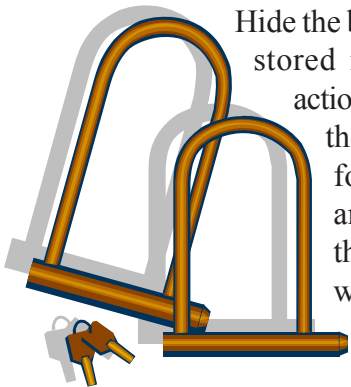


Protecting Your Property in Your Garage

Your garage is a treasure chest of personal property that has a high re-sale factor. Your used skis, roller-blades, bikes, outdoor clothing, power tools etc. can be re-sold at the sports consignment stores and pawnshops, etc. These items should be engraved or identifiable. Outdoor clothing can be identifiable if you use a permanent fabric marker. Another good solution is to purchase a strip of kryptonite cable from a bike shop or your local hardware store. Thread the cable through all the bikes, lawn mower and power tools and use a U-style bike lock to chain the items together. If a thief were to enter your garage, they would have to drag everything behind themselves.



Hide the bolt cutters if you have them stored in your tool chest. These actions may not stop the thief. But, they make it far more difficult for any thief to leave with any one item. Please cover the window(s) in your garage with drapes and consider using window bars.

Too many homeowners advertise their garage interior. Thieves may simply walk onto your property and peer in your garage window(s). They can see all the goodies within. If you are an avid outdoors person or weekend craftsperson with lots of expensive outdoor equipment, clothing or power tools, you may want to consider alarming your garage in conjunction with your home alarm. Always make sure that you have adequate insurance. Some garages have isolated points of entry. An isolated point of entry simply means that thieves can spend more time and make a little more noise breaking in. Please assess your own garage and decided what has to be done to prevent entry. Thieves that break into your attached

garage can then break into your house out of sight from your neighbour's view. Detached garages are farther away from the residence which may make detection difficult by homeowners or neighbours.



Unfortunately, the days of leaving our garage door opener inside our vehicle has come and gone. Your vehicle can be broken into at any time, anywhere. All they have to do is break into your vehicle, take your car registration

papers and your garage door opener, and they may have full access to your home. The RCMP recommend you remove your original registration papers from the glove box, photocopy them, then black out your home address and keep the photocopied copy in your glove box. Keep the original in a secure location at home. If the RCMP pull you over and ask to see your registration papers, give them the photocopy, the Police may ask you to bring the originals to the Police Station. Tell the officer that you have blacked out your home address to protect your home from being b&e'd if a thief steals your vehicle. Thieves are also aware that homeowners tend to leave the door leading from the garage into their home unlocked, or at minimum, not as secured as their front door. This door should not only be kept locked, but have a good quality deadbolt installed.

Some homeowners that park their vehicles in their own garages think that their vehicle is now more secure, they leave wallets, purses, laptops, etc., inside the vehicle, as well. Always remove these items and store them in a safe place in your home.

As a whole, we tend to make things way too convenient for criminals to target us for crimes. The objective is to take the comfort level and convenience away from the criminal. Although this can mean our conveniences may be sacrificed, at least you will have more peace of mind knowing that you've done what you can to protect yourself, your property, and your family.



Protecting your Property in Condominium and Apartment Storage Locker Rooms

Do not leave valuables in your storage locker. Some storage lockers are in underground areas where the bad guys know that they are very isolated from public view and hearing. The current rage among thieves is theft of income tax/personal records that condo/apartment owners leave in their lockers. This information should be kept in your personal living space. Even then, it should be hidden and under lock and key. Theft of personal information is rampant and a serious crime problem. Buy a shredder and use it.

In conclusion, the property in your locker room and garage deserves as much protection as the property in your residence. Please use an engraver to engrave your BCDL# on your personal, work and recreational property. Please use good quality deadbolts, 12" interlock plates and a heavy duty strike plate with 3-4" woodscrews on the entry door to your garage. Use a solid wood or steel door.

Not all Locks are Created Equal

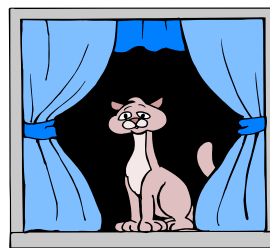
Does everyone remember the old adage... you get what you pay for? It's true! Too many homeowners are purchasing cheap bargain bin deadbolts and installing them in their homes and their garages. These locks are poorly made and have no qualities to resist a property crime suspect's attempts to forcibly enter your home or garage. Grade 2 locks are built stronger and can withstand far greater punishment than a lower quality lock. Remember, the lock must be Grade 2 or better! If the package does not say "Grade 2" then put it back. Locate your closest locksmith store, and they can assist you. The favourite break-in tools for a property crime suspect are 8-12" slotted screwdriver and/or vice grips, pliers or any suitable gripping/twisting hand tool. There are no other fancy pieces of equipment that these suspects use. It's really that simple and easy. These

tools can easily open aluminum/vinyl framed sliding windows, poor locks and exposed door jambs. Consider installing a 6-12" interlock plates which are installed via one-way screws (so the bad guy cannot remove them), these plates prevent a screwdriver from prying the wood and strike plate. In conclusion, we strongly recommend a minimum Grade 2 deadbolt/lock assembly and 12" interlock plates on all exterior doors for homes, garages, apartments, condo's, locker room and storage room doors!

Report Your Stolen Items

The Crime Prevention Section of the Richmond RCMP reminds the public to please report their missing or stolen property to the Police. We will often recover items from various locations, people and businesses around the city. Often we know that the item is stolen, but can't prove it because we can't find an owner for the item because it was never reported stolen. For example, we may deal with a suspect who has a fairly expensive mountain bike in their possession. Even if the owner did not have the serial number, we can still check our database to see if one has ever been reported stolen. If the citizen didn't report it stolen then there is no chance of returning it to the owner. We can still trace stolen property with the make and model of the bike. It would be nice to have the serial number but not necessary. Bikes should be engraved with your BCDL#.

To Drape or not to Drape? That is the Question



It's a slight twist on Shakespeare but it will illustrate our next point. We have read many crime prevention techniques regarding break and enters. However, there is one technique that we have some concerns with. Many crime prevention manuals have stated to citizens to leave their drapes open when no one is home. This manual stated that closed drapes mean that no one is at home. We wish to offer a second opinion. Months ago, we did a security assessment of a condominium project.



We walked around the entire complex and noted that some people had their drapes open and some people had their drapes shut. Anyone who kept their drapes wide open had their televisions, computers, and audiovisual equipment exposed for anyone to view. We could easily see the interior of all the ground floor suites and possibly determine if anyone was home if we loitered in the area and observed any movement within the residence. If we could see your property, then you can bet that any property crime thief also could see it. Talk about waving a red flag for the bull. This is all the incentive a thief may need. The next step is the thief to approach the home and confirm if anyone is home. These property crime suspects have a weak but plausible excuse when you answer their knocking. So, a homeowner is faced with dilemma.

Do I keep my drapes open and let anyone see my home's interior when no one is at home. Or, do I keep the drapes shut, leave the lights on a timer with the radio on when no one is at home? The latter option gives the illusion that someone could be home. Closing your drapes is no guarantee that an attempt will not be made on your home. However, why should a homeowner make it easy for the thief? Let's make it harder for a thief to confirm what is behind your drapes. Let's not give any incentive for a thief to loiter around your home and break in. Let's make it appear that someone could be home without advertising the interior of your residence. Perhaps, when the last person leaves your home, closing your drapes to prevent unwanted viewing is a good idea.

Submit your Stories

Please send us your success stories and your tales of woe. I would like to know if any Blockwatch member was victimized by a break and enter. I would also like to know if any Blockwatch member was responsible for preventing a property crime or aided in the apprehension of a property crime suspect! We want to share these stories with our entire Blockwatch community in our upcoming newsletter.

Theft of Scrap Metals

Well, the price of aluminum is up! And the price is going higher for scrap metal. There have had been several reports of aluminum /metal thefts. You may be surprised to wake up one morning and realize that the railing on your front stairs or patio is gone. Yes, high commodity prices for metals are also increasing the chances that someone will enter your property and steal your aluminum ladder. Please be vigilant.

Blue Box Recyclables



Keep your blue boxes in your garage or under wraps until your recycling collection day. Blue boxes that are stored in an area that is visible from the street are tempting targets by identity thieves, binners, dumpster divers, etc. Remove all papers with your personal information and shred these documents. Also, these boxes offer anyone a plausible excuse to enter your property and search through your garbage for any returnables. These people could get up close and personal with yourself or get closer to peer into your windows. It would only take a second to ascertain if someone was home or see what type of property is visible from a closer vantage point. Do not give anyone a reason to enter your yard/property. Keep the blue boxes from public view until recycling day. Do not leave them on your back steps/ front or back porch during the collection period. On the morning of recycling day, put them out on the street or in the alley.

Security Film

A common method of residential and commercial break and enters is by breaking the glass door or window. Security film is readily available from different companies that can be installed on these windows to provide better security. The film provides a coating that is difficult to break through, making it difficult for a suspect to break and reach in and unlock the door. There are varying kinds of security film available, some are thicker, which would be stronger. To get specific information about costs and installation, refer to the Yellow Pages under Security. If you are not familiar with this film, we would suggest having it installed as opposed to installing it yourself. If installed incorrectly, the film may be ineffective.

License Plate Thefts

There has been an increase in license plate thefts recently. This type of theft is difficult to prevent. It is important to report the theft of either the front plate, rear plate, or validation decal to the Police right away. You should obtain new plates asap because the culprits use the stolen plates on similar types of vehicles (same year, make, model and colour), which are often times stolen too, and commit various crimes. Thus if the victim does not report it thinking that the single plate is alright, they may become frequently stopped by the Police often at gun point (a Code 5 take down!) depending on the type of crimes committed (i.e., armed robberies and other violent crimes, etc.) that the criminal has committed while using another vehicle displaying your license plate number. So simply leaving the remaining front or rear plate on is absolutely insufficient for the above reasons, and it is not in compliance with the motor vehicle act and regulations, you could receive a traffic ticket.



Frigate Court's 2006 summer Block Watch party.



To listen to a recorded message listing the weekly residential break and enters, please call 604 207-4715.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police



City of Richmond