



Southwest Precinct Public
Safety Newsletter

April 30, 2009

Dear Community Friends,

Warmer Weather Burglaries In The Spring

The Seattle Police Department is taking a proactive approach in alerting its citizens to certain crime trends that have occurred throughout our City in recent years. Unfortunately, spring is the time when warmer weather brings burglars to your block.

Suspects, posing as legitimate workers, approach homeowners (especially the elderly) at their residence with the intent of gaining entry under a seemingly legitimate role: local gas company, water department, cable company, tree trimmers, pavers, County inspectors, or government officials. One suspect will distract the homeowner while a second suspect will enter the home and search inside for valuables and cash.

Another type of ruse used to gain entry into the home is for a suspect to knock on the door and ask for a pen and piece of paper to leave the victim's neighbor a note. The suspect may appear to have difficulty writing the note, and will ask to come inside the house. Once inside the victim's house, the suspect will ask the victim to help write the note. As the suspect keeps the victim occupied, others enter the residence to remove money and valuables.

A variety of vehicles have been associated with these subjects including pick-up trucks, vans, and sport utility vehicles.

Be particularly alert to anyone in your neighborhood looking to perform home repairs, or asking to gain entry into your home. Be sure to ask to see identification and let them know you are going to call and get authorization from their company before allowing them access. If they are legitimate, they won't mind the wait.

Remember:

- ❑ Do not open your door to strangers, but rather talk through the door.
- ❑ Call 911 immediately about suspicious persons and activity. Alert your neighbors.
- ❑ Post a "No Solicitors" sign on your door. Handwrite the sign until you buy one.

Protect Yourself From Home Improvement Scams

Warmer weather signals the arrival of things pleasant - like spring, and unpleasant - like burglars and con artists. We urge you to take precautions to safeguard your homes and property against these unwelcome visitors.

To prevent the chances of being victimized, residents are urged to observe the following precautions:

- ❑ Keep doors and windows locked when inside your home or working in yard - even if you will be out for only a short time.
- ❑ Request identification from utility representatives - true representatives carry it and will gladly show it to you. Call their company for verification.
- ❑ Only rarely will legitimate home improvement companies solicit door-to-door. They usually distribute fliers or make phone calls - it's more cost effective for them.
- ❑ Never pay in cash. Using a check keeps a record of the transaction and often provides identification of the person cashing the check.
- ❑ Beware of excuses such as "We just finished a job around the corner and had extra materials that we could offer you at a discounted price." Professional companies do not operate in that manner.
- ❑ Call police immediately if you notice someone unfamiliar to the neighborhood or acting suspiciously.

Be aware of various ruses that have been used to gain entry, including posing as utility representatives, asking for a drink of water, looking for property that is for sale, or selling home improvement services. In the past year, victims have been working in their yard while suspects entered through unlocked doors.

Resources To Keep You Informed

Police Blotter, <http://spdblotter.seattle.gov/>

Subscribe to SPD: Crime Blotter

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/SeattlePoliceSouthwestPrecinct>

Police Blotter, Megan Sheppard, West Seattle Herald

<http://www.westseattleherald.com/news/police%20blotter/>

West Seattle Blog, Tracy Record, Editor

http://westseattleblog.com/blog/?page_id=4988

Seattle Police Department main web page

<http://www.seattle.gov/police/>

Southwest Precinct Web-page

<http://www.seattle.gov/police/Precincts/Southwest/default.htm>

Seattle Police Crime Statistics

<http://www.cityofseattle.net/police/crime/stats.htm>

For **More Information** Call: **Benjamin Kinlow**,
Crime Prevention Coordinator, (206) 684-7724 or
email benjamin.kinlow@seattle.gov. Check out
www.seattle.gov/police/precincts/southwest/prevention.htm