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COMMANDER
DISTRICT 2

METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

CITY OF ST. LOUIS • 315 SOUTH TUCKER • ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI 63103

Residents of the 2nd District,

The Burglary Task Force in the Second District leads the City with arrests and prosecutions in regards to residential burglaries to include our garage burglaries that we encounter. I had the below prepared by Sgt. Karen Menendez who supervises these officers. To help us deter and in some cases investigate these and arrest those who commit these crimes, the below suggestions will be helpful.

Garage Burglaries:

With warmer weather there is always a substantial increase in garage burglaries. People doing lawn work, coming in and out of their garages more often, sometimes leads to garages being left unlocked. Garage burglars are well aware of this and increase their activity around this time, checking for unlocked doors. This, with the higher demand for lawn equipment at pawn/resale shops, contributes to the increase.

Preventative tips:

****Make sure your garage doors (and sheds) are always locked. If you have a detached garage in the back of the house and are doing lawn work in the front yard, criminals notice this and will check your garage while you're working in front. Lock the doors and don't leave any equipment unattended that they can quickly grab. This is very common. On the same note, if you have an attached garage facing the front of the house, don't leave equipment unattended or doors open while you're in the backyard. Keep bicycles, bar-b-q pits, etc. out of sight as well.**

****If you park your car inside the garage, lock the car doors. Criminals often target garages looking for an unlocked car inside and steal items from within.**

****If you don't use your garage that often or are going away for an extended period of time, unplug the overhead garage door. Thieves have been known to use universal garage door openers to facilitate their crime.**

****Put some type of noise maker inside the gates going into your yard or inside your garage door. This can be something as easy and cheap as tying on aluminum cans. You may not be able to hear the noise if the gate is opened when you're inside, but it could be enough to scare off a thief.**

****Record make, model & serial number of your property and have photographs of your lawn equipment, bicycles, golf clubs or anything valuable you keep in the garage. Put some type of permanent identifiable markings on your property such as painting your initials on the items.**

****Install motion detectors around your garage.**

Distraction/Impersonation Burglaries:

For an unknown reason, there is always an increase in these types of burglaries in the Spring time. The targets are always elderly victims, usually living alone. These burglars work in pairs. One knocks on the door, front or back, and usually identifies himself as some type of utility worker (Water Division/ Gas Company/Electric Company employee) and requests admittance into the home under false pretenses, such as to check water pressure. They have been known to wear utility belts, reflective vests and carry two-way radios. One distracts the elderly victim, luring her or him into the basement (to check pipes) or into another room as his accomplice enters the residence, undetected, stealing items (cash & jewelry).

They've also approached elderly people outside their residence and lured them into the backyard, offering masonry work, fence repairs and tree trimming services, while the accomplice enters the front door of the home, stealing items.

General description is white males of foreign decent, with dark complexions, 20-50 years old, having dark hair and speaking with accents.

****PLEASE** keep an eye out for your elderly neighbors! Most are unaware of this type of crime as they don't own computers and therefore, don't receive informative email alerts. Advise them of this activity, check on them frequently and if you see any of the described activity call 911 immediately. Try to get a good description of the suspects and any associated vehicle (they usually park in the rear).

Residential Burglaries:

Again, this is the time of year we see an increase in residential burglaries. This is most likely attributed to the fact juvenile offenders are out of school and people tend to leave their windows open more with the warmer weather.

Preventative Tips:

****If you leave your windows open at night or while away from your home, make sure to have some type of lock bar in place so that the window cannot be pushed open to allow entry. Broom sticks, dowel rods & 2x4s are all inexpensive and easy installations. Drilling screws or nails inside the window frame can also prevent further opening. In almost all overnight residential burglaries, entry was made through an insecure open window or an unlocked door.**

****Reinforce your basement door, a very common entry point, with a metal brace or a 2" by 4" of lumber at the door handle braced to the floor or across the door with metal braces on both sides of the door.**

****When away from home, leave a radio (news/talk show station) loud enough so it can be heard by any would-be intruders.**

****Weather you have a dog or not, put up "Beware of Dog" signs on your gates/fences. Have large dog bowls by the back door.**

****Always lock your doors. Even if only away for a short time. No one expects to be burglarized.**

****Lock up all jewelry and firearms, preferably in a safe secured to the floor. Burglars know all the hiding spots- under the mattress, inside the bread box, in the underwear drawer.**

****Record make, model & serial numbers of all electronics and firearms and have photos of them. This is extremely important and helpful in investigations.**

****Mark your items with an identifiable distinct marking-your initials, anniversary date, pet's name. You can use an engraver, nail polish, paint, etc.**

****Have detailed descriptions & photographs of all valuable jewelry, coins, etc. Jewelry has become the most sought after property for burglars due to the increase in gold prices. This is extremely important and helpful in investigations.**

****Never leave "hidden" keys. Burglars know to look in flower pots, under doormats, in mailboxes, etc. Leave a key with a trusted neighbor if necessary.**

****If you have a burglar alarm, use it! Incredibly, there are many burglaries reported where victims didn't want to be bothered with setting the alarm. If you don't have an alarm, think about getting one.**

****Burglars check to see if someone is home before making entry. If a stranger knocks on your door or rings the doorbell and asks for an unknown person or says they have the wrong address, they may just be checking if the residence is occupied. They may also offer snow shoveling or leaf raking services. Err on the side of caution, don't hesitate, call 911 immediately and provide the dispatcher with a detailed description: clothing, age, height, weight, hair color, eye color, facial hair, eyeglasses, tattoos, and direction of travel. Get a vehicle description if possible. Most burglars park in alleys, rear carports or neighboring driveways.**

****If you leave your residence and see someone watching you and you get an uncomfortable feeling, get a description. Circle the block and call 911. Some of our victims have reported noticing an unfamiliar subject watching them leave, only to discover upon their return they've been burglarized.**

****Most importantly, if you see anything that gives you cause for concern call 911 immediately! You are not "bothering" us with your calls. On the contrary, we need the help of citizens, who are our eyes and ears when we aren't there and we encourage you to call. It is**

extremely helpful in crime prevention and investigations when we are aware of any suspicious people, vehicles and activity. Get as detailed description as possible.

Thank you for taking the time to read the above suggestions. If you take the time to implement just a few of these it will reap benefits for all of us in the long run.

Be safe.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Deeba". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a stylized "Deeba".

Captain Michael A. Deeba Sr.

Commander, District 2.

Prepared by: Sgt. Karen Menendez