



WESTERN SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT



CRIME ALERT

Western Springs, IL
February 23, 2022

The Western Springs Police Department would like to make the public aware of two separate incidents of reported burglaries.

On February 22, 2022, at approximately 9:25 am, the Western Springs Police received a delayed report of a residential burglary that occurred in the 4000 block of Grove Avenue in Western Springs.

According to the complainant, the residence was unoccupied while under construction. The burglary appears to have taken place between 3:30 pm, on 2/21/22, and 7:30 am, on 2/22/22. Construction items including copper plumbing and insulation were removed, with an estimated value of \$12,000. There were no signs of forced entry as the rear patio doors to the residence were open and undamaged.

Also on February 22, 2022, at approximately 4:30 pm, the Western Springs Police responded to the 4000 block of Hampton Avenue for unwanted visitors in a residence. The complainant (family member of the victim) contacted police after learning of two men who were inside her mother's residence claiming to work for the gas company. Upon the officer's arrival, both suspects left the residence. Jewelry items were removed from the bedroom having an estimated value of \$10,000. Suspect #1 was described as a Hispanic male, 5'10 in height, weighing approximately 200 lbs., wearing a mask, navy-colored jacket, and a baseball cap. Suspect #2 was described as a Hispanic male, approximately 5'9" in height, weighing approximately 160 lbs., thin build, wearing a mask and all-black clothing. There was a third unidentified suspect inside late-model silver or white Ford Escape parked in the victim's driveway.

During both incidents, there were no reported injuries and at this time, there is no apparent threat to the public. Investigations are ongoing.

If anyone has information about either of these incidents that could assist the investigation, please contact the Western Springs Police Department at 708-246-8540.

Information on Ruse Related Activities

These scams are often conducted by groups of anywhere from 2-6 subjects. At times, women and children will accompany a male subject, or two women will work as a team. Scammers occasionally use a look-out who will sit in the vehicle and sound the horn if they see a police officer. Oftentimes these individuals are experts at false identification and will use variations of family names and birth dates.

These scammers are career criminals specializing in home repair fraud and ruse entry burglaries. They often target the elderly and can locate a potential target by identifying elderly-occupied homes based on

certain common characteristics. These subjects identify homes with poorly maintained landscaping and exterior repair needs as potential targets.

***Below is a brief description of the two most common variations of these crimes: ***

Home Repair Fraud

Offenders frequent residential neighborhoods to locate elderly people outside their homes. Once located, they approach the senior and offer to do some sort of home repair work like driveway seal coating, tree trimming, or roof repair. The price is often very low or very high. If the price quoted is low, the money requested following completion of the work is often much higher. Work that is done is often very poor quality. If given an opportunity, the subjects may commit a residential burglary to the home by distracting the resident while another offender searches the home.

Ruse Entry (Burglary)

After selecting a home, the offender will claim to be a utility worker, village employee, or contractor. They will enter the victim's home under the guise of checking faulty equipment (water pressure, electrical panel, gas meter, etc.). While one offender keeps the victim occupied by taking them downstairs or outside to check on the alleged faulty equipment, one or more additional offenders enter the home undetected and commit a burglary.

How to Protect Yourself:

Never allow someone to perform home repairs on the spot. Ask for a business card and check on the reputation of the business before selecting a company. Get a license plate number for anyone who appears upset at your requests for additional information. Do not negotiate prices from the outset. Often they will tell you this will be a great deal because they completed another job in the area and have extra material. Tell them you'd like to wait and think before making any decisions.

For further information and updates, please follow the Western Springs Police Department Facebook and Twitter pages:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Western-Springs-Police-Department-197146446978283/>

Twitter: @springspolice