



Community Focus

Crime Prevention

Recent rural Lancaster County burglaries signal a need to take extra precautions to prevent you from falling victim to crime. Many crimes can be prevented if the opportunity to commit a crime is removed.

Protect your equipment, tools, and supplies.

Rural properties contain many items attractive to thieves. Garden tractors, hand tools, batteries, machinery attachments, and supplies such as gasoline, oil, and animal feed are items a criminal is eager to steal.

To defend your property, follow these security tips:

- ✓ Utilize yard lights and a watch dog to deter potential thieves.

- ✓ Secure storage buildings, gas pumps, your home and barn with deadbolt locks or sturdy padlocks.

- ✓ Keep boats, snowmobiles, bikes, fertilizers, tools, and other small equipment out of view and in locked buildings. Consider



constructing a metal storage cage within a building for locking up smaller more valuable items.

- ✓ Secure property you leave outdoors to large stationary objects with a chain and padlock.

- ✓ Never leave valuable tools or guns in an open car or pickup truck.

- ✓ Avoid leaving garage doors open. An open garage door especially with no vehicle in sight is a "welcome" sign to burglars.



- ✓ Avoid leaving farm equipment and tractors in a field overnight.

- ✓ Remove vehicle and equipment keys—do not make it easy for a thieves to take your belongings.

- ✓ Identify your property with permanent identification in two locations. This helps prevent easy sale of unidentified items and helps authorities to identify recovered items.

- ✓ Maintain a property inventory and keep a record of serial numbers.

- ✓ Utilize your neighbors to help fight crime and keep an eye on each other's property. Be observant and report any suspicious activity to the authorities at once.

- ✓ Encourage family members and employees to be security conscious.

- Protect your livestock
- ✓ Mark your animals. A permanent brand tattoo or other marking system is essential for identification of stolen livestock. Signs posted indicating animals are branded are often a deterrent to thieves.

- ✓ Check your livestock frequently and take a frequent count. When away, arrange for a neighbor to check them for you.

- ✓ Check gates and fences regularly. Good fences and closed gates prevents stray animals which are especially vulnerable to theft. Lock corral gates, loading chutes and livestock trailers. Don't make it easy for thieves to use your equipment to steal from you. (GB)

Prevent Crime the Pro-active Way: Organize a Neighborhood Watch Program

Neighborhood watch is a program to help residents protect themselves and their property. It is not a program of vigilante actions nor does it use citizens to actually enforce the laws. It is about establishing a network of eyes and ears for the Lancaster County Sheriff's Department. Through a system of training and organizing neighborhoods, citizens become alert to suspicious activity and take an active role in reducing crime.

Organizing a Neighborhood Watch

1. Visit with friends and neighbors to determine their interest and support for a Neighborhood Watch Program.
2. Contact the Crime



3. Determine an organiza-
- Prevention Division of the Lancaster County Sheriff's Department to organize a meeting (main non-emergency phone number 441-6500).

tional meeting date and time. Usually these meeting are held at the home of the organizer.

4. During the meeting, the Lancaster County Sheriff's Department will provide:

- A deputy to explain the Neighborhood Watch Program and answer questions.

- Assistance in selecting a coordinator for your area—usually the person who organizes the meeting.

(A color TV should be available for use during the meeting.)

5. If an easily defined area exists for a Neighborhood Watch Program to operate, the

See WATCH on page 11

Suspicious activity

Not every stranger who comes into your neighborhood is a criminal by any means. There are many door-to-door salesmen, repairmen, and servicemen moving around our neighborhoods all the time, but criminals DO take advantage of this by pretending to be legitimate workmen. The Sheriff's Office would rather investigate than be called when it is too late. Your call could save a life, prevent an injury, or stop a criminal act. BE ALERT. BE CONCERNED and CALL.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY CONCERNING PERSONS	
CIRCUMSTANCES	POSSIBLE CRIME
Going door to door in a residential area especially if one or more persons goes to the rear of the residence.	Possible burglary suspects or trespassers.
Waiting or loitering in front of a house or business, if the business is closed or house unoccupied.	Possible burglary suspects.
Forcing entrance, or entering your neighbor's house, when it is unoccupied.	Possible burglary, theft, or trespassing.
Person running, especially if something of value is being carried.	Possible suspect fleeing the scene of a crime.
Person carrying property that is not wrapped, at an unusual hour.	Possible suspect fleeing the scene of a burglary or robbery.
Much human traffic to and from a certain residence, if it occurs on a daily or regular basis.	Possible vice, fence, or narcotics operation.
Person screaming.	Possible rape or assault.
Person loitering around cars or going car to car peering into them, especially in parking lots or on the streets.	Possible car thief or a theft from automobile.
Persons loitering around schools, parks, or secluded areas.	Possible sex offenders or drug activity.
Persons offering items for sale at a very low price.	Possibly trying to sell stolen property.
Strangers loitering or driving through a neighborhood several times.	Possible burglary or larceny suspects.
"Delivery Man" with the wrong address, or one who asks if someone else lives there.	Possible burglary suspect.
Vehicle moving slowly, without lights, or driving in an aimless manner. This is suspicious in any location, including residential streets, schools, and playgrounds.	Possible burglar, drug pusher, or sex offender.
Parked or occupied vehicles containing one or more persons especially significant if observed at an unusual hour.	Possible lookouts for a burglary or robbery.
Vehicles being loaded with valuables if parked by a business or unoccupied residence.	Possible burglary or theft in progress.
Abandoned vehicle parked on your block.	Possible stolen car.
Vehicle containing weapons.	Owner may be engaged in criminal activity.
Vehicle where someone is being forced into it, especially females or juveniles.	Possible kidnapping, assault, or attempted rape.
Vehicle where a business transaction is being conducted around schools or parks.	Possibly selling stolen items or drugs.
Locked vehicle that someone is attempting to forcibly enter, especially in a parking lot.	Possible theft of a car or contents.
Persons detaching mechanical parts or accessories from a vehicle.	Possible theft or vandalism.
Objects thrown from a vehicle.	Possible disposal of contraband.
Property in homes, garages, or storage areas is suspicious if accumulations are large, or item in good condition but not in use.	Possible stolen property.
Property offered for sale at a very low price.	Possible stolen property.
Property in vehicles that is not normally found in vehicles, especially if observed at an unusual hour or if TV sets, stereos, guns, or auto parts.	Possible stolen property.
Property carried by persons on foot, especially suspicious at an unusual place or hour. Very questionable if person is running or property is unwrapped.	Possible property just stolen in a burglary or robbery.
Property being removed from or loaded into a vehicle or building. Not suspicious unless at an unusual hour or from a closed business or unoccupied residence.	Possible burglary or theft in progress.
Continuous repair operations at a nonbusiness location.	Possible stolen property being altered.
Open or broken doors and windows at a closed business or unoccupied residence.	Possible burglary in progress, completed burglary, or vandalism.
Unusual noises such as gunshots, screaming, or dogs barking continuously.	Possible burglary, assault, rape, etc.
Sound of breaking glass.	Possible burglary or vandalism.
A person exhibiting unusual mental or physical symptoms.	Person may be injured, under the influence of drugs, or otherwise needing medical attention.



Sheriff's Office Seeks Your Help

The Lancaster County Sheriff's office seeks your help in solving burglaries throughout the county. If you or members of your family witness:

- (1) strangers asking for directions;
- (2) a vehicle that looks out of place;
- (3) multiple hang up phone calls; or
- (4) unannounced sales persons or any other suspicious activities in your neighborhood,

please call the sheriff's office at 441-6500 and ask to speak to a criminal investigator. Remember many crimes are solved through information provided by the public. (GB)