



Residential and Cottage Property Crime Prevention Tips

Cottage break and enters, property damage and thefts are serious concerns impacting police, property owners, cottager's associations and insurance companies. Being an owner of a residence or cottage, you sometimes prefer an element of privacy. This element of privacy can be a wonderful feature; however, it may make your residence or cottage more vulnerable to crime. The primary deterrent to criminal activity in cottage country is "natural surveillance". Criminals will be reluctant to force their way into your property if neighbours are willing to report suspicious activity or vehicles.

Many people tend to think the act of break and enter is strictly a physical term, that is, illegal access to our home, items taken and/or items destroyed. However, a break and enter does not only create a monetary loss, but can have a significant impact on a person's mental well-being. Property crime victims will often speak of a sense of violation. This can lead to feelings of fear, anger and emotional distress.

To protect your loved ones, your property and your home, we have designed this document to assist you in preventing property theft and break and enters. We encourage you to read the crime prevention tips and strategies contained within this document, and take some time to improve the security in and around your home. Together we can help reduce the incidents of break and enters to your property, and make an impact on property crimes that affect both seasonal and full time residences throughout our communities.



Here are some helpful tips to help prevent you from being a victim of property crime:

Inside:

- ✓ Mark your valuables. This may discourage theft of valuables and will provide a way to easily identify stolen property
- ✓ Record the contents of your home by taking pictures of all valuables or by video recording. Keep record of your items at a primary residence
- ✓ Record all serial numbers of all items in your property. Property that cannot be identified by specific marks or serial numbers cannot be placed on police databases, making it difficult for police to prove the theft.
- ✓ Remove expensive articles from your property when you are away for extended periods of time. This includes small valuables, electronics, medications, and alcohol.
- ✓ Consider installing an alarm system and identify a "local" key-holder or property rep, who is able to respond when alerted by the alarm company.
- ✓ Ensure your doors are made of solid wood or metal; Install deadbolts with a 1 inch throw (the part that extends into the door frame) on all exteriors doors; Install a strike plate (the flat metal plate that fits onto the door frame) using 3 inch screws for maximum support.
- ✓ LOCK YOUR DOORS! Let's not make it that easy to gain access to your property!
- ✓ Place a metal bar or piece of wood into the frame of your sliding patio doors and windows; ensure the doors are locked.

Outside:

- ✓ Never leave a spare key in a convenient hiding place such as under a rock, a door mat, or in a flower pot.
- ✓ Don't leave articles outside such as axes, tools, or ladders; this may assist thieves in breaking into your property.
- ✓ Record all serial numbers of your recreational items, including your snowmobiles, ATV's, bicycles, your boat and boat motor. Don't forget to record the Hull Identification Number (HIN) from your boat.
- ✓ Make sure your house number is visible during the day and night. In an emergency you want emergency personnel to find your property as soon as possible.
- ✓ Trim trees and shrubs so doors and windows are visible from the street.
- ✓ If away, make certain your home looks occupied; shoveled walkways, mail collected, and grass cut will all help.
- ✓ Don't advertise your recent purchases of valuables such as electronics outside; if they see an empty box for a television outside, they will assume that it is inside your property.
- ✓ Always keep your vehicle locked, even if it's inside a locked garage. Don't be fooled into thinking your vehicle is safe.
- ✓ Remove all belongings and valuables from inside your vehicle; if it's visible then it's something that can be stolen.
- ✓ Install motion detector lights or have your outside lights on at night; ensure all entranceways are well lit.
- ✓ Get to know your neighbours; knowing who's a stranger and who belongs in your neighbourhood strengthens the sense of "community".



Other helpful hints:

- ✓ Keep your vacation plans off social media networks like Twitter or Facebook. It's easy to gain access to personal information once it's entered onto Facebook or another social network.
- ✓ If you will be away from your property for an extended period (such as during the winter months), consider the availability of a property rep to check on your property while you are away. This is beneficial if you have an alarm at your property, as a readily available property rep could be contacted if an alarm is triggered.

If You Have Been the Victim of a Crime

Don't hesitate to call police because you think the incident is too insignificant or because your own carelessness may have contributed to your victimization. Calling the police is an important part of protecting yourself and of being a good neighbour. Informing the police about crimes that have occurred is one way of preventing future crimes.

What to do if your property has been broken into

If you discover that your property has been entered, a few important steps will minimize disruption and ease your aggravation. Do not enter the property, call police, and follow their instructions to avoid personal risk and evidence contamination. Try to protect obvious foot prints and tire track.