

WATCHWORD

TAMPA NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER 🏠 JULY 2006

The Tampa Police Department's Special Operations Division

“HURRICANE SAFETY TIPS”

A family action plan is one of the first steps towards keeping our loved ones safe and out of harms way in a severe weather event. Once the family develops and finalizes an action plan, be sure to practice it frequently.

Creating a Disaster Supply Kit is another major step towards preparedness. The creating of a Disaster Supply Kit is a great time for the whole family to come together, and be involved in this important process. Young children will enjoy the time spent with their parents and this will also give them the opportunity to ask questions and allow for open dialogue about any anxiety they may have going into this hurricane season. Children will also feel a sense of security knowing that their family is prepared. Allow children to customize the kit by adding extras such as coloring books, crayons, favorite toys, snacks, etc. A well stocked Disaster Supply Kit will help alleviate stress and allow children the opportunity to face an event with minimal anxiety.

Below are some helpful tips that can be utilized when developing a family action plan. You can also find below a list of items that should be included in your disaster supply kit. These items should be stored in a water-resistant container and replenished as necessary.

Family Action Plan

- Discuss the type of hazards that could affect the family. Know the home's vulnerability to storm surge, flooding, wind and tornadoes.

- Determine if the home is located in a storm surge evacuation zone. If so, know exactly where to go to reach safe shelter, and know how to get there.
- If the home is located outside a storm surge evacuation zone, and the home is well constructed, its residents still need to have a hurricane plan.
- Locate a safe room or the safest areas in the home for each hurricane hazard. Sometimes the safest areas may not be in the home, but within the community.
- Determine escape routes from the home and designated meeting place nearby.
- Designate an out-of-state contact so all family members have a single point of contact.
- Make a plan now for what to do with pets if family needs to evacuate. Most hurricane shelters do not accept pets.
- Post emergency telephone number. Children should know when to call 911.
- Review insurance coverage, as flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance.
- Stock non-perishable emergency supplies and a disaster supply kit.
- Monitor NOAA weather radio for official real-time weather information.
- Take First Aid, CPR and disaster preparedness classes.

Disaster Supply Kit

- Two weeks supply of prescription medicines.
- Two weeks supply of non-perishable foods.
- Drinking water/containers - 1 gallon/ per person/per day (min. 3 days).

- Flashlights and (seven sets) batteries for each member of the family.
- Portable radio and (seven sets) batteries.
- First aid book and kit including bandages, antiseptic, tape, compresses, aspirin and aspirin pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medication, antacid Syrup of Ipecac (used to promote vomiting only if advised by the Poison Control Center).
- Mosquito repellent and citronella candles.
- Fire extinguisher (small canister, ABC type).
- Instant tire sealer.
- Whistle and/or distress flag
- Two coolers (one to keep food; one to go get ice).
- Plastic tarp, screening, tools and nails, etc.
- Water purification kit (tablets, chlorine (plain and iodine)).
- Infant necessities (medicine, sterile water, diapers, ready formula, bottles).
- Cleanup supplies (mop, buckets, towels, disinfectant).
- Camera and film.
- Non-electric can opener.
- Extra batteries for camera, flashlights, radio portable TV and lamps, etc.
- Garbage can or bucket with tight-fitting lid (for emergency toilet)

For more information please contact the Special Operations Division at 276-3391.

Go to skydiary.com/kids/ for great educational tips for children on hurricanes and other natural disasters. This website also includes neat projects kids can do to help them learn about these Natural Phenomenon.

DOOR-TO-DOOR SALES

By: CPP Maryanne Hunsberger

Your Crime Prevention Teams encourages everyone to be attentive to personal safety and home security issues at all times, it bears repeating that not everyone who visits your neighborhood has good intentions in mind. As the weather improves, we often see groups of door-to-door sales persons working through various Hillsborough County neighborhoods. Please remember to be cautious whenever anyone knocks at your door:



- Never open your door to a stranger! Keep the storm door locked or speak through the closed door. Criminals are more than willing to push their way in if you give them an opening.
- Contact the Police Department immediately if you observe sales persons behaving aggressively or raising alarm in any way. If you aren't interested in the product, you should not have to argue with an aggressive sales person to get them to leave your property.
- Consider posting a "No Solicitors" sign, which could discourage door-to-door sales.
- Let the "buyer beware." If the deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If you are expected to pay in advance for an item being ordered-are you prepared to lose your investment if the so-called sales person fails to send what you've paid for?

PREVENTING APARTMENT BURGLARIES

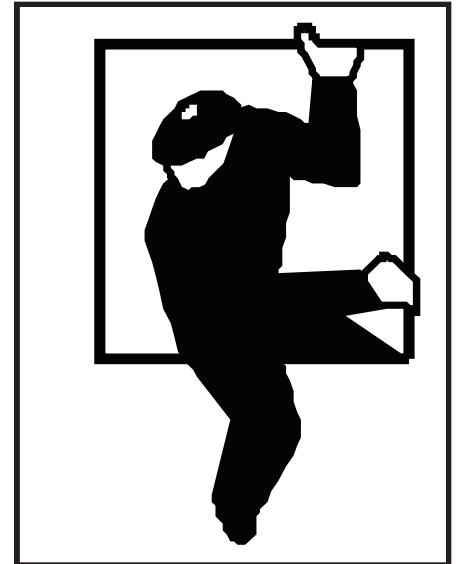
By: CPP Maryanne Hunsberger

Burglary, by definition, is a non-confrontational crime, but being victimized can leave a family feeling vulnerable and violated. To prevent a burglary, it is important to first gain an understanding of who commits them and why. The majority of apartment burglaries occur during the daytime when most people are away at work or at school. Burglaries also occur at night when there are obvious signs that no one is home. Most apartment burglars are young males looking for things that are small, expensive, and can easily be converted to cash. Items like cash, jewelry, guns, watches, laptop computers, and other small electronic devices are high on the list. Quick cash is needed for living expenses and drugs.

Statistics tell us that more than 30% of all apartment burglars gained access through an open door or window. Ordinary household tools like screwdrivers, channel-lock pliers, small pry bars, and small hammers are most often used by burglars. Although apartment burglaries may seem random in occurrence, they actually involve a selection process.

The burglar's selection process is simple. Choose an unoccupied apartment with the easiest access, the greatest amount of cover, and with the best escape routes.

- **Always keep your doors and windows locked.** This means when you are at home as well as when you are out. If you leave your apartment for just a minute to go to the laundry room, lock the door behind you. Opportunists may see you leave and use that five minutes to burglarize your apartment or go inside and wait for you to come back.
- **Be a Good Neighbor.** Good neighbors should look out for each other. Get to know your neighbors on each side of your apartment and the three directly across from you. Invite conversation



often, and establish trust. Good neighbors will watch out for your apartment and vehicle when you are away, if you ask them. They can report suspicious activity to management, to the police, or to you while you are away.

- **Keep the lights on.** Interior lighting shows signs of occupancy inside a residence at night. Seeing a dark apartment night after night sends a message to burglars that you are away. Also, keep your porch light on at night. Bad guys like the dark not the light.
- **Take advantage of Operation Inventory,** or engrave valuables with your FDL, such as FL12345DL, for identification purposes if they are stolen. This is called "Operation ID" and not only helps law enforcement identify your items if they are stolen, but also decreases their value to pawn shops. No one wants to buy items that have someone else's information engraved on them. District Crime Prevention Teams have engravers that your Neighborhood Watch group may borrow for this purpose.
- **Start a Neighborhood Watch.** This has been proven to be one of the most effective tools against burglary or other crimes in communities.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF WHILE USING AN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE (ATM)

By: MPO M. Fleita

Source: Florida Attorney General's Office

- Try to avoid using an ATM by yourself. Either take someone with you or only use an ATM when others are around.
- If possible, avoid using an ATM after dark. If you must, choose one that is well lighted and does not have tall bushes nearby.
- When you arrive at an ATM, look around. If you see anything that makes you uncomfortable or anyone who looks suspicious, do not stop. Either use an ATM at a different location or come back later. Notify the authorities.
- Have your access card and any other documents you need ready when you approach an ATM. While you are fumbling with a wallet or purse, you are easy game for a thief.
- If someone else is using the ATM when you arrive, avoid standing right behind them. Give them enough space to conduct their transaction in privacy.
- Even while using the ATM, stay alert to your surroundings. Look up and around every few seconds while transacting your business.
- Protect your Personal Identification Number (PIN). Do not enter your PIN if anyone else can see the screen. Do not use spouse, children, maiden or pet names for PIN number. Shield your PIN from onlookers by using your body.
- When your transaction is finished, be sure you have your card and your receipt, then leave immediately. Avoid counting or otherwise displaying large amounts of cash.
- As you leave, keep a look out. Be alert for anything or anyone who appears suspicious. If you think you are being followed, go to an area with a lot of people and call the police.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT INFORMATION

By: CPP Maryanne Hunsberger

National Night Out is fast approaching. **The 23rd Annual National Night Out**, a unique crime and drug prevention event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch, has been scheduled for Tuesday, August 1, 2006. We cordially invite you and your community to be part of our NIGHT OUT 2006 team. Last year's National Night Out campaign involved citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials from 10,000 communities from all 50 states. In all, over 34 million people participated in 2005. National Night Out is designed to:

- Heighten crime and drug prevention awareness.
- Generate support for, and participation in, local anticrime programs.
- Strengthen neighborhood spirit and police community partnerships.



- Send a message to criminals letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

Along with the traditional display of outdoor lights and front porch vigils, cities, towns and neighborhoods "celebrate" NNO with a variety of events and activities such as: block parties, cookouts, parades, flashlight walks, contests and youth programs. NNO has proven to be an effective, inexpensive and enjoyable program to promote

neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships in our fight for a safer nation. The benefits your community will derive from NNO will extend well beyond one night.

It's not too late to have a successful National Night Out in your community. You must contact your District Crime Prevention team to let them know you want to participate! This is the cutoff date for National Night Out participation. Don't forget to register your National Night Out program with the National Association of Town Watch. You may call **1-800-NITE-OUT** or visit their web site at www.nationalnightout.org - where you can register online. After your event, you need to send National Association of Town Watch pictures and a summary of what occurred at your event.

GENERAL RULES TO AVOID AUTO THEFT/BURGLARY

and

HOW TO GIVE A THIEF A HARD TIME...

By: MPO M. Fleita

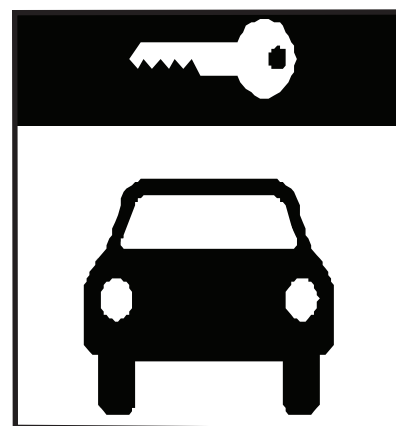
- **Always** lock your vehicle. Remove the keys.
- **Lock** valuables in the trunk and don't leave personal identification or credit cards in your vehicle.
- **Never** leave your vehicle running while unattended. 9 Violation of State Law Sec. 316.1975, FSS)
- **Install** an anti-theft device that's highly visible, hard to defeat and that renders your vehicle un-drivable.
- **Use** an alarm or wheel-locking device
- **Photocopy** your vehicle registration and insurance papers and keep them in your wallet, not in the glove compartment.
- **Park** in a garage, if possible, or choose a well lighted heavily traveled area to park.
- **Don't** hide a spare key in the vehicle.
- **Always** be observant for possible "carjackers" as you drive and while entering or exiting your vehicle. Your horn is a good deterrent to crime.
- **Engrave** your drivers license number on your stereos or car phones.
- **Etch** the vehicle identification number on the windshield. This process is inexpensive and available through the (YOUR AUTO THEFT UNIT)
- Report any suspicious activity to your local law enforcement agency.

NOTE: Citizens should contact their insurance companies for recommendations on other preventative measures. Some companies may offer a discount for specific alarm equipment.

IS YOUR VEHICLE "A CRIME WAITING TO HAPPEN?"

IS YOUR VEHICLE A TARGET? Have you taken the necessary precautions to avoid becoming a victim?

VEHICLE BURGLARIES have become a serious problem in our area. Thieves are taking anything they can get their hands on! We are asking your help to reduce the rate



Practice These Tips:

ALWAYS LOCK YOUR PARKED VEHICLE:

Install a locking device, like "The Club".

REMOVE VALUABLES:

keys, wallet, cellular phone, etc.

IF THE ITEM CAN NOT BE REMOVED...cover it.

IN PARKING LOTS, be aware of people wandering through the lot, looking into parked vehicles;

AND...

**REPORT ALL THEFTS
AND
SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY**

2006

TAMPA NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT:
Samuel Mobley

SECRETARY:
Thelma Davis

VICE PRESIDENT:
Norbert Holz

TREASURER:
Wayne Schnars

BOARD MEMBERS:
Betty Dowd
Flo Dickerson



DO NOT BELIEVE EVERYTHING ON THE INTERNET

By: Sgt. Puig

The following E-mail has been making the circuit and I have received several questions about it. The allegations as made in the E-mail are not true. Please read the inaccurate E-mail and then read the correct information that follows it.

Inaccurate E-mail

Seems that car thieves have found yet another way to steal your car or truck without any effort at all. The car thieves peer through the windshield of your car or truck, write down the VIN # from the label on the dash, go to the local car dealership and request a duplicate key based on the VIN #.

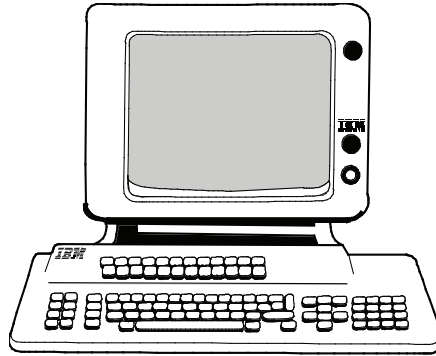
My friend didn't believe this e-mail, so she called a dealer and pretended she had lost her keys. They told her to just bring in the VIN #, and they would cut her one on the spot, and she could order the keyless device if she wanted.

The Car Dealer's Parts Department will make a duplicate key from the VIN #, and collect payment from the thief who will return to your car. He doesn't have to break in, do any damage to the vehicle, or draw attention to himself. All he has to do is walk up to your car, insert the key and off he goes to a local Chop Shop with your vehicle.

You don't believe it? It IS that easy. To avoid this from happening to you, simply put some tape (electrical tape, duct tape or medical tape) across the VIN Metal Label located on the dashboard. By law, you cannot remove the VIN #, but you can cover it so it can't be viewed through the windshield by a car thief.

I urge you to forward this to your friends before some other car thief steals another car or truck.

Slip a 3 x 5 card over the VIN NUMBER.



Correct Information

The e-mail is incorrect when it said that it was not against the law to cover your VIN. It is not only against the law to cover your VIN, but it is a felony to do so. The following is the quote from Florida State Statute #319.33(1)(d):

(d) To possess, sell or offer for sale, conceal, or dispose of in this state a motor vehicle or mobile home, or major component part thereof, on which any motor number or vehicle identification number that has been affixed by the manufacturer or by a state agency, such as the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, which regulates motor vehicles has been destroyed, removed, covered, altered, or defaced, with knowledge of such destruction, removal, **covering**, alteration, or defacement, except as provided in s. 319.30(4).

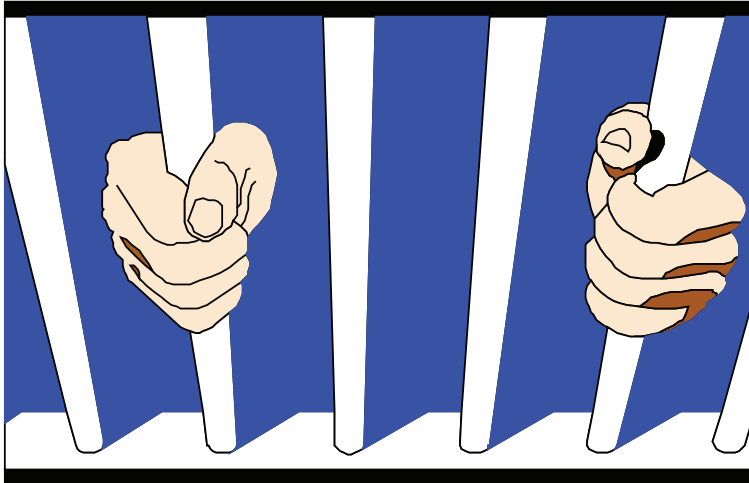
If an officer comes across your vehicle and you have the VIN covered, the officer could very possibly impound the vehicle for latent investigation. The detective assigned could then charge you with the felony of covering the VIN.

The very least that would happen is that your vehicle would be impounded until the detective could look at the vehicle (detectives work a lot of cases and on a priority basis), and that could take several days. You may not be charged with a crime, but you would be without your vehicle for that length of time, plus you would be charged the cost of towing and storage of your vehicle, which would be in the area of \$150-\$200.

The e-mail also mentioned how easy it was to obtain a duplicate key from a VIN. The making of duplicate keys should not be that easy. You can get a duplicate key made from a VIN, but dealerships will make you produce some type of ID and proof of ownership before they will make or give you the key. If you get a lazy or dishonest or stupid employee behind the counter, then you may be able to get the key without ID or proof of ownership. The Tampa Police Department Auto Theft Squad has posed as customers and we have tried to obtain keys from a VIN from dealerships at random in Tampa. Without exception, we found that all of them would NOT make the key without proof of who we were and that it was our car that we wanted the key for. If you come across an employee at a dealership who would make a key without proper identification being presented, then you need to contact the dealership management (not the employee who did it) and report that employee. Dealerships do not want that type of person working for them as it exposes them to liability issues and taints their business reputation.

ALMOST SEVEN MILLION ADULTS UNDER CORRECTIONAL SUPERVISION

By: MPO M. Fleita



The number of adults in prison, jail, or on probation or parole in the United States reached almost seven million during 2004, according to the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).

The number has grown by more than 1.6 million adults under correctional authority control since 1995.

The nation's total correctional population was 6,996,500 in 2004, of which 4,151,125 were living in the community on probation; 1,421,911 were in a state or federal prison; 765,355 were living in the community on parole; and 713,990 were in jail, according to the BJS report on probation and parole. At year-end one in every 31 adults was under correctional supervision - 3.2 percent of the U.S. adult population.

Probationers are criminal offenders who have been sentenced to a period of conditional supervision in the community, generally in lieu of incarceration. Parolees are criminal offenders supervised conditionally in the community following a prison term.

The study's other highlights included the following:

Probation

- The adult probation population grew 0.2 percent during 2004. This was the smallest annual growth rate since this survey began in 1979.

- Fifty percent of all probationers had been convicted of a misdemeanor, 49 percent of a felony, and 1 percent of other infractions. Twenty-six percent were on probation for a drug law violation, and 15 percent for driving while intoxicated.
- Four states had an increase of 10 percent or more in their probation population in 2004: Kentucky (15 percent), Mississippi (12 percent), New Mexico (11 percent) and New Jersey (10 percent).
- The adult probation population decreased in 21 states. Washington was the only state with a double-digit decrease (down 27 percent).
- Some 2.2 million adults were discharged from probation supervision during 2004, and 60 percent successfully met the conditions of their supervision, nearly unchanged since 1995.

Parole

- The adult parole population grew 20,230 or 2.7 percent during the year, more than twice the average annual increase of 1.3 percent since 1995.

- Thirty-nine states had increases in their parole populations in 2004, led by Nebraska (24 percent), Vermont (16 percent), and New Mexico (15 percent).
- Nine states had decreases in their parole populations. Nevada (down 13 percent) was the only state with a decrease of more than 10 percent, followed by Virginia (down 9 percent).
- Mandatory releases from prison as a result of sentencing statutes or good-time provisions comprised 52 percent of those entering parole in 2004, up from 45 percent in 1995.
- Overall success rates for parolees have remained nearly the same between 1995 (45 percent) and 2004 (46 percent).

Probation and Parole in the United States, 2004 (NCJ-210676) is available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/ppus04.htm.

DISTRICT THREE CRIME PREVENTION TEAM



Operation Rolling Thunder

District Three is happy to announce that Operation Rolling Thunder is in full swing. This operation focuses on juveniles and summer crimes, which began on May 27, 2006 and will continue through August 6, 2006. So far all the hard work is paying off. We are at a 36.9% reduction for the month of June compared to last year; that is excellent! Comparison for last month (May) to this month we have approximately a 9% reduction.

Even though we have a 9% reduction, that does not mean we can lay back and relax. We continue to move forward on the District III Express and we want every single one of you on board with us. There is always room for more. Please be cognizant that we do have a "Red Alert" in burglaries and breaking and entering of vehicles. Vehicles thefts are looking excellent, but robberies are not too far behind from last month. With all this in mind, please remember to always protect yourself, your home, and your vehicle.

DO NOT GIVE THE CRIMINAL THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE YOU A VICTIM!

You and your community continue to call us and we are so happy that more and more of you are being encouraged by your neighbors to better your home and the area you live in. There have been numerous calls to police regarding a crime in progress that end up with the suspect being apprehended and the victim getting their property back. Continue to do everything you do. We are succeeding in the fight against crime because of you and everyone's hard work.

MESSAGE FROM MARYANNE



Maryanne Hunsberger

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH REALLY WORKS!

By participating in a program where we look out for each other, you can make a real difference in attacking crime in your community through your Neighborhood Watch involvement. Everyone in the neighborhood can participate, no matter his or her age, occupation, race or religion.

The key to success in any Neighborhood Watch program is the participants' willingness to "look out for each other" and to observe and recognize what is suspicious, then immediately report it.

2005 HURRICANE AWARENESS CITY OF TAMPA LIMIT IMPORTANT NUMBERS

American Red Cross.....	348-4820
Clean City Division (N.E.A.T.)	931-2140
Code Enforcement	274-5545
County Hurricane Information	(Emergency 272-6900)
	(Pre/Post non-emergency 272-5900)
Crisis Center	211
McKay Bay Transfer Station/Scale House	242-5320
Neighborhood & Community Relations	274-7835
Parks & Recreation.....	274-8615
Police Department	231-6130
Public Works.....	274-8721
Solid Waste Department	348-1111
Stormwater.....	622-1901
TECO.....	223-0800

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On Duty with the *Tampa Police Department*



*is now available anytime
at your local library!*



You can now watch Police Chief Steve Hogue as he hosts "On Duty with Tampa the Police Department" anytime that fits your schedule! You can check out a DVD from any Hillsborough County library. The public safety program showcases special operations in Tampa's neighborhoods. The 15-minute segment will take you on patrol with the men and women of TPD.

Tune in:
Sundays at 8 p.m.
Tuesdays at 5 p.m.
Thursdays at 1:30 p.m.



It also airs on CTTV
channel 15.

