

Seattle Police Email Community Newsletter

October 1, 2015



Dear Community Friends,

Package Theft

I've received recent reports from people reporting they have been the victims of package theft. I've also received emails and phone messages from neighbors who suspect that their neighbor was a victim of package theft because of suspicious individuals they saw on their neighbor's porch following a package delivery by a UPS or Fedex truck. While I appreciate you keeping me in the loop, please call 911 to report the theft or the suspicious person on your neighbor's porch.

That being said, you may have seen recent local news broadcasts regarding package theft. Package thefts are crimes of opportunity. Thieves will follow or watch for FedEx, UPS, US Mail and other delivery trucks and then target a home after a delivery is made. Often packages are simply left at the doorstep of the home and in plain view of the street. Package thefts from doorstops and front porches during the day usually increase between the months of October and January. There are steps you can take to be proactive in keeping your package safe from theft. To reduce the chances of being victimized by package delivery thieves, we offer the following advice:

Tracking and Delivery

- Track your shipment: All of the major delivery companies offer package tracking, some providing free alerts letting you know where your package is in the shipping process.
- Choose a shipping option that requires you to sign for delivery.
- Arrange to have the package shipped to another location where someone can receive it. This could be your workplace, a friend or relative's home, with a trusted neighbor, the leasing office at your apartment complex or even the local "mailbox" business that may agree to accept shipment of your item for a fee.
- Ask the delivery service to hold your package for customer pick-up at their local shipping facility.
- You can buy locking bins that your packages can be stored in safely until you return home to retrieve them. You just give the key code to the delivery company so they can store the package and use your key code to retrieve it. While locking bins are an option, it is recommended you bolt the locking bin down so that it can't be carted away. Also, be mindful that these locking bins run \$500-\$800 on average.
- If none of the above are viable options, at the very least request the package be placed in a discrete location not visible from the street.

Package Not Received or You Suspect Theft

- If you do not receive your shipment on time, check with the company of origin and confirm the delivery. If something you ordered cannot be located, contact the sender of the package to initiate a trace process. The sender will then follow up with you on the progress of your shipment.
- If the item was delivered and you did not receive it, report the theft or loss to the original company, the shipping company, and the Seattle Police Department's non-emergency line at 206-625-5011.
- Many package thefts occur during daylight hours. As always, be alert to suspicious behavior in your neighborhood, especially if you see a delivery truck making the rounds and a vehicle following behind or unfamiliar subjects on foot or on your neighbor's property. Be prepared to call 911. Your calls **do** have an impact on crime and criminals.

Delivery Company Liability

- Once the package has been delivered, whether signed for or not, it's no longer the shipping company's responsibility. Bottom line, if the package is stolen after delivery, that's on you, not them; the delivery company is not liable.

We hope this information is useful to you.

Question of the Month

We have some real problem neighbors. They constantly party and play their music way too loud all hours of the night. There have been lots of fights and they're so loud all the time, we can't sleep. We've got young kids. And they've got a lot of shady characters coming around constantly. We think they're selling drugs. We know they are using them. What can you do about this nuisance?

There's a lot to unpack here. Let's start with the easy ones.

Have you talked with your neighbors to let them know that they are being disruptive? Have you approached them - as neighbors – to develop a relationship as neighbors? Sometimes the first step is just letting them know and letting them know how their behavior is impacting you and your family. If they ignore you and continue to be loud, you can report them for noise disturbances. Hopefully other neighbors impacted by their behavior will call and report as well. Your call gives officers a reason to make contact with the neighbors and let them know that complaints have been received. If we have a lot of calls for noise disturbances at a particular location, we'll be having conversations with the property owner about it. If the neighbors causing the problem are renters, we'll loop in the property owner as well and speak with the renters. You can also engage with the property owner/landlord and let him/her know your concerns about the neighbor's behavior. Most property owners, when they know that there are concerns about activity on property they own, will work to address those concerns.

If what you are hearing sounds like angry voices yelling at each other, that could potential be leading to a fight disturbance, especially since you've indicated there have been lots of fights at that location. Call 911 on those loud angry voices when it seems that things are escalating since there is a potential for someone being physically injured.

Regarding shady characters and drugs,... What about a particular individual is "shady?" As police are concerned about criminal behaviors and activity, ask yourself what activities are individuals engaged in that make you think that a crime has been, is being, or is about to be committed? There are some activities that may indicate that narcotics trafficking is taking place at a particular location (heavy vehicle and foot traffic for very short stays, or as we sometimes call them, "the five-minute friends"). To begin an investigation, we would need those calls or on-line reports from neighbors expressing that they suspect narcotics trafficking is occurring. We would need specifics on behaviors and activities, not just a "feeling."

Back to those shady characters. Be mindful that Police cannot tell people who they can and cannot have as guests in their home or dictate how they can conduct themselves on their property absent indications of criminal activity.

These may be uncomfortable situations. Rest assured that we will partner with you in addressing issues of public safety and quality of life. Sometimes, there may not be a law enforcement solution to a community problem, but we will partner with you and engage other city agencies and resources as necessary to address the concern. Before you involve police in trying to resolve an issue, you as neighbors need to be clear about the real issue you want resolved.

Thank you for all you do for your neighborhoods. Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

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