

Top 8 Tips for Crime Prevention 2008 (#4 in a series)

Build a great neighbourhood

Preventing residential break-and-enters doesn't mean looking out for just your own home — it covers your whole neighbourhood. Burglars don't like watchful neighbours who are collectively interested in the security of their community. The first step that neighbours can take is to work together. Here's how to start the process.

#1: Get to know each other

Residents should become familiar with the routines in their neighbourhoods and know their neighbours on sight. Even better, they can help build community spirit by hosting community- or street-wide block parties or yard sales. They should also be aware of strangers and know what to do if something or someone looks suspicious.

#2: Talk to each other

Good neighbours look out for each other and let others know when they will be away. Leave keys and emergency phone numbers with a trusted neighbour, friend or relative.

#3: Keep up appearances

A well-kept community is less attractive to criminals and vandals. Appearance often reflects residents' concerns, pride and willingness to work together to take care of their interests.

#4: Get involved in crime prevention

Block Watch is a program that brings concerned citizens and police together to reduce crime in neighbourhoods. For more information call (403) 509-2565 or visit calgaryblockwatch.com.

#5: Look out for the children

The Calgary Block Parent Association provides personal safety information and immediate assistance through a community safety network. Contact them at (403) 269-6460 or calgaryblockparent.ca.

#6: Register for PACT

Register for the free PACT (Police and Community Telephone) system by calling (403) 645-2990 or visiting calgarypolice.ca. PACT is a police-operated computer system that sends out recorded messages about criminal activity, police concerns and information affecting your community.

#7: Learn to be suspicious

Report the following to the Calgary Police Service:

- Unusual noises, such as someone yelling for help.
- Vehicles moving slowly and randomly through the neighbourhood.
- A stranger running or walking randomly through the neighbourhood.
- A stranger sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child.
- Furniture being removed from homes when the owners are on vacation or at work.

- Abandoned cars.
- A stranger looking into homes or parked cars.
- Unusual activities of pets, such as the repeated barking of a dog that is normally quiet.
- Someone going door to door soliciting who refuses to provide proper identification.
- If you see homes with open doors, front doors with keys left in the locks, or a neighbour's car with the trunk left open, give them a quick call, to let them know.

#8: Don't hesitate to call

Many people believe that the police do not want to be called if the caller is merely suspicious. This isn't true: When in doubt — call the police. Use the general police line at 266-1234 for suspicious activities; use 911 for crimes in progress.

If you have community concerns, you can also call your Community Liaison Officer — every district of the city has several of these officers who are a key point of contact for community policing initiatives and problem solving. Check calgarypolice.ca for a district map and phone numbers — they'll put you through to the CLO who looks after your community.

Public Contact Information:

General Police Line: 266-1234

Public Email Contact:

cps@calgarypolice.ca