

CRIME PREVENTION

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT CRIME

NEWSLETTER

Online Travel Fraud Prevention

Planning for a trip and booking through an online travel agency? Thanks to the internet and online booking technology, you now have the option to take control and handle all the logistics of your trip. Before booking online, make sure you know what the advantages and disadvantages of booking online.

Advantages:

- Instant access to competitive prices for airline and hotel comparisons to find one that best suits your needs and wants.
- Have full control of your travel that matches your preferences and budget.
- Flexibility to make last minute changes should you wish to leave earlier or stay longer at one place.

Disadvantages:

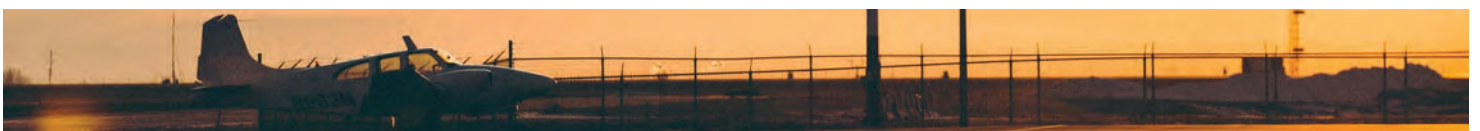
- Could be a big hassle to deal with any issues that may arise during your trip, e.g. flight cancellations.
- Possible hidden fees required on top of booking fees.
- Reliability and accuracy of information online can sometimes be questionable which leads to disappointment and dissatisfaction.

Things to Consider when Booking Online:

- Make sure to read the fine print so you're clear about what you're actually getting. Read the refund or exchange policy carefully to avoid being stuck paying a significant fee for changes or cancellation.
- Be aware of travel phishing scams. If the price is too good to be true, it probably is a scam and they are going after your money as well as your personal and financial information. Do not fall for scam sites that lures you in with crazy deals.
- After booking on a third-party site, be sure to check with the hotel or airline directly to ensure there is a record of your online booking.
- Be mindful of currency exchange rates when booking online.

Online booking not only changed the travel agents landscape, travel-related cybercrime also increased immensely. Many rogue websites and apps trick people into thinking they are booking directly with the hotel or airline of choice. Instead, victims are entering all their personal, financial and travel documents information on a phony website where criminals collect their information for other fraud purposes.

Watch out for fake or deceptive ads, or fraudulent websites that look legitimate. When in doubt, do not book online and contact the company directly on the phone to check if the website is legit or book over the phone.



Home Security Checklist for the Summer

For many people, summer is the time to go on vacation. Whether you are leaving the house for a short or long period of time, preparing your home for vacation is a must-do to protect your home and valuables. When you go on vacation, the last thing you want to hear is someone telling you your house was broken into or discovering your home was broken into when you return. Ask yourself these questions to secure your home for summer vacation.



Are your points of entry secured?

- Before you leave, check **ALL** doors and windows to make sure everything is closed and locked, including the ones on the second floor.
- Make sure all keys are accounted for. Do not leave out any spare or hidden keys, put them in a secure location inside your home.

Is someone watching over your home?

- Ask a trusted friend, neighbour, or family member to look after your home. Have them pick up the newspaper and mail. They can also move the car once in awhile to make it look like someone is home.
- Look to join or create a Block Watch group in your neighbourhood! You can find a trusted neighbour to help with house sitting. They are also the closest people to your home so they may see or hear things, alert you, and the police.

Did you set up your home security system?

- Double check your cameras, alarms, and home security systems to see that they are working and you are able to access them.
- Install security cameras around your home. Security cameras alert you when someone is in the frame. If something were to happen, the camera gathers evidence and provides details to the police to use in their investigations.
- Set timers for your lights and have them turn on at times when you are usually home.

Did you take inventory of your household items and valuables?

- Vacation time is a perfect time to remind yourself to do an updated inventory on household items, valuables, bikes, appliances, jewellery, or valued items. Look for serial numbers and identifying features on items.
- Put away any tools or items that are left outside. Thieves can use these tools or items to break into your home. Put away any objects they may use as a surface to climb onto your home.

Are you ready for vacation?

Checking off all these different things will give you the peace of mind that your house is secured. Enjoy your summer knowing you have made adjustments to your home to make it harder for thieves to break in.



Eventful Season

The warm weather has been eventful for us because we were able to organize and attend a few community events. We went out to a few communities in Richmond and set up pop-up detachments for people to learn more about Block Watch and crime prevention. We hosted our first Shred-a-Thon event! We partnered with Richmond Centre for Disability to raise awareness for their program and ways to prevent identity and mail theft. We provided valuable crime prevention tips against identity theft and mail theft to people who came to check out our booth.

We also attended two neighbourhood parties at Richmond Baptist Church. Richmond RCMP's Community Engagement Team were invited to deliver a safety talk to the neighbourhood. Many kids and adults got a chance to spin Safety Bear's safety wheel to win prizes! In addition, people participated in Spot the Target and learned more about how to prevent theft from auto.

Our own Block Watch groups are also hosting parties for their groups and neighbourhoods this summer. These parties are strongly encouraged as they bring the neighbourhood closer together. It allows neighbours to talk to those that live around them, learn more about their community, and crime prevention. We want to thank all the volunteers and the public for their help and participation.



To start a Block Watch Group

Interested in starting a Block Watch group? Let us tell you a little about Block Watch! Block Watch is a program that brings the police and the communities together. This program helps you build connections and relationships with people in your neighbourhood and the police while striving for the common goal of crime prevention.

Select a Captain/Co-Captain

- ◇ Each Captain/Co-Captain must submit an application and complete a Police Information Check

Recruit and build your group

- ◇ Recruit homes that are near to you. To build an effective Block Watch, try to involve 50-75% of households in your area. We will provide you with recruitment packages.

Complete activation of your team

1. **Complete** Block Watch Captain/Participant training - Register as many of your groups as you can for a virtual training session.
2. **Submit** your participating household list.
3. **Qualify** for Block Watch street signs once above steps are completed.

If you are interested in creating a Block Watch group in your area, email us your name and address at blockwatch@richmond.ca or call 604-207-4829.

BUSINESS LINK

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT CRIME**NEWSLETTER**

Shoplifting Prevention

Summer time is a season for businesses to hire seasonal staff to help with the growing demand of customers and back to school sales. Seasonal staff will not have the same knowledge as the regular staff so it is important to train them to know how to handle shoplifting and what to do when they see the crime happening. Below are some training material to be aware of when training seasonal staff to better prepare them against shoplifters.

A basic but effective crime prevention tactic is to instruct all employees to greet the customers as they walk into the store. By engaging with the customers, it shows that the staff acknowledges their presence and it sends a message to the customer that the employees are watching them. Regularly check in with the customers and ask if they need help. If shoplifters feel they're being watched, it's less likely they will try to steal.

Recognizing the signs of a shoplifter is another skill owners and managers should teach their employees. People will not tell you they are thieves verbally but through body language you can make an educated guess that the person is a shoplifter. Thieves avoid eye contact, appear nervous, and look at the staff instead of the products. They pick up random items and wear bulky clothing to conceal any items they pick up. These signs suggests that the person is waiting for an opportunity to commit a crime. Shoplifters may also work in pairs or groups. One person acts as a distraction so another person can escape. Shoplifters take advantage of the lack of supervision around the store. Thus, it is important for owners and managers to have the right amount of people working. When possible, schedule the right amount of staff so that there are enough eyes and ears in the business.

Lastly, it is important for managers and owners to educate their employees on what to do when they see someone shoplift. Educate staff to know the policies of the company on how staff are expected and not expected to act when faced with shoplifters. Another important part of education is to have emergency contact numbers visible and available for all staff to see. Knowing what to do and who to call allows staff to be comfortable dealing with shoplifters.



Please help by reporting any suspicious behaviour: RCMP
Non-Emergency line **604-278-1212**.
If you witness a crime in progress, dial **9-1-1**.

Email Break & Enter Alerts

To receive email alerts of neighbourhood commercial break and enters, register your business name and street address at: RCMP_Business_Link@richmond.ca