



Repeat Burglaries

Homes Businesses

Did you know that victims of residential burglaries are 12 times more likely to be re-burglarized in the next month, according to a Canadian study? This is part of a world-wide trend known as “repeat victimization” or “revictimization” for short.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Victimization is a good predictor of future victimization and “repeats” happen quickly; half the time within seven days of the first occurrence.

HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?

Normally criminals use the environment to help select the targets they choose. They do this by looking for good and bad environmental cues. Good cues, from the criminal’s perspective, include papers and flyers that aren’t picked up, overgrown landscaping and open garages, to name a few. Bad cues to a criminal include, unobstructed sightlines with witness potential, an active Neighbourhood Watch and signs that the residence is occupied, even when it’s not. Examples of the latter include the use of interior lights and properly maintained homes.

In the case of burglars who have committed a previous break-in, the selection process changes. Now, the burglar weighs the same environmental factors with the knowledge that was gained from the previous break-in. This includes the ease with which entry occurred, the amount of valuables left behind, and the amount of valuables likely to be replaced. In the event that significant steps are not taken to change the environment, the scenario may repeat.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT A SECOND ATTACK?

Burglars, like most people, tend to travel familiar routes, whether they’re engaged in criminal activity or not. Knowing this, it is easy to influence the burglar’s decision by altering those factors that attracted him to your property in the first place. In some cases this will be obvious, such as pruning or removing large overgrown shrubs that provide cover near entry points (see Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Fact Sheet). In other cases it will not be so obvious, and may require risk management techniques, such as marking your valuable property (see Operation Identification and Operation Provident Fact Sheet) or improving your forced entry resistance (see Home Security 1 Fact Sheet).

Regardless of which crime prevention techniques are required, it is important to objectively look at your property, and limit the crime opportunities around your home or business. A property that fails to attract the attention of a burglar is a property that won’t be entered.

If you require professional, unbiased advice, contact your nearest:

- Community Police Station;
- local Crime Prevention Ass’n.; or
- Belleville Police Service

PREVENTING REPEAT BURGLARIES

DO

- Stand back and critically look at your property, as if you were the offender.
- Address the obvious factors that may have contributed to this crime.
- Include positive changes to your environment that offenders will take notice.
- Advise your neighbours of the break-in and ask for their assistance in watching your property during the next few months. Also, pay extra attention to their homes.
- Make sure your home looks occupied, even when it’s not.

DON’T

- Just repair/replace the damaged area.
- Be complacent once the insurance has settled.
- Conspicuously dispose of replacement packaging in the garbage.
- Believe that your crime prevention efforts will be in vain.