



HALL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CRIME PREVENTION UNIT



CRIME PREVENTION TIP

DATE: August 19, 2009
TO: Crime Prevention Program Participants
FROM: Deputy Stephen Wilbanks
SUBJECT: Burglaries & Entering Autos
DISTRIBUTION: All members

With children returning to school, more homes are vacant during the daytime hours. Many of you know that most residential burglaries take place between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM. We've been seeing a regular number of burglaries recently, so it's a good time to remind everyone about some preventative measures.

- 1) **Make an effort to give your home the appearance of being occupied.** In the past, burglars that we've caught have admitted that they specifically target residences where it appears that no one is home. A light left on, closed window blinds, or a TV on a timer are all sound practices.
- 2) **Secure your home.** While most of our recent cases involved forced entry, a surprising number of the victims did not lock their doors or windows. It's not especially difficult for a criminal to break a door or window, but don't make it any easier, faster, or quieter for them by not locking up. The longer they are delayed and the more noise they have to make in their efforts, the greater the chance that an alert neighbor or passerby will take note of them and call 9-1-1.
- 3) **DO NOT, I repeat, DO NOT**, hide a key outside your door. Just yesterday we received a report of a child coming home from school and being alerted to a stranger at the door. The child did not open the door, and observed the individual searching all around the door, under the mat, etc. for a hidden key. We don't know if his intentions were burglary or something more sinister. Either way, had he found a key, the results could have been tragic.
- 4) **Photograph and record the serial numbers of your valuables**, or put a permanent identifying number on them, and keep these photos and this list in a safe location. In the event that your items are stolen, this greatly aids in not only recovering your belongings, but in prosecuting the crime.

We're also seeing a fair number of vehicles being broken into ("entering auto"). Many of these have been forced entry, but again, we've seen a number of these vehicles being left unlocked. Last week our Officers made two arrests in connection with a recent string of these cases, with one of the arrestees stating that he used a screwdriver to break the vehicles' windows. Many of the vehicles were also left in remote business or industrial areas where they felt like they could ply their trade in secrecy.

- 1) Try to park in well-lit, populated areas with good visibility to passers-by.
- 2) Lock the doors *anytime* you leave your vehicle- even if it's for just a very short time.
- 3) Remove valuables from the car, but if you must leave them inside, keep them stored out of sight.

As always, stay alert for suspicious activity. If you see someone or something that just doesn't look right, it probably isn't. Call it in to dispatch and let us check it out.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

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