



PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

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BURGLARIES— NEW UNIT CONCENTRATES ON PROPERTY CRIME

The Sheriff's Office has banded together with local police agencies in the north part of the county to reduce property crimes. In the North County Property Crime Unit, detectives from the Sheriff's Office, Marysville, Lake Stevens, Stillaguamish Tribe and the Tulalip Tribe work together, exchange information and compare notes to catch burglars who have been breaking into homes and businesses in the area. Often burglars commit their crimes in multiple jurisdictions. Detectives in each jurisdiction may have a partial understanding of how each burglar works. By combining their efforts, the police departments become more efficient and effective in catching the bad guys.

The unit is identifying the top players who have conducted the most burglaries. By prosecuting the most prolific burglars, the unit expects to reduce property crimes.

The unit is also studying the affects of drug addiction on property crime. Most police officers and deputies would tell you that most crime is driven by addiction to drugs. And with the heroin epidemic that has taken hold in the country

and in Snohomish County, the crime spree seems to continue. By surveying the suspects that it apprehends, the unit hopes to document the problem and then propose practical recommendations to try to take offenders off of drugs at the beginning of next year.

Even though the unit only began operation at the beginning of the year, it has seen good results. The unit has made a total of 202 arrests since beginning operations. Also, the unit is finding that it can return more property to victims with \$220,000 worth of property recovered. The Sheriff's Office and other local law enforcement agencies are looking into starting up similar units in east and south Snohomish County.

Law enforcement agencies that cooperate always benefits public safety. Task forces such as the South Snohomish County Narcotics Task Force, the Snohomish Regional Drug and Gang Task Force, the Snohomish County Auto Theft Task Force and this property crimes unit improve the effectiveness of their efforts by working together as opposed to working separately.



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BURGLARIES– NOTES

- *Cases where the victims can provide good information about the theft have a 60-70% chance of recovery.*
- *Burglars often take stolen items to pawn shops. Pawn shops are required to enter any property that they take in into a database that local law enforcement has access to.*
- *Burglars also put stolen items up for sale on craigslist and of ferupnow.com. These are good places to look for your stolen possessions.*

PROPERTY CRIMES– HOW TO HELP IF YOU'RE VICTIMIZED

Property crimes are frustrating for victims and law enforcement. Most of the time a theft, a burglary or vandalism is discovered well after the perpetrator has left the scene. There may not be much evidence for a responding deputy to collect. There may not be witnesses to give descriptions of suspects. The case is closed, the victim is dissatisfied.

As detectives review property crime reports, they have to consider “solvability factors” for each case. Are there witnesses? Do they have a named suspect? Can they find the suspect? Can the stolen property be tied to the victim and the suspect? Is there physical evidence that can link the suspect to the crime? For many property crimes, little information is available for detectives to make an arrest.

Deputies get excited about calls that have a high probability of catching a suspect. Burglaries in progress, or burglaries that have video or very good pictures and descriptions of stolen items, or license plate numbers of suspect vehicles.

There are actions that homeowners and business owners can take to help deputies catch burglars and recover stolen items:

- **Cameras**– Cameras have become

increasingly popular with homeowners and small businesses. They may deter some burglars and those that aren't deterred are caught in the act. Having photos can give valuable evidence for investigating detectives. This is especially true if the suspect(s) in the video is recognized by detectives. Not all suspects caught on video are known to local law enforcement agencies.

- **Inventory your valuables**– If you are the victim of a burglary or theft and you can give a list of what was taken with good descriptions to investigating deputies, you have a better chance of recovering your stolen property and the deputies have a better chance to make an arrest. Take pictures of your valuables (front, back, serial numbers if available) especially of your jewelry, electronics and power tools. Also, make a list of your valuables with clear, complete descriptions. You can make your list on a word processor or spreadsheet. Copy your inventory onto a CD, thumb drive or portable hard drive. Make at least three copies and give one copy to your insurance agent, place another copy in a safety deposit box and keep a copy at home in a safe place (outside of your computer).

BURGLARIES– STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR HOME

Of course the best situation is not to have a burglar in your home. There are things that you can do to deter burglars from entering your home.

Make your house look occupied. Some ways to do that include:

- Keep a vehicle in the driveway.
- Keep a radio going inside the house.
- When you are on vacation have a trusted neighbor pick up your newspaper and mail or have the newspaper and Post Office hold your paper and mail.

Make your house visible from the street.

- Be sure trees are pruned up to 6 feet in height and shrubs are no taller than 3 to 4 feet.
- Any fencing in the front should be 3 to 4 feet tall or should give a clear view of the house. A 6 foot cedar fence may give privacy to your, but also gives privacy to a burglar. If you have a gate to your back yard be sure to have a lock that can be operated from inside the back yard.
- Have good lighting in the garage area to discourage car prowls at night.

Make your house more secure and less accessible.

- Be sure doors and windows on the side and back of your house have strong locks. Deadbolts for doors and 3 inch

or longer screws in the door jam. Use Charley bars or wooden dowels in the tracks for sliding glass doors.

- Close and lock your doors and windows when you leave your home!
- If you have an alarm system, be sure to have a sign in the front warning that an alarm is on the premises. Most burglars will target another house.
- Don't have things lying around, especially ladders that would allow burglars to enter from the second floor.
- Keep your garage door closed. An open garage door invites a burglar to take anything in your garage and, if it is attached, in your house.
- Whenever you can, keep your valuables out of sight when you are not using them. Keep them in a safety deposit box or a hidden safe that is bolted to the floor.

ALARMS– SOME TIPS

Alarms are good, but 911 often gets a call from the alarm company 10 to 15 minutes after the alarm is first tripped.

The best response comes from a neighbor who sees suspicious activity around your house.

If you have an alarm installed, monitored or not, have a speaker installed on the outside of your house. If your alarm is tripped, the siren will sound, alerting your neighbors and scaring the burglar.

Alarms can come with many features. A simple alarm is best especially if you use it.

Get in the habit of arming your alarm every time you leave your home!

BURGLARY PREVENTION- REDUCING OPPORTUNITY INCREASING RISK FOR THE BURGLAR

Burglars look for easy opportunities to steal, the easier the better. Take actions like locking your doors and windows, not having items that burglars might steal in view. They also don't like to get caught. So if you can give the appearance that a burglar will more than likely be caught, he or she will move on to another house.

Often burglars will drive or walk through a neighborhood looking for houses that appear to be unoccupied or easy to enter; open garages without cars in them, mail or newspapers piled up, packages at the front door or notes stuck on the front door. The burglar will pick a house and then go up to the front door and ring the bell or knock. If no one answers, he will kick in the front door or go around the back and try to enter through a door or a window.

Some sort of surveillance is a good way to create a sense of risk. If a burglar thinks that he can be seen, he will move on to another house.

Natural surveillance is where your house is visible by the casual passerby. This is why deputies recommend that landscaping not be overgrown or hide the front door or windows.

Camera systems with text alerts are another good method of surveillance. If you can receive a text alert and can see on your PC or your smartphone a burglar entering your house, then you can call the 10 digit number for SNOPAC (425) 407-3970, the 911 agency that supports the Sheriff's Office.

Encourage your neighbors who take walks or who run in the neighborhood, to watch out for suspicious activity. When walking or running they should take their cell phone with them. Remember, a burglary in progress call gets the attention of deputies.

If you have an alarm, post the signs that the alarm installer provides. Most burglars will pass up houses with alarms.

Don't project that you are away with a voice mail message or social media message, or with newspapers or mail at your front door.

Participate in a Neighborhood Watch. Active Neighborhood Watches can warn their members of threats and can call 911 making it riskier for burglars to do crimes in their communities.

OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOODS

MAKING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER

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SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:

<http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/289/Crime-Prevention>

NEWSLETTER INFO

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If you have questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that appear in it, please contact the editor at neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org

TIP LINES



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: 425-388-3845

Online Tips: <http://snohomishcountywa.gov/303/Anonymous-Tips>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477