



I would like to share the following important information with you from our New Castle County Police Department.

Police Warn of Public of Rash of Residential Burglaries
68% of Homes, Sheds, and Garages Left Unsecured

During the week of May 5th through May 11th, the New Castle County Police Department investigated 28 residential burglaries throughout the county. Investigators have found that 19 of the break-ins occurred at homes and sheds that were left unsecured or completely open. Over the years, the police department has pleaded with residents to lock your homes, cars, shed and any other locations where valuables are kept. Once again, we would like to remind the public of the importance of securing your valuables.

As the weather has warmed, more residents have begun working outside and leaving their windows, doors and garages open, oftentimes overnight. As a consequence, many have woken to find their homes and sheds have been entered without force and items ranging from electronics to ATV's have been stolen.

An analysis of the reported burglaries between 2007 and 2008 (year-to-date) has revealed nearly identical numbers: (526) reported in 2007 and (525) in 2008. One of the most interesting year to date statistics uncovered was the fact that nearly half of all reported burglaries occurred without forced entries, meaning the homes and sheds were either left unlocked or wide open. Investigators have also found that 75% of the residential burglaries (where homes were entered) occurred during the daytime hours. Conversely, all of the shed and open garage burglaries occurred under the cover of darkness.

According to Colonel Rick Gregory, *"We recognize how burglary related crimes deeply affect our citizens and their sense of comfort in their communities. This is why our investigators constantly strive to solve these crimes and recover the property as soon as possible. Most importantly, we all should focus on crime prevention. We need our community's help as our research has discovered that many of these crimes would have been averted if the victims simply closed their garage doors, locked their sheds and made sure they locked all of their doors and windows."*

The New Castle County Police Department would like to offer the following crime prevention tips:

- Make your home look occupied, and make it difficult to break in.
- Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed. Even if it is for a short time, lock your doors.
- Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away for a length of time, connect some lamps to automatic timers to turn them on in the evening and off during the day.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked.
- Don't allow daily deliveries of mail, newspapers or flyers build up while you are away. Arrange with the Post Office to hold your mail, or arrange for a friend or neighbor to collect them.

- Arrange for your lawn to be mowed if you are going away for an extended time.
- Check your locks on doors and windows and replace them with secure devices as necessary.
- Pushbutton locks on doorknobs are easy for burglars to open. Install deadbolt locks on all your outside doors.
- Sliding glass doors are vulnerable. Special locks are available for better security.
- Other windows may need better locks. Check with a locksmith or hardware store for alternatives.
- Lawn mowers, snow blowers, barbecues and bicycles are best stored out of sight.
- Always lock your garden sheds and garages.
- Use curtains on garage and basement windows.
- Never leave notes on your door such as "Gone shopping."
- No lock, regardless of its quality, can be truly effective. Key-in dead bolt locks provide minimum security. Ask a locksmith for advice on your situation.
- Change locks immediately if your keys are lost or stolen.
- When moving into a new home, have all locks changed.
- Have adequate exterior lighting. A motion-sensitive light is recommended for backyards.
- Trim trees and shrubs so that they cannot be used as hiding places for intruders.
- Make sure your door hinges are on the inside.
- An alarm system is excellent for home security. It provides peace of mind to homeowners, especially while on vacation. There is a wide variety of alarm systems on the market.
- Make several inquiries to different companies for the best security system available to you.
- Never leave keys under doormats, flowerpots, mailboxes or other "secret" hiding places -- burglars know where to look for hidden keys.
- Keep a detailed inventory of your valuable possessions, including a description of the items, date of purchase and original value, and serial numbers, and keep a copy in a safe place away from home -- this is a good precaution in case of fires or other disasters. Make a photographic or video record of valuable objects, heirlooms and antiques. Your insurance company can provide assistance in making and keeping your inventory.
- Be a good neighbor. If you notice anything suspicious in your neighborhood, call 911 immediately.

To schedule a free home security survey, please call the New Castle County Police Department at 395-8050.



Councilman David L. Tackett
New Castle County Council
Eleventh District