



# Winter 2010



## Hampton Police Division NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER

Report all suspicious persons and activities to your Law Enforcement Agency



### **Chief's Message**

Communication, communication, communication.....the key to survival especially in this ever changing technology era. Just as we began to learn in the 1990's of the many resources available to us on the Internet, email and instant messaging came along soon thereafter and opened more doors to help us connect with friends, family and businesses. Since the turn of the century, the smart phones have come along with the "texting" and "web" capabilities that have further begun to reinvent the way we communicate. And, now we have the ever popular social networking web sites which offer us the ability to not only chat with friends and family members, but we are now able to expand our communication with the use of blogs, photos and videos. But it hasn't stopped there. Businesses have even jumped on the band-wagon and are now using such networking sites as Facebook and Twitter to promote their products and services.

But, technology continues to be ever changing. In keeping with the times, the Hampton Police Division has recently expanded its "Project Stay Informed" program to include the use of the *Citizen Observer Community Notification System*. This nationwide web-based notification system allows users to sign up, free of charge, and link to their nearest law enforcement agency, to stay informed on the most up-to-date happenings in their neighborhoods. With the use of this system, citizens are able to receive secure, near real-time neighborhood-specific and city-wide alerts. All alerts are delivered via email, cell phone text messaging or by logging onto the Citizen Observer website directly ([www.citizenobserver.com](http://www.citizenobserver.com)).

But it doesn't stop there. Because our agency strongly believes that our citizens can also be our eyes and ears, we rely on the community's involvement to help us solve cases and it therefore remains imperative that we hear from you, the public. As such, we believe that the Citizen Observer Community Notification System will empower our citizens with the capability of *anonymously* communicating directly with the police division. Should you or someone you know have information on a fugitive, missing person or information regarding any of our unsolved cases, you will have the ability, using the Citizen Observer system, to provide us with such information directly without having the fear of being identified.

Consequently, the Hampton Police Division is very excited about this new technology. We therefore encourage our residents to register at the Citizen Observer website to stay informed on the latest happenings throughout the City. With citizen involvement, we can build a stronger community together and help to keep Hampton a safe place to live, work and play!

Sincerely,  
C.R. Jordan, Jr.  
Chief of Police



## Home Burglary Prevention Tips

### Protect your home from burglary

Most people only think about making their home secure after a burglary has occurred. According to crime reports compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation one out of every six homes will be burglarized this year. It has been stated that burglars only need 60 seconds to break into most homes. FBI statistics claim that only one out of every four burglaries involve forced entry. Most burglars enter homes through an open or unlocked window or door. By making it more difficult for intruders to get into your residence, you can greatly reduce your chances of being burglarized. The more a burglar has to work to get into your home, the less chance you have of becoming his victim.

To determine how secure your home is, think like a burglar. From the outside of your home, consider how difficult it would be to break in. If you locked yourself out, could you easily break in or climb in through an unlocked window? If you answered yes, then a burglar could answer yes also. Carefully observe any items or objects in your yard that could offer assistance to a would-be thief. Are there any items lying around your home that could actually entice a burglar? A ladder propped up beside your garage could offer easy access to a second floor window. A tool such as a screwdriver or hammer left outside could be used to break a window or pry open a window or door. A privacy fence or large trees and shrubs could provide cover for a burglar while he attempts to break in.

Here are a few other things to consider on the outside of your home.

#### Exterior Doors

Take a good look at your exterior doors. Do they appear solid and sturdy? Your exterior doors should be constructed of solid wood or metal for the most protection against break-ins. Try inserting a straight pin into the door, if it goes in without much effort, you have a hollow door that can easily be kicked in by burglars.

Make sure that all doors are kept locked at all times. In addition to your door knob or key lock, you should have a high quality dead bolt lock installed on all entry way doors. Deadbolts can withstand the prying and pounding those regular key locks can't.

If you have glass windows on your doors or next to your doors, consider installing a double cylinder deadbolt. This type of deadbolt requires a key to open it from the outside and the inside.

Not all burglaries occur in an unoccupied house, you may also consider a peephole so you can see who is at your door before you open it.

#### Windows

Windows should be closed and locked anytime that you are not in your home or anytime at night. Many burglars, and worse, have easily entered homes through open windows while the home's occupants sleep.

Consider installing window locks on all windows to help prevent them from being broken into. If you have double - hung windows, ones that slide up and down, you can utilize window pinning or track fillers to add inexpensive security.

Window pinning is done by inserting a pin or nail above a window so it can't be opened Track fillers are items such as a wooden pole that is placed into the track of the window.

## Sliding Glass Doors

Sliding glass doors can be the easiest place for a burglar to gain entry into your home. Since these doors provide the easiest opportunities for thieves, special consideration and expense, if necessary, should be used to properly secure these doors. To improve the security on your sliding glass doors:

1. Have eyed locking devices that secure the doors to the frame or track installed by a professional locksmith.
2. Adjusting the door's track clearances so they can't be pushed or lifted out of their tracks.
3. Place a strong metal or wooden bar, such as a metal pipe or broomstick handle, inside the track to prevent the doors from being opened.
4. Install locking hinges that slide over the tracks to prevent the door from being forced open.

Some of the newer styles of sliding glass doors have built in locking systems. If your doors do not have these locks, you may want to consult with a professional about having them replaced with the more secure models.

## Outdoor Lighting

Lighting, both inside and outside of your home, is one of the best and most economical deterrents for burglars. Indoor lighting gives the impression that a home is occupied while outdoor lighting diminishes places to hide.

You should have lights placed near porches, outside of all doorways, garage doors and all other points of entry. Keep any entryways well lit. Statistics have shown that a burglar is less likely to attempt to enter a well-lit residence.

Floodlights are good choices for providing bright light. Motion detecting lights are also good choices for home security. These lights turn on automatically whenever motion is detected nearby. The sudden flash of bright lights can be very effective in scaring away a would-be burglar.

For added security, place some lights out of reach so that the bulbs can't be removed or easily broken. Install flood lights or motion lights on each corner of your house's roof for added light and security. Aim the lights away from the house so that your yard is illuminated, allowing you to see anyone that approaches.

## Burglar Alarms

Burglar Alarm Systems may offer an advantage to you if you live in an isolated area or if you that spend extended periods of time away from your home. Also, if you live in a high crime area or keep valuable items in your home, you may want to consider installing a security system.

There are a variety of burglar alarms and security systems available. To determine which level of security best suits your need; compare the services of several companies. If you have an alarm system installed in your home make sure all household members are properly trained at using it. A top notch security system is worthless if it isn't used...or if it is used improperly.

## Security When You're Away From Home

Burglars have an opportune time to burglarize your house while you are away from home on business or vacation. Make sure your home looks as if someone is living in it at all times. If possible, ask a trusted friend, neighbor or family member to stay in your home while you are away. Otherwise, arrange for them to visit your house each day to pick up the mail, any newspapers, deliveries, and turn on lights.

If you will be away for a long period of time, consider using light timers that will automatically turn lights off and on at specific times. Have the post office and the newspapers stop your deliveries while you are away. A pile of old newspapers in the driveway are a sure sign that no one is home.

No method is 100 percent effective against burglaries, but with the steps described above, you can decrease your chances of being the next burglary victim.



## Why should I call the police?



Calling the police is always a good idea when you want to get involved in crime prevention and/or take ownership of your community. These are just a few ideas the Hampton Police Division has created to help you better understand when you should call the police:

- Anytime you feel something is suspicious or someone is acting suspicious by casing the area on foot or in a vehicle.
- You are experiencing an unwanted guest or someone trespassing on your property.
- You experience someone soliciting door to door (DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR IF YOU DO NOT KNOW THEM).
- Unknown vehicles are parked in front of your house or on your property for days or even weeks.
- The sound of breaking glass or gunshots
- Anytime you suspect something is wrong, suspicious, dangerous, or you feel a criminal offense has occurred, is occurring, or is about to occur.
- **YOU CAN CALL ANONYMOUSLY!!**
  - Tell the dispatcher you do not want to be known!!
  - Ask the dispatcher if the officer can call you if needed!!

If you do decide to call the police remember if it is an emergency please dial **911**. If it is not an emergency you can contact the police at 727-6111.

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## Safe Driving Tips

Do you know the top six causes of automobile accidents in the United States? Here are the top six causes of automobile accidents according to the National Highway Transportation Association:



1. Driver Distraction
2. Driver Fatigue
3. Drunk Driving
4. Speeding
5. Aggressive Driving
6. Weather



Here are some suggestions to help make your next driving experience safer:

### Always—

- Plan your trips ahead of time. Decide what time to leave and which roads to take. Try to avoid heavy traffic, poor weather and high-speed areas.
- Wear your safety belt—and wear it correctly. (It should go over your shoulder and across your lap.)
- Drive at the speed limit. It's unsafe to drive too fast or too slow.
- Be alert! Pay attention to traffic at all times.
- Keep enough distance between you and the car in front of you.
- Be extra careful at intersections. Use your turn signals and remember to look around you for people and other cars.
- Check your blind spot when changing lanes or backing up.
- Be extra careful at train tracks. Remember to look both ways for trains.

### Never—

- Never drink and drive.
- Never drive when you feel angry or tired. If you start to feel tired, stop your car somewhere safe. Take a break until you feel more alert.
- Never eat, drink or use a cell phone while driving

## Trying to keep your car warm may leave you in the cold!

**Always lock your vehicle when unattended and never leave valuable items inside vehicle.**

**D**uring winter months, several vehicles are stolen in the early morning as a result of owners leaving their vehicles running, unattended, in order to warm them up. Car thieves take advantage of residents who leave their cars running to keep them warm.



**T**hieves can easily detect a running vehicle in colder weather due to the exhaust.

**E**ven if you lock the car, it only takes a thief seconds to break a window or jimmy a door lock. **It is against City ordinance to leave your vehicle unattended with keys in the ignition and can result in a fine.** Some insurance companies may even hold you accountable for the theft and cause you a financial burden. Trying to keep your car warm may leave you in the cold! Please help us to decrease car thefts as cooler weather approaches.



**F**or years opportunist thieves have stolen cars from outside schools, shops, and gas stations. Now thieves are hanging around driveways or where there is on-street parking and convenience stores waiting for motorists to leave their engines running while they warm their car. When the owner goes back into the house to get warm or grab a quick cup of coffee, the thief drives away without being noticed.

**D**on't assume that the car is okay because there is someone further down the road scraping ice from a windshield, as most people are hidden by big coats and hats. It could be an opportunist thief, rather than your neighbor warming their car. Do not give the criminal an opportunity to victimize you.

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**This gives us something to think about with all of our new electronic technology:**

### **GPS TIP**

Someone had their car broken into while they were at a football game. Their car was parked on the green which was adjacent to the football stadium and specially allotted to football fans. Things stolen from the car included a garage door remote control, some money and a GPS which had been mounted on the dashboard.

When the victims got home, they found that their house had been ransacked and just about everything worth anything had been stolen.

The thieves had used the GPS to guide them to the house. They then used the garage remote control to open the garage door and gain entry to the house. The thieves knew the owners were at the football game, they knew what time the game was scheduled to finish and so they knew how much time they had to clean out the house. It would appear that they had brought a truck to empty the house of its contents.

Something to consider if you have a GPS – **don't put your home address in it.** Put a nearby address (like a store or gas station) so you can still find your way home if you need to, but no one else would know where you live if your GPS were stolen . . .

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## **MOBILE PHONE TIP:**

Something to think about . . .

This lady has now changed her habit of how she lists her names on her mobile phone after her handbag was stolen. Her handbag, which contained her cell phone, credit card, wallet, etc., was stolen.

Twenty minutes later when she called her hubby from a pay phone telling him what had happened, hubby says “I received your text asking about our pin number and I’ve replied a little while ago”.

When they rushed down to the bank, the bank staff told them all the money was already withdrawn. The thief had actually used the stolen cell phone to text “hubby” in the contact list and got hold of the pin number. Within 20 minutes the thief had withdrawn all the money from their bank account.

## **MORAL OF THE LESSON:**

Do not disclose the relationship between you and the people in your contact list.

Avoid using names like Home, Honey, Hubby, Sweetheart, Dad, Mom, etc. . . .

And very importantly, when sensitive info is being asked through texts, **CONFIRM** by calling back.

Also, when you’re being texted by friends or family to meet them somewhere, be sure to call back to confirm that the message came from them. If you don’t reach them, be very careful about going places to meet “family and friends” who text you.

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## **SCHEME WARNING . . . !!!**

On Friday night they parked in a public parking area. As they drove away he noticed a sticker on the rear window of the car. When he took it off after they got home, it was a receipt for gas. Luckily his friend had told him not to stop as it could be someone waiting for them to get out of the car. Then this email was received:

**“WARNING FROM POLICE . . . BEWARE OF PAPER ON THE BACK WINDOW OF YOUR VEHICLE – NEW WAY TO DO CARJACKING (NOT A JOKE)”**

Heads up everyone! . . . Husbands, wives, kids, everyone!!! Please, keep this circulating . . . You walk across the parking lot, unlock your car and get inside. You start the engine and shift into reverse. When you look into the rearview mirror to back out of your parking space, you notice a piece of paper stuck to the middle of the rear window. So, you shift into park, unlock your doors, and jump out of your car to remove that paper (or whatever it is) that is obstructing your view. When you reach the back of your car that is when the carjackers appear out of nowhere, jump into your car and take off. They practically mow you down as they speed off in your car. And guess what, ladies? I bet your purse is still in the car. So now the carjacker has your car, your home address, your money, and your keys. Your home and your whole identity are now compromised.

## **BEWARE OF THIS NEW SCHEME THAT IS NOW BEING USED**

If you see a piece of paper stuck to your back window, just drive away. Remove the paper later. I hope you will forward this to friends and family. A purse contains all kinds of personal information and identification documents, and you certainly do NOT want this to fall into the wrong hands.

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**PERSONAL SAFETY TIP / WORTHWHILE**

Wow! Didn't know I already had a home alarm system in my driveway!

**PUT YOUR CAR KEYS BESIDE YOUR BED AT NIGHT**

Tell your spouse, your children, your neighbors, your parents, and the check-out girl at the market, everyone you run across.

Put your car keys beside your bed at night. If you hear noises outside your home or someone trying to get in your house, just press the panic button for your car. The alarm will be set off, and the horn will continue to sound until either you turn it off or the car battery dies.

This tip came from a Neighborhood Watch coordinator. Next time you come home for the night and you start to put your keys away, think of this:

Your car alarm is a security alarm system that you already have and requires no installation. Test it. It will go off from most everywhere inside your house and will keep honking until your battery runs down or until you reset it with the button on the key fob chain. It works if you park in your driveway or garage. If your car alarm goes off when someone is trying to break in your house, odds are the burglar-rapist won't stick around. After a few seconds all the neighbors will be looking out their windows to see who is out there and sure enough the criminal won't like that. And remember to carry your keys while walking to your car in a parking lot. The alarm can work the same way there. This is something that should really be shared with everyone. Maybe it could save a life or a sexual abuse crime. This could also be helpful for any emergency, such as a heart attack, where you can't reach a phone. One lady also suggested that her Dad carry his car keys with him in case he falls outside and she doesn't hear him. He can activate the car alarm and then she'll know there's a problem.

Please pass this on even if you've read it before . . . it's just a reminder!

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If additional copies of this newsletter are needed, please visit our web page at [www.hampton.va.us/police](http://www.hampton.va.us/police), and click on community, then go to neighborhood watch and then to newsletter.

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On behalf of the entire Hampton Police Division's Family, we thank you for all of your support and all that you do.

**HAVE A SAFE AND WONDERFUL WINTER!!!!**

