

CRIME PREVENTION

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT CRIME

NEWSLETTER

Credit Card Pick-Up Scams

Richmond RCMP is warning the public of a reoccurring scam where fraudsters are picking up bank cards in person to defraud victims. The scam is resurfacing and continuing to evolve with more sophisticated tactics. The scam involves the victim being contacted by fraudsters over the phone impersonating a bank employee, advising their bank card is compromised. They offer someone to come to the victim's residence to collect their bank card with the promise they would deliver a replacement card in person the next day. After obtaining the bank card, the fraudsters use it to withdraw funds from an ATM or use it to purchase items. In some instances, victims who provide their personal information are also sent a link to a fraudulent website where victims are asked to provide more personal and financial information.

Awareness and education are the most effective ways to stay safe and prevent victimization. Never hand over your bank card to anyone, especially those pretending to be couriers. The bank will never send someone to collect or dispose of your cards. Safely dispose of expired or compromised cards yourself by shredding them or returning them at the bank. In addition, never share card or banking information with anyone especially from unsolicited phone calls. If you are unsure of what you are hearing, contact the bank yourself with a number you have researched.



Online Marketplace Scams

When you are buying or selling from online marketplaces, use a few safety rules when conducting transactions. Fraudsters can scam you through the marketplace in a number of ways, such as falsely advertising items, providing false information, or falsifying payment. In some cases, when a meet-up is arranged, the seller becomes a victim of robbery, losing their item and putting themselves in danger.

To keep yourself safe from marketplace scams, educate yourself and be vigilant when browsing. First, do not believe in "too good to be true" prices. These items could be fake or non-existent. Compare the item with other listings to see if the details are consistent. Next, take a closer look at the seller and their information. Check their selling history to confirm they are credible. Generally, fraudsters use new accounts that have no history or information to keep their identity hidden. Finally when making the purchase, be careful when using e-transfer. Make sure the item is inspected and in your hand before you send money. Alternatively, you can pay or receive cash if you are uncomfortable with sending or receiving an e-transfer.

When meeting in person, keep yourself safe by meeting in a public, well-lit space. Avoid scheduling transactions in the evening as there is less foot traffic. Utilize the Richmond RCMP's safe exchange zone to make your transaction. If the seller or buyer is unwilling to come to a police station, that is a red flag! Next, ask a friend or family member to accompany you when making the transaction.

Road Safety is Everyone's Responsibility

Distracted Driving

When you are behind the wheel, focus on the road. Anything that takes your attention away from driving is a form of distracted driving. According to ICBC, you are 3.6 times more likely to crash if you use a hand-held device. On average, distracted driving is a factor in 79 deaths and 5,197 injuries each year. Distracted driving is dangerous and illegal; know the rules of the road so you can keep yourself and others safe.

Do not use your cellphone while driving. Even when stopped, checking an electronic device affects your focus and attention. Therefore, configure all your music, maps, and let people know you are on the way before you begin your trip. Know where you are going before driving and set realistic travel times. If you need to update the location or settings, pull over safely or have a passenger handle the update. If you are tempted to check notifications, turn them off or set your phone to "do not disturb" when you first get into the car. Modern smartphones have different profiles that allow you to temporarily silence your phone for various focuses, such as driving, work, or sleep. This is an effective tool to use to help you stay focused on the road.

The cost of distracted driving is not worth it. Not only are you risking lives, but you will also be fined. Every ticket for distracted driving includes a fine of \$368 and four driver penalty points. If you have four or more points on your driving record at the end of a twelve-month period, you must pay a premium. You may also have to pay additional premiums if you receive more than one distracted driving ticket in a three-year period.

Pedestrian Safety

According to ICBC, crashes involving pedestrians happen most often in the fall and winter months of October, November, December, and January, between the hours of 3p.m. to 6p.m. Intersections are the most common spot for crashes involving pedestrians. This information matches the timeframe when the weather changes and daylight hours decrease. The top contributing factors for pedestrian injuries involve distracted driving and weather. Put yourself in a safe position by reviewing the three R's for pedestrian safety.

REMOVE – Remove distractions that take your attention away from crossing the road. Do not look at your phone or have both ears plugged in when crossing, as your eyes and ears are distracted.

REFLECT - Wear something bright or have something reflective on your jacket or bag. It helps drivers see you, especially at night or in poor weather conditions.

REACT – Always use the crosswalk and make sure to look both ways before crossing. Never assume the driver has seen you. Make eye contact with the driver and ensure they come to a full stop.



Home Security: Festivities and Crime

Plan accordingly to secure your home and prevent unwanted visitors. Take time to look around your home while you are putting up decorations. Check the exterior of your home, focusing on doors, sliding doors, windows, and garages. These are common points of entry that thieves often find weaknesses. Close and lock all entry points, as this is the most effective way to deter opportunistic crime. First, when putting up your decorations, do not run wires from the exterior to the interior of your home, as this creates an opening. After decorating, put away ladders and tools because thieves can use them to break in. In some instances, thieves use existing ledges, outdoor furniture, and ladders to climb to the second floor. Therefore, ensure that entry points on the second floor are also closed and locked. Position outdoor furniture in a way that will not allow thieves to climb. Finally, while you are working outside, check that your security cameras are working properly and that the footage is accessible. A common problem we see is that cameras are not turned on or are not in working condition. When a crime occurs, homeowners are often unable to produce footage because the camera failed. Position security cameras in strategic places that capture the faces of individuals and keep an eye on the different points of entry in your home.



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 Group Lead

- ◇ Each group lead 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 Block Watch Lead, 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 Lead/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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Addressing Shoplifting

As we approach the end of the year, many businesses will be preparing for the upcoming busy season. Foot traffic to malls will naturally increase. Unfortunately, shoplifters continue to disrupt businesses, affecting both businesses and consumers. One of the most important steps a business owner or manager can take is to train their staff on how to report and deal with shoplifters safely.

Proper training empowers your staff to identify and handle shoplifting. Provide them with safety resources so they know how to respond without feeling unsafe. Phone numbers for security, police, and management should be readily available. Equip staff with a theft action plan so they know the necessary steps to address shoplifters. If they witness a theft, employees will feel safer and be confident in handling the situation. Lastly, promote staff engagement with customers. Checking in with customers deters potential thieves, as they feel they are being watched, and it also boosts the overall customer experience. During busy holiday seasons, be alert and keep a watchful eye on customers. Shoplifters may use different types of distractions, such as drawing attention away from an accomplice or knocking over merchandise.



When reporting to the police, your staff can help by using proper descriptors and recalling as many details as possible. Train your staff to pay attention to facial features, clothing, shoes, accessories, and the direction of travel. Practice identifying descriptors in your business. This can be done naturally when directing another staff member to help a customer. When shoplifting happens, your staff will be able to quickly describe the individual and provide key descriptors to the police.

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

