



PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

MAY/JUNE 2023

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|--|---|
| BURGLARY- WHAT DO I DO IF I DISCOVER MY HOUSE BROKEN INTO? | 1 |
| YOUR HOUSE IS BURGLARIZED- WHAT YOU SHOULD DO | 2 |
| CAMERA TIPS- | 2 |
| YOUR HOUSE IS BURGLARIZED- WHAT YOU SHOULD DO CONTINUED | 3 |
| CALLING 911- REPORTING AN EMERGENCY | 3 |
| OPERATION ID- KEEPING AN IN- VENTORY | 4 |

BURGLARY— WHAT DO I DO IF I DISCOVER MY HOUSE BROKEN INTO?

The obvious answer to that question is to call 911 immediately. But should your house be burglarized there are steps and precautions that you should take to protect yourself, any evidence that would be helpful for investigating deputies, and to recover from the trauma of the burglary.

Our houses are our sanctuaries. The thought of a stranger rummaging through our house, potentially damaging it and taking our possessions is repulsive. The Sheriff's Office and its Crime Prevention Officers encourage you to take action to prevent becoming a victim of burglary. But sometimes the burglars get through and take your possessions.

On discovering that you have been burglarized, you will be upset and angry that someone has entered your house without permission. Having a mental checklist of what to do will help you through the situation.

Your next actions need to keep the following in mind,

Safety. Your safety is very important. If, for example, you come home to find your front door ajar, do not go into your house. A burglar could be inside. While most burglars run away when confronted by a homeowner (they really don't like being caught) there are some that

will attack you. Also, glass shards and other debris can injure if you are not being careful.

Evidence. The responding deputy/deputies purpose in coming out to your home is to catch the burglar in the act (if that is possible) and to collect evidence to catch the burglar and to help the prosecutor's office put a convincing case in court to convict the burglar. Deputies need to see the site of the burglary as it was when the burglary happened. So when you do go in to survey what was stolen and any damage to your home, with or without the deputy, do not touch anything or move anything. Potential fingerprints off of objects are important to establish who was in your home and the fact that they were in your home. Also, be on the lookout for anything out of place or unusual. Burglars have been known to drop things like wallets, tools that they may have used in the burglary, and even cell phones. Also, they have been known to take a Coke out of a victim's refrigerator.



Adam Fortney- Sheriff
Snohomish County
Sheriff's Office

3000 Rockefeller
M/S 606
Everett, WA 98201
425-388-3393
<http://sheriff.snoco.org>

CAMERA TIPS–

- *Place cameras at points of ingress and egress. For example, with a view of your driveway to show people coming and going from your property. Also, views of your front door and back door to show people going into and out of your house.*
- *Where you can, place cameras inconspicuously at head level to get the best view of a person's face. Cameras placed above head level can easily be obscured with a hat.*
- *Be familiar with your system. If you are burglarized, you will be traumatized and you probably will be angry. Knowing how your system works will help you turn over any evidence of the crime more easily. Play with your system from time to time to ensure that you know how it works.*

YOUR HOUSE IS BURGLARIZED– WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

If you find that your house has been burglarized there are definite actions that you should take and not take that can help deputies apprehend the burglar and give complete, convincing evidence to the prosecutor. These actions include,

- **Call 911 immediately and wait outside of your house.** If you return home to find that your front door is open or ajar you should be wary of going inside. Most burglars will run away if confronted, but some may attack in reaction to being discovered. Call 911, explain that your house has been burglarized and that you are unsure that the burglar has left the scene. A timely call to 911 can help deputies catch a burglar, even if the burglar has left your house.
- **Wait in a safe place.** This can be in a neighbor's house with a good view of your house or in your locked car outside of your house. Watch your house and surroundings for suspicious people or vehicles. Jot down the description of anyone out of place in your neighborhood and the description and license number of any suspicious vehicles.
- **Inventory your house with the deputy.** Look for missing items and damage to the house or contents. Your household inventory with descriptions, serial numbers and pictures will be handy (see page 4). Taking pictures of damage to the house, such as to doors or windows, or to any damaged contents will be helpful with your insurance claim.
- **View video footage of the break in.** If you have a camera system, there will likely be video of the burglar at least entering and leaving your house and the time of day of the burglary. Look at the video and be ready to give a copy of the pertinent footage to the deputy. While any footage is appreciated by the Robbery and Burglary Unit detectives, enough footage to give a complete view of the incident can be more helpful in making a case against the burglar. For example, did the burglar cruise the neighborhood in a car to scout for targets. Often burglars knock on the front door before entering to ensure that no one is at home. Footage that includes 30 minutes before the burglary and 30 minutes after

YOUR HOUSE IS BURGLARIZED– WHAT YOU SHOULD DO CONTINUED

can give a more complete picture for detectives. Also, point out neighbors who have cameras with a good view of the outside of your house or the street in the immediate area of your house.

This can save time for deputies in canvassing the neighborhood for video.

- **Call your insurance company.** At some point the deputy will complete his/her investigation at your house. After this, you should call your insurance company within 24 hours to file a claim. You will need to have filed a police report, hence the need to call 911. The deputy can give you an incident number that can be used to reference your burglary.
- **Clean up the mess.** After the deputy has gathered all of the evidence and your insurance company has sent an adjuster to view the damage, you should take action to have any damage to the house repaired and to clean up any mess made by the burglar. Don't be afraid to ask for help from family or neighbors. This can be an emotional time especially if your home was extensively ransacked. You may

discover items that do not belong to you in your clean up. Let the Sheriff's Office know about them as a follow up to the investigation.

- **Take preventative action.** Even if you have taken measures to prevent a burglary, the burglary may have revealed weaknesses in your defense. Determine those weaknesses and take action to shore them up so that they cannot be used by a burglar in the future.

Security Surveys. This could be a good time to have a Crime Prevention Officer from the Sheriff's Office's Crime Prevention Unit come out to your house to conduct a security survey of your home. A Crime Prevention Officer can offer advice on techniques you can use to improve door and window locks in your home, protect your valuables inside of your home, placement of video cameras, as well as other techniques that help to discourage burglars from entering your home.

If you would like to have a Crime Prevention Officer conduct a security survey of your home, send an email to

crime.prevention@snoco.org

CALLING 911– REPORTING AN EMERGENCY

If you think that your home has been burglarized, you should call 911 immediately on discovery of the burglary.

Snohomish County 911 defines an emergency as “an immediate threat to life or property or an in-progress crime.” It emphasizes that if you are not sure if you are in an emergency it is ok to call 911.

When you call 911, the call taker will ask you for the exact location of the emergency and your phone number. The call taker will ask you a series of questions to determine the type of response and who should respond (Sheriff, city police, fire fighters, EMS). As the call taker is gathering the information from you, he/she simultaneously shares the information with the appropriate dispatcher who in turn shares the information with first responders. So, first responders receive timely updates as you provide information.

OPERATION ID- KEEPING AN INVENTORY

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. And you have documentation for your claim to your insurance company.

Cases where the victims can provide good information about the theft have a 60-70% chance of recovery. Good information includes pictures of the items, inventories that include detailed descriptions and serial numbers (where appropriate), receipts showing the purchase of the stolen items, information about possible suspects and clues on the scene.

If you cannot provide any information to the police, your chance of recovering your stolen property goes down to 10%.

Take pictures of your valuables (front, back, serial numbers if available) especially of your jewelry, electronics and power tools. Also take pictures of each room in your house showing your possessions in them. This is especially good for items like TV's and high end art.

Make a list of your valuables with

clear, complete descriptions. You can make your list with a word processor or spreadsheet. You can make a table in your word processor or use a spreadsheet to list information such as Item Description (item, model numbers, color, unique identifying features) and serial numbers.

Copy your inventory onto a CD, thumb drive or portable hard drive. Make at least two copies. Keep one copy off site in a safety deposit box. Keeping a copy on an offsite cloud storage service (for example OneDrive, Dropbox, or Google Drive) is also helpful. Keep a copy at home in a safe place (outside of your computer) such as in your safe or a locked file cabinet.

Engrave items such as electronics, and tools with your name or a unique code known to you. Do not use personal numbers such as your Social Security Number or Driver's License. This is private information and could be used in identity theft.

If you engrave your electronics and expensive tools, they become more difficult to sell. Engraving is a sign to pawn shops that the item is probably stolen. Also, if a piece of equipment that is engraved is recovered by a police agency, it will be easier for that agency to return it to you.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE RESOURCES

CRIME PREVENTION UNIT

CRIME PREVENTION UNIT EMAIL:

crime.prevention@snoco.org

CRIME MAPPING:

For information about crime incidents around your neighborhood checkout this link:

<https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/236/Community-Crime-Map>

SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:

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

NEWSLETTER INFO

EDITOR

Steve Moller

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

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

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