



Ready to Protect, Proud to Serve

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Media Release



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BURGLARY TRENDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PUBLIC

Recently, the Tucson Police Department has been noticing more reported incidents where vacant homes and businesses are being burglarized. In some instances, brazen thieves are literally forcing their way into residences or businesses by breaking in through an entry point, such as a door, window, cooler access/venting into the house, etc. Detectives from the Burglary Unit report that a trend has developed in which a subject, someone who could be mistaken as a utility worker, a person renovating a vacant house, or an individual that would not be out of place in the neighborhood, forcefully removes a realtor lock box from a house listed for sale. The subject will then use a hammer or other tool to gain entry to the lock box and utilize the key inside to gain access to the house. In most of these cases, neighbors or other people in the neighborhood have seen the thieves in action, but did not perceive it as suspicious until after the burglary was completed.

Occupied businesses that are directly adjacent to vacant businesses can experience a higher risk of being burglarized as well. In one recent incident, thieves gained access to a vacant business and cut a large hole through the wall of the adjacent business. They then used the hole as a pass-through to remove items from the occupied business building. An alarm system can be a useful deterrent to these types of crimes. However, being aware of one's surroundings, especially in cases where an occupied business might adjoin a vacant building, and alerting police to any suspicious activity will help to lessen the numbers of victim businesses.

Lately, the trends are wide ranging with respect to what items are typically taken during burglaries of vacant properties. Historically, high dollar, yet easy to carry items, such as laptops, mp3 devices, some televisions, etc. are highly sought after items for burglars. For some time, investigators have responded to reports of appliance thefts, especially in new home construction areas. More recently, copper wire thefts have been prevalent in a variety of theft investigations to include cases of vacant home or business burglaries. However, what Burglary Detectives are now seeing are thefts of nearly everything else that can be removed from the inside of a home or business, such as furniture, fixtures, cabinetry, and even toilets.

For accommodations; materials in accessible formats; foreign language interpreters; and/or materials in a language other than English, please contact the Tucson Police Department Public Information Office at (520) 791-4852 or (520) 791-2639 for TDD at least five (5) business days in advance. Para arreglos; materiales en formatos accesibles; interpretes de idioma extranjero; y/o materiales en otro idioma que no sea inglés, por favor comunicarse al Departamento de la Policía de Tucson a la sección de Información Pública al (520) 791-4852 o (520) 791-2639 para TDD por lo menos con cinco (5) días hábiles de anticipación.

In addition, there have been a steady number of incidents involving locations that are left unsecured (unlocked doors and/or windows) that occur in both the daytime and nighttime hours. In one recent instance, a cat burglar literally entered the house in the nighttime hours while a family was asleep, stealing high dollar items like a television and laptop. Investigators discovered that none of the family members had locked the front door before going to sleep at night because they thought someone else had done it. Cases involving cat burglars are rare, but the example points to the fact that citizens need to take the time to ensure that their doors are locked during both day and nighttime hours.

Other ways that the Burglary Unit Detectives report burglars gain access to homes are through “doggy doors,” improperly latched or ill fitting/closed sliding glass doors, and windows left open to vent the house as a result of a swamp cooler in use even though the resident is not there. The Tucson Police Department encourages the public to take extra measures to ensure that access cannot be gained to your home in these manners. Making sure that the latching mechanism on your sliding glass door is functioning properly and/or taking additional security measures, such as inserting a stick or similar in the track of the sliding glass door, should help in making it more difficult for an intruder to get into your residence. Also, an easy way to make it harder for someone to gain access to your house or business is to ensure that all windows and doors are closed and locked before leaving your residence or business.

The Tucson Police Department would like to take this opportunity to remind the citizens of Tucson that we continue working diligently to investigate burglary offenses and arrest offenders, but need the public’s assistance in helping us move forward to prevent burglaries. By taking steps mentioned above, reporting suspicious activity as soon as you see it, being aware of your surroundings, and participating in neighborhood watch groups, you can help to make it much harder for burglars to target new victims. For more crime prevention tips as well as contact information for our Neighborhood Watch coordinators, please visit our website at <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/police/crime-prevention>. Remember, **Crime prevention is everyone’s responsibility**, and the Tucson Police Department would like to partner with our community to make our homes and neighborhoods safer in every way possible.

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