

August 2004 Neighborhood Watch Newsletter

Rise in Business and Street Robberies

We have noted a rise in business and street robberies in the Encino community. As the crimes increase, so does the viciousness of the suspects. One such incident occurred in Encino where the business owner was shot.

Anyone, at anytime, can find themselves in this horrible situation. Your best chance of surviving the incident without harm is to cooperate with the suspect. As difficult as it may be to give up your hard-earned property, the suspect will get it one way or another and there is NO property worth your life.

Burglaries are also on the rise. The recent trend is to throw a cement stepping stone or some other type of rock or brick through a sliding glass door and walk right in. If you have an alarm, be sure to have a "Glass Breakage" device installed. Neighborhood Watch is also very important! If you are not involved or would like to get a Neighborhood Watch started, please call the Senior Lead Office at 818 756-9891.

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Recent criminal activity leads me to comment on private contractors that do work in and around your homes. At recent meetings, I shared with some of you that a small number of these workers have been accused of (and actually seen) committing theft-related crimes in your homes while (or after) carrying out their hired work. When hiring professional help, which may range between construction work to carpet cleaning services, do not let your guard down. If possible, stay home and monitor their work. You may also consider dropping in on them when they may not expect it. Although the bad element accounts for a very small number of workers, some of these people will take advantage of their general access to your home (and property). At a bare minimum, please lock up and/or completely remove your valuables when any work is being done inside your home.

Keep in mind that the person you hire may not always be the same person that does the actual work. Especially in construction, it is common practice for a primary contractor to hire temporary-type employees (e.g., they may pick-up people, waiting for work, in front of a Home Depot). The primary contractor may be a decent and honest person, but we cannot always assume the same for some of his/her partners or hired workers, some of which may have been hastily hired without any background check whatsoever. Ask your contractors to disclose their use of any impromptu-temporary employees. In my experience, if and when some of these workers got accused of stealing something in and around the house, the investigations often got stifled because the primary contractors never seemed to know some of the workers' last names, addresses, phone numbers etc. This is most likely due to the spontaneous nature of their relationship.

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