

Protect Yourself Against Crime

Theft from Vehicles

Theft from vehicles is the most common crime in Ridgely's Delight. August and September have traditionally been big months for car break-ins in Ridgely's as unsuspecting new students move in and leave their belongings in plain view to anyone who passes their car. Please be alert. Don't leave anything visible in your car, even if it's only a few pennies in the ashtray or a CD or candy bar on the floor, because somebody will probably break in and steal it. Take a few moments to clean out your car. It could save you a lot of time and money in replacing your windshield and belongings. If you see someone suspicious hanging around cars, get a description and call 911.

Burglary

Burglary is one of the more preventable crimes. By taking a few precautions, you can dramatically reduce your risk. Most burglars do not give a great amount of thought to planning the job, but understanding how they choose a target can go a long way in reducing the chance of becoming a victim. Most burglars look for and unoccupied home with easy access, low visibility and something worth stealing.

How to Prevent Break-ins

1. Fool them by making your home look occupied at all times. Most burglaries happen during the day because homes tend to be vacant then.

- Use automatic timers on lights when away from home.
- Place radios on automatic timers.
- Lower the sound of your telephone ringer and answering machine.
- Never leave notes on your door that can tip off burglars.

2. Eliminate hiding places. Most burglars in this neighborhood gain entry through the rear of the house. Most homes have a high rear fence that can hide a burglar.

- Install motion detector lights to illuminate rear door and windows. Remove bushes and shrubs near doors and under windows.

3. Use common sense and caution. We live in a community with a lot of foot traffic. Think safety, and make it routine.

- Call 911 if you see anything suspicious. (Do not call 311 if you want police response.)
- Know your neighbors.
- Always lock all doors and windows, even when you step out for just a minute.
- Use a peephole to identify visitors.
- Do not tell strangers your daily routines.

- Don't hide a spare key outside the house. Give one to a trusted neighbor.
- Don't leave anything of value in view of a window.
- Don't put out the box from your computer or TV for recycling. (Cut it up and put it in a trash bag.)

4. Make your home a harder target. Most burglars will spend no more than 4-5 minutes trying to break into a residence. With a few simple steps, residents can make their homes harder for a burglar to enter.

- When moving into a new residence, have the locks changed. Consult a good locksmith to make sure you have the correct types of locks on doors and windows.
- Secure exterior doors with good quality deadbolt locks.
- Secure windows by installing additional locks, and impact-resistant glass within 42 inches of a door lock.
- Secure patio doors with a pin-type lock, a key lock or a steel rod inserted into the door channel.

5. Make your house look the same whether you are home or away.

- Tell a trusted neighbor that you will be gone for a few days. Ask him or her to pick up mail, newspapers and pizza flyers.
- If you are away from home on garbage pickup day, ask a neighbor to bring your garbage cans back in. Burglars sometimes check for empty cans as a sign that residents are not home, so don't leave them an invitation. This is a particular problem on Portland Street and Melvin Drive.
- Have a plan in place to have the grass mowed or the snow shoveled.

6. Inventory and mark your belongings. Use an engraving pen to mark your belongings, so they can be traced and returned, if stolen. Never mark them with your social security number.

7. Be a good neighbor. The easiest and most enjoyable way to prevent crime is to know your neighbors. Who belongs in the community and who does not?

- Attend community meetings and events. Baltimore City Police and University police make periodic presentations on crime issues.
- Join the Citizens on Patrol (COP). Get some exercise, walk your dog, and help fight crime.
- Join the neighborhood Watch Program. Applications are available at community meetings and from the Baltimore City Police.
- Call 911 if you see anything suspicious. Don't call 311 if you want police response.