- Make several inquiries to different companies for the best security system available to you.
- Get a dog, not only are they scary, but they draw attention by barking.

INSIDE THE RESIDENCE:

- Find good hiding places in your home for high-ticket items, especially jewelry. Jewelry boxes make things quick and easy for the burglar. Don't use the typical places like under mattresses, in drawers, in desks/file cabinets, etc.
- Secure guns in safes that are bolted to the floor or large enough that someone could not move without a lot of help.
- Limit the amount of cash kept in the home, and store it in a creative hiding place.
- You don't have to answer your door, you can talk through the door and you can install a peep hole.

IF YOUR HOME IS BURGLARIZED:

- If you come home to find an unexplained open/broken window or door, do not enter - the perpetrator may still be inside.
- Use a cellular phone or a neighbor's phone to call police.
- Do not touch anything or clean up until the police have inspected for evidence.
- Write down the license plate numbers of any suspicious vehicles.
- Note the descriptions of any suspicious persons.

OTHER PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE:

- Never leave keys under doormats, flowerpots, mailboxes or other "secret" hiding places. Burglars know where to look for hidden keys.
- Keep a detailed inventory of your valuable possessions, including a description of the items, date of purchase and original value, and serial numbers, and keep a copy in a safe place away from home -- this is a good precaution in case of fires or other disasters. Make a photographic or video record of valuable objects, heirlooms and antiques. Your insurance company can provide assistance in making and keeping your inventory.
- Be a good neighbor. If you notice anything suspicious in your neighborhood, call 911 immediately.
- Form a Neighborhood Watch Group. Police can work with your neighbors to improve security and reduce risk of burglary.

Get to know your neighbors:

- Get to know all your adjacent neighbors
- Invite them into your home and establish trust
- Agree to watch out for each other's home
- While on vacation - pick up newspapers, and flyers
- Offer to occasionally park your car in their driveway
- Return the favor and communicate often