

GOOD SECURITY ADVICE

Hello Block Captains and Contacts: 9/3/09 I wanted to thank the over 100 blocks who participated in National Night Out in August. Judging from the increasing number of participants each year, we clearly see that you value this Crime Prevention event as much as we do. Nearly 1, 200 blocks celebrated their neighborhoods city-wide this year. Outstanding!

Residential Burglaries: FBI stats indicate that more burglaries occur in July and August than the remaining months. (Fewest are in February) I reviewed the residential burglaries that were reported for Magnolia and Queen Anne in July and August and found that in over **two-thirds** of these burglaries the intruder entered through an open and unlocked door, or used a key. In at least 8 of the burglaries, the victim knew the intruder as former roommate, spouse or acquaintance. So what else can we learn from these burglaries to prevent becoming a victim? The most obvious tip is to keep your windows and doors locked, even when you are home or outside gardening. Burglars used ladders, garbage cans and picnic table to climb up and into the open window in a few of the burglaries. Lock up your ladder w/a bike lock or store it unseen. Overgrown shrubbery provides great hiding places for would-be intruders and often diffuses existing lighting. Use the 3/6 rule: shrubbery should be trimmed to no higher than 3 ft. from the ground and trees should be limbed up so the lowest branches are no lower than 6 feet off the ground. If you have rooms with electronics or other valuables that are visible from the street, close your blinds when you are away. Burglary is a crime of opportunity, so deny the temptation by keeping your valuables out of sight to passers-by.

Car Prowls: Vehicle crimes tend to spike during the summer months as was true for the car prowls reported on Queen Anne and Magnolia since July 1st. In reviewing these police reports, many of the crimes occurred in unlocked cars. Cell phones, medicines, CD's, wallets, money, check books, golf clubs, GPS devices; sunglasses are just a sampling of items reported taken in these popular crimes. In one incident, eight quarters were the only thing taken. So again, we see a crime of opportunity, which is committed within seconds. We can prevent some of these crimes by not leaving anything of value in the car. Lock your car and park on well-traveled, illuminated places. Anti-theft devices may convince the prowler to move on to another vehicle.

Be consistent and be observant. Report all crimes and suspicious activity to 9-1-1 immediately. I am here to support your neighborhoods in public safety pursuits. So if you want to have a Block Watch meeting, re-kindle an old one, or schedule a free security assessment of your home, please call me at the West Precinct, 684-4741 or email me at terrie.johnston@seattle.gov. If you want to know what happened to your 9-1-1 call, I'm happy to research that for you. Need a speaker for your civic organizations (Elks, Lions, Eagle, etc.) I am available for personal safety presentations, Identity theft prevention, workplace safety, etc. We work closely with other City Departments, so if you cannot find the right number to call, I'm here to help refer you.

So Queen Sector folks, just because you get to have black bears, coyotes, cougars, snow owls, and eagles passing through, does not mean you are living in a small crime-free city. Turn on your porch light, get to know your neighbors, lock it up and let me know what I may do to help keep your community as safe as possible. Thanks for sharing this email with your neighbors. TJ.

Terrie, I had a conversation with my wife said on Opera they said leave blinds open so people from the outside can see activity, if burglar. My thought is as yours, if the burglar sees something they want they will break & run. I don't think a passer by will pay too much attention unless they actually see the break-in or our alarm is going off. Your thoughts.

I certainly cannot compete w/Oprah on giving crime prevention tips :)

If you are home, then open blinds are fine, because there will be movement indicating that people are home. Most burglars do not want to come into an occupied home. If you are gone, blinds are fine open as well, if you leave lights on timers, or a TV on which casts movement and light which indicate someone might be home. But what burglars have told us, (especially one who is an older white male, born and raised on Queen Anne, who confessed to at least 60 res. burglaries) is that they walk around the neighborhoods, primarily during the day, looking into windows and seeking things they want. So, if you have a room w/desirable expensive electronics, for example, leaving blinds open allows a would-be thief to see what is inside, and may be just the temptation/opportunity they need. Bottom line, I don't want to advertise my stuff! Burglary is a crime of opportunity. So if they want what I have, and they can get inside easily and unnoticed and have a fast getaway, it could/might/will happen. Why tempt fate?

When I mentioned the blinds being closed/opened, I did not mean to paint a picture of a home completely sealed up during the day, and then opened up when folks are home. Do not want to advertise our patterns for sure. I was mainly thinking of closing blinds to protect rooms (like home offices, w/computers and our important documents w/personal info. etc.) where desirable property may be the impetus to break in. Need I talk to you about TEMPTATIONS? ;)