What Can You Do to Prevent Crime in Your Community?

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Crime Prevention

Safety in Your Home

For the majority of people, a feeling of security is found in the safety of their homes. However, many Canadians fail to take even fundamental precautions to secure their homes against robbery. There are a number of precautions you can take that will reduce the opportunities that a burglar is looking for.

Prevention Tips

1. Conduct a security check of your home to determine possible entry points and any weaknesses they may have.
2. Keep all entrances and garages well-lit at night.
3. Do not leave tell-tale signs that you are away.
4. Install good locks and always use them.
5. Install a wide-angle door viewer which permits you to see callers before you open the door.
6. Never open a door to strangers without credentials.
7. Change your routine often. Burglars can operate on your routine!
8. Do not keep large amounts of money in your home.
9. Mark valuable items for identification. The Operation Identification program has been developed by police to assist people in marking their property.
10. Keep valuables in a safety deposit box at your bank. If this is not possible, keep them locked up in a reasonable hiding place in your home.

Away From Home

It is important to take extra care in securing your home when you are going to be away for any length of time. Not only should your home be secure but it should also appear lived in.

Prevention Tips

1. Secure all windows, doors and garage before you leave.
2. Leave a radio playing to indicate that someone is home.
3. Leave one or two lights on, preferably timers that turn on according to how dark it is outside.
4. Discontinue mail, milk and newspaper deliveries.
5. Arrange to have someone pick up any newspapers or mail that are left on your step.
6. Leave a key with someone you trust.
7. Let your neighbors know your going to be away, for how long and where you can be contacted if necessary.
Safety on the Street

If street crimes (purse snatching, robberies, assaults, etc.) are a problem in your neighbourhood and you have a fear of being victimized, there are ways in which you can reduce the risk of victimization and increase your sense of personal security.

Prevention Tips

1. Walk only in well-lit areas.
2. Do not burden yourself with packages and a bulky purse.
3. Never display large sums of money in public.
4. Go shopping in pairs or in a group.
5. Walk in the centre of the sidewalk, away from alleys and doorways.
6. If you suspect you are being followed, cross the street, go to the nearest home, service station or business and call the police.
7. Be aware of your surroundings and avoid areas that increase your chances of being assaulted.
8. Report problem areas to police. The police welcome the information and can also advise you of prevention methods.

Safety in Your Vehicle

There are some common-sense rules that motorists should follow under certain conditions. Rely on your judgement and assessment of the situation to tell you what you should do.

Prevention Tips

1. Remember to keep your vehicle locked at all times, whether moving or parked.
2. If you are driving at night, use well-lit streets and parking lots that are open for easy observation.
3. Be cautious of any stranger approaching your vehicle. If you feel you are in danger, press the horn repeatedly in short blasts; this will attract attention.
4. If you think you are being followed, pull into the nearest gas station or safe place. Do not drive home.
5. Plan and know your route before you leave, whether it is for a short drive in the city or a long trip in the country.
6. Do not pick up hitchhikers.
7. View the interior of your car before getting in to make sure no one is hiding inside, even if the doors are locked.
8. Have keys in hand so you do not have to linger before entering your car.
Personal Safety

1. Keep your head up, know your surroundings and know where to go for help if you need it.
2. Avoid distractions like cell phones, head phones and personal music players. (Cell phones are useful to carry for emergencies).
3. Plan your route to avoid isolated areas.
4. Don't overburden yourself with heavy parcels or a bulky purse.
5. Use a money belt or pouch to conceal valuables.

Senior Safety

1. Direct Deposit - Have regular cheques sent to your bank via direct deposit.
2. Automated Teller - When using automated teller machines (ATM) be aware of who is around you. Do not make it obvious that you are taking out cash.
3. Shop around, always get a minimum of three estimates on major purchases or service contracts.
4. Be wary of something for nothing or get rich quick schemes. If it sounds too good to be true it probably is a scam.
5. Be careful of door to door sales people or telemarketing. Do not allow yourself to be pushed into buying something you don't really need or want. Take a day to think about it. Read the contract, ask the salesperson to explain all the costs involved.

Child Safety

1. Always let your parents know where you are going and when you will be home.
2. Walk with a buddy or a group of friends.
3. Know your neighborhood and safe places to go if you need help.
4. Stay away from cars occupied by strangers. Do not approach a vehicle even if the occupant asks for help or directions.
5. Never flash money, bus passes, cameras or other possessions. Don't tell people what you have in your locker.

Home/Apartment Security

Install your house numbers on the front and rear of your house and ensure they are large, visible and well lit at night.
Trim trees and shrubs so doors and windows are visible to neighbors and from the street.
Lock doors and windows even when you are home or working outside.
Install good quality dead bolts with a minimum 2.5 cm (1 inch throw). Adding door reinforces that fit around the dead bolt adds 2-3 times the strength to the door.
Install anti-lift devices and a good auxiliary lock, dowel or bar on sliding glass doors and windows.
Report suspicious persons or vehicles immediately to the police.
Get to know your neighbors. - Join BLOCK WATCH or CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING.
Apartment Security

6. Never allow strangers to enter your building without proper screening.
7. Use the intercom wisely. If you do not know the person do not buzz the door. If someone claims to have a delivery for you go down to the lobby to let them in.
8. Lock your patio door or windows when you are out of the room to prevent a cat burglar entering and stealing your wallet or purse.
9. Use your suite door locks even if you intend to stay in the building or just take out the garbage.
10. Don't store valuables in storage lockers.

Tips on Auto-Crime Prevention

1. Close windows, lock doors. Take your possessions with you. Leave NOTHING in your vehicle.
2. Remove your keys from the ignition even if you will only be away from your vehicle for a few seconds (at a gas station for example).
3. Do not leave your garage door opener and registration in your vehicle. These items can be used by thieves to find and gain access to your residence.
4. Invest in a good anti-theft device such as a steering wheel lock, alarm and/or immobilizer.
5. Plan your route and carry a map in case you get lost. Carry a cell phone for emergencies.

Signs of Drug Houses or Grow-Ops

1. Residents avoid contact with neighbors. Occupants appear overnight.
2. The windows are covered with plastic, heavy curtains or blinds that are tightly shut and pressed against the windows.
3. Chemical or strange odors coming from the house, apartment or detached buildings.
4. Neighborhood residences experience unexplained power surges or a decrease in power.
5. The house may appear to be vacant as the yard is not well tended, and flyers accumulate at the door.
6. There is heavy condensation on the windows or an absence of frost or snow on the roof when other houses have frost or snow.
7. Extra security measures have been taken to protect the house i.e. new fencing, guard dogs and bars on the windows.

Identity Theft

1. Shred all documents containing personal information.
2. Never provide bank, credit card, or other personal information to anyone who contacts you by phone or email.
3. Provide information over the phone or internet only if you have initiated the contact and can verify the business is legitimate.
4. Memorize all passwords and pins. Do not write them down.
5. Check monthly credit statements for charges you did not make and review your credit report at least once a year.
Graffiti and Vandalism

1. Graffiti and other types of vandalism are a crime and should be reported to police.
2. When witnessing suspicious behavior or graffiti crime, call police immediately at 911 or the Emergency Police # in your area.
3. Failure to remove graffiti or fix other acts of vandalism leaves an impression that no one cares about the community. The sooner graffiti is removed, the less likelihood of continued vandalism.
4. Remove objects which can be used to access target areas such as roofs.
5. Increase lighting and visibility in vulnerable areas and ensure your property is well lit at all times.

Benefits of Engraving Property

1. Engrave property with your driver's license number.
   Engravers work on plastic, metal and wood.
2. Items worth engraving include bicycles, electronic equipment and tools.
3. Make an inventory list of engraved property items and keep it in a safe place.
4. Once you have marked the property put decals on your front and rear doors or windows alerting would be criminals that your property is marked for identification.
5. Engraving - provides evidence of guilt and enables police to detain a suspect who is found in possession of property engraved with someone else's driver's license number.
6. There is a higher likelihood that the property will be returned to its rightful owner.
7. Engraving may serve as a deterrent as criminals are less likely to steal marked property.
8. The thief cannot reclaim the property if it is seized.

Decals are provided to Block Watch groups free of charge by the Block Watch Society of British Columbia. In addition your local Block Watch Office may be able to lend you an engraver.
Crime Prevention Quiz: True or False

1. Your daily routine has nothing to do with burglary
   True or False

2. Keep money in your home instead of a bank, in case the bank gets robbed
   True or False

3. Don’t carry large bulky things when walking alone at night
   True or False

4. Walk close against walls at night as not to be seen
   True or False

5. Seniors should have direct deposit instead of checks
   True or False

6. Lock everything, even when you are home
   True or False

7. It’s ok to leave your vehicle unlocked because you will mostly be driving it
   True or False

8. If someone is delivering a package to an apartment its ok to let them up, going downstairs is being paranoid and rude
   True or False

9. Keep all personal documents in your bedroom
   True or False

10. Call the police when witnessing graffiti
    True or False
Crime Prevention Quiz Answers:

1. False- they watch your routine and use it
2. False- never keep money in the house
3. True
4. False- walk in the middle of the sidewalk away from doors
5. True
6. True
7. False- always lock car
8. False- go down to the door
9. False- Shred personal documents
10. True