

The holidays are upon us! As we head into the holiday season, the Seattle Police Department often sees an increase in a variety of criminal activity- including package/mail theft, residential burglary and car prowl. One of the most important things to remember is 'If you see something- Say something!' and to call 911 immediately to report suspicious behavior.

As I have discussed in previous bulletins, one of the single most effective residential crime prevention techniques is getting to know your neighbors and starting a Block Watch. Block Watch brings residents and law enforcement together to improve safety and prevent crime. Safety improves when neighbors watch out for each other by reporting suspicious activity and in progress crimes to 911. Crime prevention occurs when the opportunity for crime is removed and neighbors work together towards a safer neighborhood. If you are interested in setting up a Block Watch for your area, have questions and/or would like to learn more about this program- please feel free to contact me.

Around this time of year, we not only see an increase in the quantity of mail and packages delivered, but we also see an increase in theft. In order to reduce your risk of mail and package theft, we recommend the following helpful tips. For mail- never send cash in the mail, don't leave outgoing mail unattended in the mailbox for pick up- drop it off at the post office instead, if you are going out of town- ask the post office to hold your mail until you return, keep your mailbox in good repair and make sure it is properly installed and consider a locking mailbox (contact your local postmaster for regulations). For packages- consider choosing a shipping method that requires a signature, ask the delivery service to hold the package for customer pick up, track packages/shipments online, considering buying a locking bin for packages, arrange to have the package delivered to work or a location where someone else can receive it and if none of these are viable options- at the very least request the package be placed in a discrete location that is not visible from the street.

In addition to traditional residential burglary prevention strategies, there are some unique tips to consider around the holiday season! Try not to visibly display wrapped or received gifts through windows or doors, dispose of packaging, in which gifts or other purchases come in- by breaking down boxes and turning them inside out so the exterior writing does not show, and don't put these boxes on the curb until collection day. Do not run holiday light extension cords inside through a window or door- consider installing an exterior outlet for your holiday lights, so that you don't provide an opened and unlocked entry into your home and if you are going to be away, let your trusted neighbor know when you plan to be out of town so that they can watch your home and call 911 to report suspicious activity if seen.

Lastly, regarding car prowls- we often see an increase in this particular crime around the holiday season due to holiday shopping and transporting gifts for holiday celebrations. As always, it is extremely important to keep these prevention tips in mind- never leave valuables in plain view (including holiday gifts- wrapped or unwrapped), hide chargers and accessories that indicate an electronic device may be in the vehicle, remove garage door openers, key cards and other keys from the vehicle, install anti-theft devices, if possible- activate alarm, whenever possible- park vehicle in a busy, locked, monitored and/or well-lit areas and always transport gifts in the trunk or in a concealed area.

Below you will find my contact information, including email and phone numbers. Keep an eye out for my newsletter next month, which will again focus on a specific crime/safety issue and include important prevention techniques. Please feel free to contact me with questions, concerns, to request my presence at a future meeting and/or if you are interested in free firearm cable locks.

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Upcoming events in SW Precinct-

Other resources-

- Seattle Police Department's Website: <http://www.seattle.gov/police/>
- Seattle Police Department Non-Emergency Number: (206) 625-5011
- Contact information for other SPD Crime Prevention Coordinators:
 - North Precinct- Mary Amberg- Mary.Amberg@seattle.gov
 - East Precinct- Felicia Cross- Felicia.Cross@seattle.gov
 - West Precinct-
 - South Precinct- Mark Solomon- Mark.Solomon@seattle.gov