

COMMUNITY ALERT

Provided by: Tucker Crime Prevention Unit of the DeKalb Police Department

BURGLARY PREVENTION

Most police agencies, nationwide, experience an increase in burglaries during the summer months for various reasons including: residents are away from their homes more often during these months, either on vacation or off on an all-day outing such as Stone Mountain Park, 6 Flags, etc.; residents, who host out of town visitors, often turn their alarm systems off to avoid activating false alarm calls by these visitors, who are unfamiliar with the alarm system. Another factor that occurs during the summer months that affects burglaries is that landscaping is in full bloom, which may inadvertently provide cover for burglars.

Proactive security measures to deter burglaries:

- **Home Security Check:** Each spring and fall, when we adjust our clocks, we should take the time to conduct a home security check of our residences. We need to try to imagine how a burglar would view our homes, and then identify the vulnerable areas and make the necessary adjustments to improve or add security measures.
- **Entry Points:** Make sure all entry points (doors, windows, garage doors, and basement doors) are closed and locked while you are *at home* or *away from home*. Keep in mind: Anyone can enter through an unlocked door or window.
- **Alarm Systems:** If you have one, activate it. Everyone who *legitimately* comes in contact with an alarm system should know how it operates, how to avoid false alarms, what the alarm code is, and how to handle follow up by the alarm monitoring system, and/or police. Do not rely on your alarm system as your only security measure--it is just one part of your total security package.
- **Suspicious Persons, Vehicles, or Behavior:** Report them immediately to 911. Know your neighbors, so that you will be able to spot suspicious persons easily and call 911.
- **Neighborhood Watch Program:** A N/W program is a communications network, where neighbors establish or enhance a sense of community by sharing information that is beneficial to the neighborhood through a structured communication system comprised of Residents, Block Captains, and N/W Coordinators. A resident shares concerns or problems with their Block Captain, who, in turn, shares this information with the Coordinator. The Coordinator then

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communicates with their Public Education Specialist and ICP Officers to determine what action, if any, should be taken. Two main goals of the N/W Program are: To provide residents with a quick and effective communication network, and to create and maintain safe communities.

- **Strangers:** Treat all unknown visitors who come to your door the same way. Through a **closed, locked door**, ask "who is it?" This informs the visitor that someone is at home, which may deter a burglar from attempting a kick in attack.
- **Valuables:** Purses, wallets, keys, laptops, gun racks, flat screen T.V.s and other electronics, valuable artwork, jewelry, etc. in your home should not be visible from the street. These items are prime theft targets.
- **Garages-** Keep garage doors closed and locked. Once inside your garage, intruders are only one door away from being inside your residence. The door that leads from the garage to the living area should be a solid core door with a good lock. Windows located on the garage doors can be broken and the manual override cord can be used to open the garage door to gain entry. Shorten this cord to avoid entry into your garage. There are many items of interest to a thief that are located in your garage: bicycles, sports gear, tools, lawnmowers, etc. Also, cars parked in garages should be locked and valuables such as briefcases, purses, keys, checks, GPS systems, cell phones, weapons, etc. should be removed from vehicles.
- **Windows-** To secure double hung windows, drill a hole on each side of the windows at a slightly downward angle and insert ten penny nails.
- **Broken Window Theory-** An intruder may interpret that if residents are careless about the appearance of their property, that they may also be careless regarding their security measures. Keep your neighborhoods as clean and free of code violations as possible.
- **Sticks and Stones:** Stones, bricks, ladders, hammers, screwdrivers, uncovered firewood, etc. left in plain view on your property can be used by intruders to gain entry into your home.
- **Barking Dog-** An audible alert to residents of possible criminal activity in progress.

THE 3 L'S OF HOME SECURITY: LIGHTS, LOCKS AND LANDSCAPING

- **Lights-** Keep some lights on both inside and outside. Motion sensor lights equipped with an adaptor provides a visual and an audible prompt for the homeowner that a person or animal is on their property.
- **Landscaping-** Plant "prickly" type shrubbery under low windows and trim low. Most intruders won't want to wade through prickly bushes to gain entry into a low window. A row of holly bushes lining the outside and/or inside of a fence may deter both burglars and unwanted cut through traffic. Landscaping should be

planned and trimmed so that it won't provide cover for uninvited visitors.

- **Locks/Doors**- Four steps are necessary to secure a single entry door: 1. Solid core door, 2. One inch deadbolt lock (double cylinder locks are recommended for doors that have glass on or near them. 3. A reinforced doorframe- door fits tightly into the doorframe, and 4. A **reinforced strike plate**, which has four 2-3" long screws, can withstand more resistance during a kick in attack. Sliding glass doors should be secured by placing a wooden or metal dowel in the floor track, installing a "Charley Bar", and drilling a hole through the metal top of both doors where they meet and inserting a ten penny nail to secure both doors together. French or double doors should have a jimmy-proof rim lock and cane/flush bolts installed on both the top and bottom of both doorframes.

NOTE: If the locking mechanisms on your entry doors are 10 years old or older, you should consider upgrading them and possibly your doors as well.

A home inventory, complete with serial numbers, pictures, and/or video of valuables is a necessity for all homes. One copy should be kept in a secure place within the home and another copy kept in a secondary location. This inventory provides a quick reference for both police and insurance carriers in the event of a burglary or a fire. If you are filing documents in a home safe, remember that your safe is mobile unless it is bolted down onto a flat surface.

If you are unsure of the effectiveness of your home security measures, contact me to schedule a free Home Security Survey.

Sharen L. Dorcon

Crime Prevention/Public Education Specialist
DKPD-Tucker Precinct
678.937.5339 or sldorcon@co.dekalb.ga.us

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