

ALTADENA SHERIFF'S STATION COMMUNITY MEETING INFORMATION

On October 7th, Sheriff's Deputies from the Altadena Sheriff's Station held a community meeting at Daniel Webster School. The focus of the meeting was on an increase in burglaries and thefts that have occurred this year. The following is a summary of what was discussed in that meeting.

- There are several criminal street gangs based in the Altadena-Pasadena area. It is believed that many of the burglaries are being committed by members of local Blood street gangs, specifically the Pasadena Denver Lane (PDL), Altadena Denver Lane (ADL), and Projek Gangster (PJG) street gangs. This belief is based on the fact that members of these gangs have been arrested repeatedly this year for residential burglaries and thefts from vehicles.
- Generally speaking the residential burglaries have been occurring, during daytime hours, on weekdays (when many people are at work) and the thefts from vehicles have been taking place at night, when cars are parked unattended outside while their owners are asleep.
- Many of the residential burglars are knocking on doors to ascertain if anyone is at home prior to attempting to break into the house. Typically, these criminals will offer some sort of excuse for knocking on the door if someone answers. They may tell you they are looking for someone, or looking for a lost pet, or that their car broke down, or that they are selling magazines, etc. There is virtually no end to the different excuses they might offer. If no one answers, they will break into the house, usually by going into the back yard and forcing open a door or window. If someone knocks on your door, it is best to answer them without opening the door. In most cases this will prevent a break in.
- The burglars usually have a getaway car parked nearby, often with a driver waiting inside.
- The burglars often carry backpacks or something similar to carry stolen property.
- There have also been several cases where suspects have posed as workers when committing burglaries. An example: A man posing as a tree trimmer offered to give a local resident an estimate for trimming several large trees in the back yard. He accompanied the victim into the back yard, meanwhile communicating in Spanish with his accomplices via a handheld radio. As the victim stood in the back yard with the "tree trimmer", the accomplices ransacked and stole items from the victim's home.
- The Sheriff's Department strongly encourages people to call when they see something they feel is suspicious. People should remember that they do not need proof that someone is committing a crime before they call. Figuring out whether they are involved in criminal activity is the Sheriff's Department's job. If something seems suspicious or out of place, just call and let Sheriff's deputies respond to ascertain what is going on.

- When calling, please remember that, if you call 9-1-1 from a cell phone, you will not always be connected immediately with your local Sheriff's Station. 9-1-1 calls from cell phones are primarily answered by the California Highway Patrol. They ascertain what emergency services you need, who the local agency is, etc. before transferring your call. This results in an undesirable delay. If calling from a cell phone, it's best to have the number of your local Sheriff's Station programmed into the phone (for Altadena it's 626-798-1131) and use that number to call.
- Home security systems can act as a deterrent to would be burglars. The best systems are usually ones with loud audible alarms that will often scare away the thieves before they steal your property. If you cannot afford such a system, a sign or sticker that merely says you have such a system can also be a deterrent to the burglars.
- If you have a safe in your home, please bolt it into concrete or take similar measures to make sure the burglars cannot simply walk away with the safe. When burglars see a safe in a home, they usually figure that is where the good stuff is. The burglars typically do not work alone and therefore there may be two or three of them to work together in a hauling away your safe.
- Dogs can be a deterrent to burglars, but not always. We have seen cases recently where the burglars do not seem to care if you have a dog. If you do have a dog, please remember that it will not guarantee the safety of your home and lock your doors and windows.
- People are encouraged to get to know their neighbors. Neighbors who know each other well know each others routines and can more easily tell when something suspicious is happening at or around the neighbor's home. For example, if burglars back a moving van into your neighbor's driveway, you would hopefully know that your neighbor is not moving and something might be wrong with the situation. Also, neighbors who know each other well tend to look out for one another rather than simply deciding not to get involved.
- In almost every case where items have been stolen from vehicles, one of two things were true. Either the car was unlocked or there was something valuable in plain view inside the car. It is very rare for a thief to break into a locked vehicle just to see if there is something inside worth taking. Items most commonly stolen from cars include GPS navigation systems, iPods, cell phones, laptop computers, and purses.
- It is a good idea to close drapes, blinds, and other window coverings when you are not home. Leaving window coverings open affords the thief the opportunity to see what types of things you have in your home and also to get a better idea of whether or not someone is home before they break in.

- It is also a good idea to document valuable items in your home by photographing them and writing down serial numbers for items that have them. The Sheriff's Department frequently comes across suspected stolen property but cannot figure out who the rightful owner is. Providing serial numbers and photos can substantially increase your chances of getting the items back if they are ever stolen.
- Information can be shared with the Altadena Sheriff's Station via email. The email address is Altadena@lasd.org. Please remember that email may take several days to get to the right person. If the information is at all time sensitive, it is always best to call.
- The Sheriff's Department cannot emphasize enough how important your calls are. No one knows better who belongs in your neighborhood and who does not. The criminals need to know that, if they are going to come into your neighborhood, people are going to call.