



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWS

Volume 16, Issue 1

West Valley Senior Lead Office (818) 374-7630

January 2012

Sergeant Randy Hoffmaster - Sergeant Chris Rowland

“Community Awareness is the Key to Crime Prevention”

It's true that anyone can become a victim of crime, but there are some very basic things that you can do to deter criminals from choosing you. People generally think of their homes as safe havens where the outside world cannot get to them, but statistics constantly show that crime and home invasions are on the rise all over the United States. Do what you can to make your home as safe as possible. It all starts by becoming more active with your neighborhood.

Crime In Your Neighborhood

One of the best ways to ensure that a burglar does not target your house for a break in is to make your entire block a highly secure area. This involves working with your neighbors so that everyone watches out for each other. Think of your block as a mini community, and you can rely on your neighbors to keep you safe just as much as they can rely on you.

Meet the people who live nearby, and get to know their names, what cars they have and exchange phone numbers. Keep a list of this contact information near a phone, so you can call anyone on your block should the need arise. Consider starting an official Neighborhood Watch Group and working with local law enforcement agencies to help watch over everyone in your neighborhood.

Watch For Strangers

Once you get to know the people around you, you will be better prepared to notice strangers who seem to be hanging around a lot. Seeing someone you don't know walk down your street once is not at all unusual, but if that same person were to be lingering and going back and forth on your block frequently, they may be “casing the neighborhood” and looking for a home to burglarize.

Similarly, if you note an unfamiliar car that is spending a lot of time driving on your street, it could be an indication that criminals are looking for potential targets. Warn a neighbor if you see someone looking at their home, and don't be afraid to call the police to report suspicious behavior. As it is often said, the best way to avoid being victimized by crime is to prevent it from happening.

Get Involved In Community Youth Groups

Much of the crime that occurs in residential areas is carried out by kids who are just bored and looking for a thrill. To some younger people, the idea of smashing a window, grabbing a few valuables and running off is exciting and adventurous. After school programs such as youth sports teams can provide a great alternative for potentially maladjusted youths who can benefit from the social aspect, learn to cooperate with others and stay out of trouble.

ENCINO:

Senior Lead Officer Robert Trulik
32325@lapd.lacity.org

Office (818) 374-7637
Cell (818) 731-2572

Contact Officer Trulik for information on the next Encino Neighborhood Watch Meeting.

Deter Criminals From Choosing Your Home

Even a well watched neighborhood can be struck by crime. A burglar looks for the easiest target possible, so it is up to you to make your house difficult to break into. The first step is keeping exterior and interior lights on during the night. Criminals prefer a cover of darkness, and will gravitate towards a home that has no lights on at all.

When you go out for the night, keep a television on, or play a radio inside the house. This will give the appearance that someone is still home, which is a great deterrent to criminals. Experts often recommend choosing a talk station for the radio to give the impression that a conversation is taking place inside. A law breaker may still attempt to break into your home if they become reasonably certain they can do so without being noticed.

LAKE BALBOA:

Senior Lead Officer David Ham
25717@lapd.lacity.org

Office (818) 374-7634
Cell (818) 731-2551

Senior Lead Officer Saul Paredes
35275@lapd.lacity.org

Office (818) 374-7635
Cell (818) 731-2554

Contact Officer Ham or Officer Paredes for information on the next Lake Balboa Neighborhood Watch Meetings.

HOW TO SELECT A BURGLAR ALARM

There are several factors involved in the selection of a burglar alarm. They include your budget, where you live, which type of alarm system you are most interested in and what other home security devices you already have in place.

Budget

The amount of money you have to spend is also a major element in what type of system you purchase. There are many different alarms available, so you don't have to settle on a model you can't afford just because an "expert" claims it is the one you need. Talk to several alarm companies and find out what they can do for you. Don't be afraid to walk away from a pushy salesperson, or from a product that costs more money than you have in your budget.

Location

The biggest considerations here are do you own your own home, rent or live in an apartment. Homeowners can install any type of alarm system they want, but renters may not have that option. Talk to your landlord first and make sure they approve of the system you hope to install. A good alarm will increase property value, so the landlord may even offer to help make the purchase.

RESEDA:

Senior Lead Officer Royal Barber
33970@lapd.lacity.org

Office (818) 374-7629
Cell (818) 731-2580

Senior Lead Officer Isela Parra
34488@lapd.lacity.org

Office (818) 374-7631
Cell (818) 731-2574

Next Neighborhood Watch Meeting – January 12 and February 9 at 7:00 p.m.
Ann Kinzle Community Room located in the West Valley Community Police Station

Alternate Security Systems

Your home may already have a vast array of security devices, including shatterproof windows, double bolted locks and even metal bars around any exposed glass. Well protected houses may only need a basic alarm, whereas homes with no security in place might require a more advanced system. It all comes down to what will make you the most comfortable. Alarms are intended to scare off criminals so they do not break into your home. Often just a sign or window decal that claims you have this security product in place will be enough to deter them. Consider what type of system will make you feel truly safe, secure and protected.

Alarm Types

An alarm that produces a loud noise is generally thought to be the best option for home owners. This will usually cause an intruder to flee, because the noise will attract attention they don't want. Some people may prefer a silent alarm that is only heard by representatives of the security company who will call the police. That allows for the element of surprise if the officers are able to catch the culprit while still in the act.

Most alarm systems also include smoke detectors that can sense the start of a small fire in your home. This is a very valuable feature, but people with several smoke detecting devices installed in their homes may not require it. Although most alarms run on electricity, many are available with back up batteries in case the power goes out or is turned off by a criminal. The backup allows your alarm to remain operational under any circumstances.

Take your time when selecting an alarm. Talk to people at several companies to find out what they have to offer and which one can do the most for you. In the end, the important thing is to choose a system that you can afford, is an effective crime deterrent and makes you feel secure.

TARZANA:

Senior Lead Officer Daryl Scoggins Office (818) 374-7632
35828@lapd.lacity.org Cell (818) 731-2573

Contact Officer Scoggins for information on the next Tarzana Neighborhood Watch Meeting.

HOW TO BURGLAR-PROOF YOUR DOORS

Burglars break into your home when they believe no one is around so they can take your most valuable possessions. They look for houses that appear to be easy to get inside, either through a window or a door. That makes it imperative for every person to make sure their doors are as secure as possible. There are several ways to do this.

Keep Your Door In Plain Sight

A burglar won't care if they break in through the front or back of the house, but if they feel the front door is well hidden it becomes an easy target. A house with overgrown trees and bushes can block the view of the front door, giving criminals a perfect spot to hide behind while they make their way inside. Keep any type of plant life trimmed back so thieves cannot use them as a hiding place.

Check Your Door

Before adding any security devices to your door, examine it to see if it hangs properly and was installed correctly. Make sure there are screws in every hole for each hinge. The more securely a door is attached to the wall, the harder it will be to break down. If the hinges are loose or partially empty, it is important to fix them right away. Create new holes if the wood is rotted out and the screws are barely hanging on. Once the door is on as tightly as possible, you can include new locks and bolts.

Door Locks and Bolts

Some basic door locks are easy to get through. The lock can be pried back with a small instrument, allowing a burglar to open the door and get inside. You can add a Dead Latch door lock quickly and easily to make the entry way far more secure. These locks cannot be pried open, so they are an inexpensive and very effective security device.

A rim lock can be installed on the inside portion of a door in just a few minutes. It includes a heavy duty dead bolt to make sure criminals cannot pry it open. The top and bottom of any door can be reinforced with flush bolts. These are bolts that make it impossible for a burglar to open the door for easy entrance. When installing any type of bolt, make sure everyone in the house knows how to lock and unlock them quickly. While they work well for keeping intruders out, they can also lock people inside during an emergency situation if everyone does not know how to operate them. Your front and back doors are common and easy targets for burglars who may try to get inside your home. Don't let them - take precautions to reinforce every door in your house and make sure they do not provide easy access for criminals.

Be Safe and Have a Happy New Year!