



Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Crime Prevention Unit



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER

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Important Numbers:

- * **Emergency 911**
- * **Non-Emergency**
703-777-1021
703-777-0445
- * **Poison Control**
1-800-222-1222
- Animal Control**
703-777-0406
- * **Sheriff's Office Admin**
703-771-0407
- * **Narcotic Tip Line**
703-779-0552
- * **Crime Solvers**
703-777-1919

Issue: 24

December 2010

Holiday Burglary Prevention

As we enter the holiday season we must keep in mind that criminals are still around and will prey on the unprepared. To help prepare citizens for the potential criminal behaviors that are common this time of year this article will focus on home security.

Criminals, especially burglars, rely on our predictable behavior to ensure the success of their crime. This behavior can put us at risk and increase our chances of being victimized. To help prepare citizens for the holiday and help brake the routine here are some tips for the community that relate specifically to Burglary Prevention.

- Unsecured windows are

a easy target for burglars. Do not run lighting cords or extension through any window you cannot 100% secure.

- Burglars will watch holiday related trash for indication on what gifts may have been received. Cut up all boxes and packaging with identifying panels and bag them in dark colored trash bags.
- Don't give burglars the chance to dumpster dive. Wait until the morning of trash pick-up to set your trash out.
- Place you holiday lighting on timers so they go on and off on their own. A sure sign that no one is home are holiday lights turned off when they have

normally been turned on.

- Try to keep gift boxes out of sight. If a burglar can see the gifts around the tree it may be just the opportunity they were looking for.
- Do not leave gifts locked in your car. Your car is more easily broken into than your home. Find a good hiding place in your home and use it.



WARNING



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

WE ARE WATCHING TO REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY OR PERSONS

TO

LOUDOUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Parcel Thefts

Another common issue this time of year is the theft of delivered parcels. This crime is generally easily perpetrated and can be difficult to prosecute unless the criminal is caught in the act. A few tips to help deter these types of crimes.

- Request specific drop

off times.

- Ask for the parcel to be placed on a back porch or beside the front porch. (Out of view from the road.)
- Pick up the packages at a package store such as a UPS store etc.

- Let a trusted neighbor know you are expecting a delivery and have them keep an eye out and bring it in once delivered.
- Call in any suspicious activity or persons you see milling around your neighborhood.

Frequently Asked Questions

If you would like to have a question answered, please e-mail the question to Nathaniel.Payne@loudoun.gov or James.Spurlock@loudoun.gov

Gift Safety

Airsoft guns are still very popular with teens this year and the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office is again cautioning parents about the use of airsoft guns. Many of these toys have nearly identical appearances to the real firearm. Manufacturers are required to place an orange tip on these types of toys. Unfortunately, kids often remove these tips or color over the with black spray paint or permanent marker. This gives these toys an identical appearance to a real firearm and therefore cause an unintended reaction by a law enforcement officer confronted by such a toy.

Additionally, it is illegal for these toys to be shot or to discharge the airsoft pellets in most of the county. There are only a few areas in the western portion of the count where it is legal to shoot these toys. Unfortunately there have been incident where kids have been carrying these through neighborhoods or been seen in wooded areas with these toys. This has caused public alarm causing deputies to respond to the area to check on the situation of a possibly armed teen with an assault rifle.

Tips for Parents:

- 1: Know where your child is playing with this type of toy.
- 2: Make sure the barrel tip stays orange.
- 3: Instruct your child to follow any law enforcement officers commands if confronted while playing with these toys.
- 4: Do not let them play with these toys without your knowledge.
- 5:

Which one is a real firearm?



The bottom rifle is the real assault rifle.

Holiday Charity Scams

The holiday season will bring out all types of criminals. Some will prey upon your good nature to steal monies and information from unsuspecting citizens. There are so many reputable charities that seek donations this time of year that the criminals can easily hide in mix. A few tips for donating this time of year.

- Do research on the charity you intend to donate to. Find out how the monies will be used.
- Do not provide personal information to charities. This information is often not secured and can easily be stolen and used in identity thefts.
- Do not use credit cards or checks. Use money orders made out to the specific charity by name. This protects your personal information and only allows the charity to deposit the donation.
- Be sure to get a receipt.
- DO NOT donate to door to door solicitors. Get the charities information and decide after doing some research.
- Follow your instinct, if something doesn't sound right, don't donate. Call the Sheriff's Office immediately and let us check it out, especially with solicitors.
- If you feel compelled to donate on impulse, such as at business entrances, have your money ready before you get there. Don't dig inside a wallet or purse looking through your cash. Other types of

criminals may be watching looking for someone with lots of cash.



Shopping Safety

Holiday shopping is off and running. This time of year many of us will be distracted by the holiday spirit and criminals will be betting on that distraction. Here are a few tips to keep you safer while you spread the holiday cheer in your local business of choice.

- Do not carry purses unless absolutely necessary. Take your credit cards, identification, and a small amount of pocket cash and keep it on your person in a pocket.
- If you make purchases in cash try to be observant to who may be close by watching you as you count out your purchase cost.
- If you use credit cards keep ALL receipts, even for Debit Purchases.
- Do not keep excessive numbers of gifts stored in your vehicle while you shop.
- Keep an eye out as you go to and from your vehicle. Are you seeing the same car or persons at different stores. Does it appear that they may be following you.
- DO NOT purchase multiple "high end" electronics in a single shopping day. This attracts attention and leaving them in the car while you continue to shop is very risky.
- If you must secure shopping items in your vehicle, do so by placing them in the trunk. This makes them less visible and harder for a thief to get to in order to take them.
- Lastly, TRUST YOUR INSTINCT! If it looks like something is wrong then make the call. Sheriff's Office Non-Emergency: **703-777-1021**.



December Classes

December 1: 7:00 P.M. Introduction to Policing (Sanders Corner Elem., 43100 Ashburn Farm Parkway)

December 8: 7:00 P.M. at Lowes Island Elementary School: Burglary Prevention

December 9: 7:00 P.M. at Eastern Loudoun Station, Sheriff's Office: Sexting/Texting Awareness for Parents (Adults Only)

December 14: 7:00 P.M. Internet Safety for Parents (Dulles Safety Center, 25215 Loudoun County Parkway) (Adults Only)

December 16: 7:00 P.M. at Lovettsville Community Center: Personal Safety for Women (Women Only, Informational Class)