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Burglars Who Like Cars

There are those burglars who like homes and others who like businesses. Some burglars prefer cars that have been left unattended and offer the allure of the "unknown;" the chance that something of value may be inside. **It can be difficult to predict exactly what will attract a burglar to a vehicle, but generally, there are some commonalities in what draws their attention.**



- △ The perfect places for burglaries tend to be areas that are poorly lit and give the burglar the cover of darkness so that they can perform their crime without being seen. Parking in well-lit, highly visible areas can be a real turn-off.
- △ Burglars like at least a chance when they break into a vehicle. When looking in through the window if there is absolutely nothing worth taking, why break in? No stereo, no GPS unit, no bags, no suitcases, no laptop. A "boring" car doesn't make a viable target for theft. Keeping those items out of the car or locked in the trunk will take away a significant enticement.
- △ Likewise, burglars prefer the easy take. A car alarm that will sound the minute a window breaks is a sure deterrent, as burglars don't want to be seen or noticed and prefer to have as much time as they want to commit their theft. An auto alarm forces them to either stop their attack on the car or to quickly finish what they are doing.
- △ A car that is unlocked is the ultimate open invitation for a burglar. There's no additional work or effort needed to get inside and their chances of being caught are reduced because to the average person passing by, it appears nothing is wrong and the burglar is probably the "owner" of the vehicle.

Make your car a less desirable target by eliminating all the attractions for a would-be thief.

Who has your key?

A key left in a magnetic holder on the bottom of your car may be perfect for the day you lock your keys inside or forget them in the office. It can also be the first place a burglar will look, putting your car at risk.

Consider also who may have had (or will have) access to your keys, such as a valet, detailer or repair person. If you feel uncomfortable with any person/business, and feel they may **take** your key while in their position and make a copy, then it may be a good idea to go elsewhere.

Other important things that should never be left in a vehicle:

- Work identification badge
- Remote control unit for garage/secured parking access
- Sensitive paperwork with personally identifying information (check stubs, bank paperwork, etc.)

Home Alone – Protecting our Children

It can be a difficult, but necessary decision to leave age-appropriate children home alone. With this decision it's important that we have our children demonstrate their abilities and common sense for making decisions when we're not around; especially in emergency situations.

Take the time necessary to go over the realities of what can happen when home alone. Even setting up some drills or scenarios will help them understand what can happen in the "real world." Instill in them the sense to not panic during an emergency, but rather keep calm and collected and to think through the issue with a good dose of common sense.

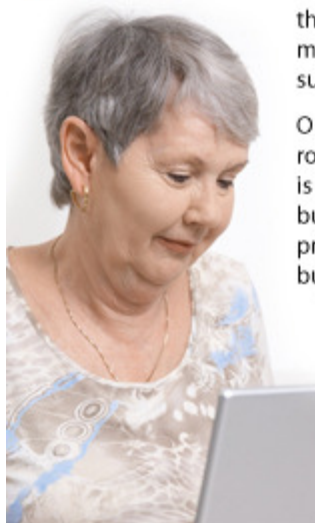
Help them create an illusion! When someone knocks on the front door or calls on the telephone, it's important that they not reveal they are home alone. Teach your child techniques for inferring that there is an adult in the house. These could include announcing in the home "Mom, someone's at the door" when a knock on the door is heard, or when answering the phone commenting that "dad is in the shower" and unable to come to the phone. These illusions might help dissuade anyone thinking of committing a crime from doing so because there is a chance of an adult in the house.

Here is a brief checklist of safety and security tips for educating your home alone child:

- ✓ Confirm that the child knows what to do in the event of an emergency such as a fire, medical incident, power outage, natural disaster or other event.
- ✓ Practice and confirm that the child knows how to escape from the house in a variety of emergencies.
- ✓ Doors and windows should remain locked while they are home alone.
- ✓ Lay down the ground rules! Friends visiting, use of fire causing items, cooking in the kitchen, etc., should all be discussed and agreed upon before you leave the house.
- ✓ Provide the child with telephone numbers at which you can be reached as well as at least one other trusted adult (preferably someone who lives close by).
- ✓ Connect with your neighbors and identify whom your child can seek assistance from if needed.
- ✓ Discuss with them the dangers of strangers at the front door and that they should never open the door to a stranger.



Online Classifieds....Are You a Safe Buyer?



Selling our unwanted items online seems routine nowadays and for some, it's a daily activity. Some of the sites for selling are designed for the exchange of the items to take place through the mail while others create a face-to-face opportunity during delivery of the item. The vast majority of these face-to-face transactions workout just fine, however, occasionally a story surfaces where the sale did not go as planned and was, in fact, a plan to commit a robbery.

One particular story that has repeated itself many times around the country has been the robbery of buyers. These are situations where an agreement for sale is made online, a location is selected to meet for the exchange and a price is agreed upon with the stipulation for the buyer to bring cash. The buyer arrives, cash in hand, to purchase the product. The only problem is the seller isn't selling a thing. Instead they are there to take something from the buyer -their cash!

While these situations are rare, they do occur and can happen anywhere. It's not a reason to stop buying through these online posting services but rather an opportunity to employ a crime preventive strategy.

Be sure you feel comfortable about the transaction before setting up a meeting with the seller. Many times our own internal instincts that "something isn't right" are correct and we need to listen to our inner voice. When setting up the meeting, pick a public place where there will be plenty of people around. If the seller is uncomfortable with the

location you may want to rethink the transaction. To add to your preventive mindset you may also want to consider bringing a friend along to witness the transaction.

Before accepting the item be sure to thoroughly check it over and make sure that it is what it was advertised to be. If it's an item of value, check it over to see if there are any engravings or stickers that may indicate it isn't owned by the person selling the item. An example would be a TV with an engraving of "School District #1" and the seller is clearly not selling on behalf of the school district; a true red flag!

Use caution, but enjoy the convenience of online classified sales!

Home Security 101... Money, Jewelry, Keys and Other Things to Protect in Your Home

While we are in the electronic age with documents and information kept on computers, there still remains a paper trail of documents; some of great value like property deeds and some with unrealized value such as birth certificates, credit information, etc. All of these types of documents can be of great value to those who will use them for criminal acts, such as identity thieves and persons who commit fraudulent acts.

For many, the idea of securing these documents is to either hide them in their home or to place them in a lock or "strong" box. Here's the problem with both of those semi-security measures...that don't always work! A hidden document can be found or destroyed in a fire; likewise a "strong" box can be taken and easily broken into. If you have valuable documents, files, jewelry, disks or other items it's best to place them in a safety deposit box at a financial institution or to have a small, hidden, fireproof and secured (bolted to a floor/wall) safe. Combination safes are certainly the most effective because you don't have to worry about a key being found, but be sure to memorize the combination and don't write it down where it can be found.



Monthly 2do List – Do you have an evacuation plan?

Disaster has struck, you need to get out and get out fast...is your family prepared?

Emergencies such as fire, smoke or fumes and other serious issues in the home can create the need for an immediate evacuation. Being prepared is critical. While most home emergencies that come to mind involve fires, other incidents can happen in the home requiring an immediate evacuation or escape. Today is the day to discuss these incidents, prepare for them, and practice what to do.

Identify ways in which you and your family can safely evacuate from the house, ideally locating at least two exit points from every room. If it's a second story room, consider a fold-up evacuation ladder that can be deployed (by someone who is able) to quickly allow for escape.

Identify for all family members the safest route out of the house and practice with them. Discuss the importance of secondary escape routes in the event their primary escape path is blocked. Then practice the evacuation and getting out of the home quickly, safely and without putting oneself in danger.

Once outside, the family will need a meeting location. This could be by the mailbox, a particular tree or other known and agreed upon location. But make sure that it is far enough from the home to protect the evacuees in case the house is on fire. An even better alternative is an agreed upon (and trusted) neighbor's home where everyone will meet. By going to a trusted neighbor's home, you will have access to a phone to report whatever may be occurring by calling 9-1-1.

Take time today to discuss, prepare and practice.

What would you take?

Evacuation is usually an emergency situation, so time should never be wasted looking for items to save or take with you. However, if you're prepared, you should be able to grab a jacket, shoes, flashlight and cell phone on your way out. Place these items in a strategic location (next to your bed) before you call it a night. Also, think about using your vehicle as a potential refuge, so have your keys easily available also.



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