

CRIME PREVENTION

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT CRIME

NEWSLETTER

Personal Safety: Vacation Planning

Planning a vacation can often be challenging, as it involves not only balancing personal interests and budget but also prioritizing crime prevention. To help ensure you don't fall victim to crime before or during your trip, we've put together valuable safety information.



Fraud Protection

Fraudsters are constantly trying to trick people out of their money, often by taking advantage of those looking for great deals. You should be especially cautious of offers that seem too good to be true, as many fake websites mimic legitimate travel sites with deceptive advertisements. Another clear sign of a fake website is the use of high-pressure tactics. These are designed to rush potential victims into clicking on an ad, disrupting their thoughts and making them feel pressured to act immediately. To protect yourself, always do your research and compare pricing from various sources. Make sure to book through trusted websites, and after you've made a reservation, always check directly with the hotel or airline to confirm your booking exists. As an alternative, you might consider using a reputable travel agent. They can handle all the logistics of your trip and often offer package deals, which significantly lowers your risk of falling for false advertisements.

Personal Safety (Before and During Your Trip)

Whether you're familiar or unfamiliar with your destination, paying attention to your personal safety is crucial. Before you travel, research your destination thoroughly. Look into the local culture, customs, current events, and the specific area where you'll be staying. It's also a good idea to ask friends or family who have visited the location about their safety experiences and any places they recommend avoiding. Next, double-check that you have the appropriate identification, such as passports and visas, and keep photocopies of your travel documents in a safe place. Finally, for your own safety, keep your family and friends updated on your whereabouts. Before you leave, provide a family member or trusted friend with a copy of your itinerary. Once you're at your destination, don't let your awareness drop! The excitement of being in a new place can easily distract you. Always pay attention to your surroundings and keep a close eye on your personal belongings. Be particularly vigilant in tourist locations, as these are often prime spots for thieves. Reading up on local scams and petty crimes can help you identify potential issues. Always ensure your personal belongings are secure. Don't carry large sums of money when you're out; it's recommended to carry only the amount you need and keep the rest secured in your hotel room. Furthermore, in your hotel, make sure to lock the doors and windows before you head out. Never leave your valuables like wallets, identification, or money in plain sight. Instead, keep them locked up in a safe or stored securely in your luggage.



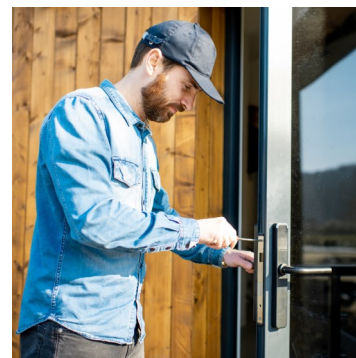
Checklist For Your Home

Performing an annual home check is beneficial due to seasonal wear and tear. Addressing these issues can actually reduce crime because it signals that the home is well-maintained. For instance, if your security camera has stopped working or a door is faulty, take the time to repair it. This prevents opportunistic thieves from exploiting weaknesses on your property. We've created a checklist to help you ensure everything is ready to go around your home!

Are Your Points of Entry Secured?

Check all doors and windows – Make sure everything is closed and locked before heading out or going to bed, including those on the second floor.

Make sure all keys are accounted for – Keep spare keys, hidden keys, and garage remotes in a secure location inside the home. This applies to both your home and your vehicle keys.



Is the Exterior of Your Home Maintained?

Trim trees and bushes – Overgrown trees and bushes can conceal thieves, especially around windows and doors. Trim them down to increase visibility.

Keep your yard maintained – A well-kept yard makes your home look lived-in, which is particularly beneficial if you're away on vacation. Pick up newspapers, cut the grass, and remove any debris.

Put away tools or items left outside - Thieves can use tools or other items to break into your home. In addition, remove any objects that could be used to climb onto another surface.

Are your Electronic Crime Prevention Tools Working?

Check security cameras – Make sure they are turned on, working properly, and that footage is accessible. A common mistake we see is cameras not functioning correctly or footage being inaccessible, which impacts police reports.

Use timers for lights – Put timers on a few light sources in rooms where the light will be visible from outside. It mimics the appearance of someone being home.

Check your exterior lights – Turn on outdoor lights at night to make your home visible. Lights help uncover hiding spots. Also, make sure your residence number is clearly visible from the street at night.



Are you connected In Your Community?

Get to know your neighbours - They may be the first to notice something suspicious is happening in the area.

Join a Block Watch group – Let your Block Watch group know you are away so your neighbours can watch over your home. Your neighbours are your closest resource for watching over your property.

Block Watch and Parties

Block Watch is a crime prevention program that focuses on reducing residential property crime by encouraging neighbors to help one another. Participants commit to watching each other's homes and reporting suspicious activities to the police and keep each other informed of crimes and/or problems in their neighbourhood. During the summer, neighbours often come together to connect and learn more about their community through Block Watch parties. These events are an excellent way to introduce new neighbors and strengthen bonds with existing households. If you are not already part of a Block Watch, now is the perfect opportunity for you to learn more and perhaps join one in your neighbourhood.



Being part of a Block Watch group also gives you the opportunity to invite police officers from our Community Engagement Team to your events, and access to various crime prevention activities. You will also receive annual reminders about available grants to help with party expenses. Over the years, we've assisted neighbors with registering bikes through Project 529, provided prizes for those who participate in our games, and educated them about the value of strong neighborhood connections. Join or start a Block Watch in your neighborhood today!

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 community 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 has to submit an application and will be contacted for a suitability interview. Candidates will then need to complete a free Police Information Check.

Recruit and build your group

- ◇ Upon confirmation from the Block Watch office on completing and passing all required steps in becoming a Captain/Co-Captain, you may begin to recruit homes that are near to you with the provided recruiting materials from the Block Watch office. To build an effective Block Watch, try to involve 50-75% of households in your area.

Complete activation of your team

1. **Complete** Block Watch Captain/Participant training – invite everyone in your group to participate in a virtual/in-person training session.
2. **Submit** your participating household list.
3. **Qualify** for Block Watch street signs once the 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

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Preventing Opportunistic Crime for Loading Bay

The loading bay is a critical part to businesses, used to load and unload supplies and manufactured goods. However, it can often create opportunities for thieves to gain entry. For example, warmer weather may encourage staff to open the bay doors to let in fresh air. However, this creates an opportunity for crime if the bay door is left open at the end of the shift or left unsupervised. Thus, strengthening the access control and adding exterior security features can help keep your business safe.



Regularly check that loading bay doors and locks are in good condition. Fix any damages or malfunctioning parts as soon as possible so thieves are not able to take advantage of a faulty bay door. In addition, ensure that the bay doors are closed and locked properly before leaving the business. Completing a final check around the warehouse area will ensure that all points of entry are closed and locked at the end of the night. If possible, shut off power to the loading bay doors so they cannot be easily opened. Lastly, the work schedule also plays a part in loading bay security. Schedule all deliveries during work hours and always have someone supervise the area. This ensures that no one will have access to the loading bay during after hours and only authorised staff have access during work hours.

Another way to keep your loading area safe is to have a working security system with cameras and alarms that can alert you as soon as possible. While cameras don't always deter theft, they are effective for monitoring suspicious activity and capturing details of an offence that police can use in their investigations. Alarms are also an effective tool, as some can alert you in real time through remote monitoring. The sound of a ringing alarm may scare the thief and deter them from escalating the crime.

Please report all suspicious or criminal activity to the police.

Richmond RCMP Non-Emergency line [604-278-1212](tel:604-278-1212). If you witness a crime in progress, dial **9-1-1**.

Online reporting available at bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/richmond/report for the following:

- Damage/mischief to property under \$5,000
- Damage/mischief to a vehicle under \$5,000
- Hit and run to an unoccupied vehicle or property
- Theft of bicycle under \$5,000
- Theft under \$5,000
- Theft from vehicle under \$5,000
- Lost property

