



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWS

Volume 16, Issue 7 West Valley Senior Lead Office (818) 374-7630 July 2012
Sergeant Frank Avila - Sergeant Chris Rowland

SUMMER SAFETY TIPS BEFORE YOU LEAVE FOR VACATION

Vacation time should be a relaxing time. The last thing you want is to come home from that relaxing getaway to find that you have been burglarized. There are a few easy things you can do to help protect your home. But with a little extra effort, you can take steps before you leave home that will help ensure you won't return home to a disaster. These tips might cost you a little extra work, but they might save you a lot of time and heartache in the long run.

- **Don't project your moves.** Show some caution when you talk about your trip. Don't post anything to your Facebook, Twitter or any other social media outlet about your vacation plans. Being aware of who's around when you discuss your trip in restaurants or even at work. Make sure that your children are discreet, too. No one is saying that you should be suspicious of everyone you meet, but even a chance remark has the potential to lead to unintended and unfortunate consequences. The less information you put out there, the less likely it is to reach the wrong ears and eyes.
- **Install security features.** Installing a home security system or even just exterior lights that run on timers is a good way to ramp up security around the house and make it safer; whether you're around or not. One of the nice things about these features is that they are working when you are awake, asleep, on vacation or hosting an outdoor barbecue. They fade into the background as far as you're concerned, but still make your property less attractive to opportunistic thieves.
- **Make your home looked lived in.** An occupied home looks lived in. Lights go on and off and cars come and go. When you're away, everything stops. To help create the illusion that the residence is still occupied, invest in timers that turn on the interior lights for a few hours every evening. If you can get a neighbor to take out your garbage and put the cans back after the garbage pickup, it's another way to send the message that everything is proceeding normally at your house.
- **Hold mail.** When you're leaving for more than a couple of days, call your local post office to stop mail delivery until you get back. In many locations, you can even submit a stop mail request online at www.usps.gov. Just enter your address and stop and start dates. This is a free feature courtesy of the United States Postal Service.
- **Stop newspaper delivery.** A pile of yellowing newspapers on the doorstep is a movie cliché for a home that is unoccupied. Stopping the newspaper when you leave town for a while is an easy detail to forget and one that will make you a sure target.

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.

- **Keep Eyes on Your Property.** Even if you stop newspaper delivery and mail service, there are still some gotchas that can make it obvious that you are not around. How about those fliers that peddlers leave on your doorknob, or those periodic yellow page book deliveries? Because you can't plan for every contingency, have someone in the area check your house periodically. Whether it's a neighbor or relative, nothing beats having a person check the premises every day or two while you're gone.

LAKE BALBOA:

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

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

Senior Lead Officer Estaban Olivares
34728@lapd.lacity.org

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

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

- **Lock up.** This seems so obvious, but it's easy to forget! If you keep a window unlocked to allow the cat easy access, or never bother to turn the deadbolt on the kitchen door, now is the time to clean up your act. Locking your home makes it less attractive to opportunistic burglars. If you don't make it easy, there's a better chance that when you get home, your house will be in the same condition as when you left it.

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 Meetings – **July 12 (Potluck) - West Valley Community Police Station**
No regular meeting in August; National Night Out – August 7 *

***(See details of events in your neighborhood from your Block Captain)**

- **Consider hiring a house or pet sitter.** The best way to make sure your house is safe while you're gone is to have someone you trust still living in it. You may be lucky enough to have a tidy and conscientious relative who will move in temporarily and water the plants, feed the pets and pick up the newspapers. If not, there are services you can use for house-sitting and pet-sitting while you're away. This can be a little expensive, but it is a solution that touches all the bases.

- **Pull the plug on electronics.** Disconnecting the power to some of your electronics, like your desktop computer, coffee pot and television can save you money while you're gone and eliminate the worry that you've accidentally left them on by mistake. Don't leave a portable GPS in your car when you use long-term parking at the airport. It will alert thieves that you're not home and give them a convenient map to your house.
- **Disable your automatic garage door** – If you have a garage it is a good idea to disable the garage door opener. Turning off your garage door is an effective way to keep thieves from opening it with a universal remote. Having it disabled will make it harder for thieves to get in.

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.

- **Keep your landscape trimmed.** If you're a diligent homeowner who mows his lawn every week, and things start to look overgrown and neglected, it's easy to come to the conclusion that you're not around. If you plan on being away for an extended period of time, hire someone to take care of the landscaping chores in your absence.
- **Do a last minute “lock check/ remove spare keys”** – Before leaving give all the doors and windows a lock check before you go. It seems very obvious but many forget to lock windows which give thieves an easy way in. And while you are at it, remove that spare key. That little fake rock right next to the front door is not a good hiding spot for your spare key. If you have a spare key around your house remove it before you leave. It is just another good step to take to keep your house safe.

Relax and enjoy your vacation, knowing now that your home is safe!





29th Annual *National Night Out*

Tuesday, August 7, 2012

To commemorate the 29th National Night Out, the West Valley Area Community Police Station is encouraging individual neighborhood watch groups in each of our communities: Encino, Tarzana, Lake Balboa, and Reseda to plan a pot luck or barbecue within your own neighborhood this year. Get to know your neighbors and expand the Block Captains for your area. Please contact the Senior Lead Office for your appropriate community so that they can stop in on your festivities throughout the evening.

National Night Out is a community event to heighten awareness and strengthen participation in local anti-crime efforts in the community. More community involvement equates to lower crime statistics. Get together with your neighbors now and start planning your neighborhood event. Questions may be addressed to your Senior Lead Officer.

Neighborhood Watch is an effective program aimed at keeping crime out of our neighborhoods. It relies on the best crime-fighting tool ever invented – a good neighbor. Fortunately, good neighbors are found everywhere. Be a good neighbor and help protect your community from criminals by participating in a Neighborhood Watch program. Remember, the battle against crime will not be won unless we fight together!

The key to Neighborhood Watch is community residents working together with local law enforcement. These partnerships create a powerful force to carry out a successful Neighborhood Watch program. Neighborhood Watch works because citizens work as a group to:

- Take charge and decide what action is needed;
- Form liaisons with local law enforcement
- Work with government to listen and respond to community's needs;
- Target specific problem areas;
- Develop realistic goals;
- Monitor their progress; and
- Celebrate their success!