

Safety Tips for Autumn

(Many thanks to Police Officer Brian Geer for these valuable tips)

It's that time of year again; time to put away the air conditioners, open up the windows and welcome the beautiful fall weather. With open windows, however, our homes become more accessible to burglars if we're not careful. Like most crimes, burglary is a crime of opportunity. If we eliminate the opportunity, we can eliminate some of the crime.

Here are a few helpful tips to ring in a safe and enjoyable fall:

- Never leave a door or window opened while you are not home.
- Keep windows and doors locked that are not in use.
- While out in the yard cleaning up leaves, or doing yard work, identify those areas of your home that are accessible by standing on any object, the top of a fence or lower roof. Be creative and imagine where someone may climb to gain entry to your home, block off all points of access by keeping everything locked.
- Consider purchasing surveillance equipment, or putting up additional lighting with timers for when you are not home, and when it gets dark.
- Take notice of overgrown shrubbery, and trim bushes as needed in areas around your home that provide cover for would-be burglars, such as those shrubs blocking front windows.

With the fall season comes shorter days, and longer nights. Remember these few tips when it comes to preventing other crimes of opportunity:

- Avoid walking alone at night. If you have to walk alone, plan out a route that you're comfortable with, even if it may be out of the way. Stay on well-lit streets, use routes that you know are widely traveled, and avoid shortcuts.
- When you walk, keep your head up, and pay attention to your surroundings.
- We recommend that you do not wear headphones while walking home from work or out exercising.
- Take note of where you park, and have your keys out and readily available prior to arriving at your vehicle.
- When exiting your vehicle be sure to put the windows up and lock the doors.
- Do not leave valuables in your vehicle. If you need to store items in your vehicle for any reason place them out of view or in the trunk.
- Keep your electronics out of site in your vehicle, remove car chargers and GPS mounts from view, and clean suction cup marks from your windows and dashboards.

Talk to your local CAPS Officer for additional information on preventing crime.