



CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION • NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE SERVICE

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When Opportunity Knocks

Three elements are necessary for a crime to be committed: the **Desire**, the **Target** (a person, place, or object), and the **Opportunity**. If one of these elements is missing, a crime will not occur. All crimes are the result of the opportunity to commit it. Whether random or targeted, those who commit the crime will look for the opportunity to carry it out.



For random crimes, individuals don't have many ways of always avoiding those with criminal desire; however, we do have an ability to reduce opportunities that make the victim or target attractive. If a burglar sees an open window into a residence, he or she may take this opportunity to enter unlawfully. If the window is locked, the burglar may move on. Valuables left in plain sight inside a vehicle can motive a thief to seize them. If the articles are stored out of sight, that crime may not be committed (out of sight, out of mind). Being observed at a bank machine and then walking down a dark street may be enough opportunity to become a robbery victim. A ladder left in a yard provides an opportunity for a thief to climb into an upper storey window and vehicles with no obvious anti-theft device are more likely to be stolen.

Many of these crimes can be avoided with some simple measures. By thinking ahead and understanding that if you present an opportunity to someone who has the motivation to commit a crime, then the crime is likely to occur. One of the best ways to reduce opportunities for crime in apartment buildings is joining the **Crime Free Multi-Housing Program**. Through this program, your property is assessed for security; management learns about signs of illegal activity and how to select suitable residents; and residents are educated in how they can reduce opportunities for crime in their homes. Contact the Crime Free Program Coordinator, New Westminster Police at 604-529-2494 for more information.

A research paper commissioned by the Policing and Reducing Crime Unit, London, England entitled "Opportunity Makes the Thief – Practical Theory for Crime Prevention" highlights ten principles on how Opportunity plays a role in crimes and crime prevention.

- 1. Opportunities play a role in causing all crime, not just common property crime** – For example, studies of bars and clubs show how their design and management play an important role in generating violence or preventing it.
- 2. Crime opportunities are highly specific** – For example, the theft of cars for joyriding has a different pattern for opportunity than theft for car parts. Crime opportunity theory helps sort out these differences so responses can be appropriately tailored.
- 3. Crime opportunities are concentrated in time and space** – Dramatic differences are found from one address to another, even in a high crime area. Crime shifts greatly by the hour and day of the week, reflecting the opportunities to carry it out.
- 4. Crime opportunities depend on everyday movements of activity** – Offenders and targets shift according to their routine activities (eg. work, school, leisure).

Continued next page

Reducing Opportunities for Auto Crime in Underground Parking Areas

ICBC provides a comprehensive guide on strategies to reduce auto crime in underground parking facilities. The guide compares the cost and effectiveness of various means of security and provides tips on assessing and target hardening access points into the area. Ultimately, the best defense is getting the involvement of all residents in protecting their home and possessions.

Steps that Property Management can do:

1. Keep detailed and accurate Incident Reports: By recording any incidents of auto crime on your property, you may be able to establish a pattern of when the crimes are occurring (day or night /days of the week) and areas of where the crimes are being committed.

2. Solve the Mystery: Tour the property and look for weak access points. This can be done with the assistance of the New Westminster Police Crime Free Coordinator.

3. Set Priorities, Action Plan and Budget: Through the Incident Reports and Property Security Assessment, a picture should emerge of where your auto crime opportunities are. If better target hardening is necessary, implement a budget that will put it in place. If education of the residents and how they can reduce auto theft crimes is necessary, arrange with the Crime Free Coordinator for resident meetings (Safety Socials) and written material.

Management can encourage residents to wait for the gate to close before driv-

ing away and consistently use anti-theft devices by offering positive reinforcement. Rewarding a \$5.00 gift card from a local coffee shop or free parking for one month to those who take care will promote goodwill among your residents and encourage others to participate.

Throughout the parking area, place signage available through ICBC such as 'Wait for the Gate' and post notices in elevators and laundry rooms reminding residents to look out and report suspicious activity. Produce a monthly newsletter to keep residents informed. These gestures will get your residents to work together and keep your property safer.

Copies of *Stop Auto Crime in Multi-Residential and Mixed-Use Buildings* is available online at <www.icbc.com/crime-fraud>.

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For example, burglars visit houses in the day when the occupants are out at work or school.

5. One crime produces the opportunities for another

– For example, a successful break-in may encourage the offender to return in the future or a youth who has his bike stolen may feel justified in taking someone else's as a replacement.

6. Some products offer more tempting crime opportunities

– Items that are easily carried, concealed, and re-sold or traded such as small electronic devices (iPods, laptops, etc) or DVD/CD's are attractive to burglars and robbers. (*Refer to Top Ten Stolen List on facing page*)

7. Social and technological changes produce new crime opportunities

– Products are most vulnerable in their 'growth' and 'mass marketing' stages, as demand for them is at its highest. Most products will reach a 'saturation' stage where many people have

them and they are then less likely to be stolen. (*Editor's note: this theory could also include how social and technological changes have opened new opportunities for fraud and identity theft.*)

8. Crime can be prevented by reducing opportunities

– If this were not true, no one would bother to lock their vehicles and homes, store money in safe places, and tell children to avoid strangers.

9. Reducing opportunities does not usually displace crime

– Wholesale displacement is very rare and many studies have found little, if no crime displacement.

10. Focused opportunity reduction can produce wider declines in crime

– Prevention measures in one area can lead to a reduction in another nearby, a 'diffusion of benefits'. This is because offenders might overestimate the reach of those measures.

Source: <www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/learningzone/scpprinciples.htm>

Reacting To Angry People

- Remain calm, keep voice steady, don't interrupt, and avoid saying something that may escalate the situation.
- Walk behind a desk or make more space between yourself and the angry person.
- Listen and acknowledge what the person has said. By repeating back their concern, you have shown you've heard them. Try phrases such as:
 - "I can see you are not happy about this."
 - "If I understand you correctly, you are concerned about _____." (try to use the exact words that the other person has said).
 - "In light of your concern, that would mean _____. Is that correct?" (ending with a question helps to diffuse the anger and implies that you are listening to the concern).
- If appropriate, ask the individual to leave. If the person refuses to leave and becomes increasingly agitated or threatening, remove yourself and phone 9-1-1.
- People who are intoxicated or irrational are unpredictable. Be prepared for a change in their behaviour at any moment.
- Establish a work place action plan to deal with unsafe situations such as:
 - Quick and easy access to telephones
 - Know the workplace exits
 - Define the areas where the public should not access



Want to Reduce Your Business License Fee? Join the Crime Free Program.

The City of New Westminster offers 10% reduction on annual business licenses to those properties that are fully certified.

Crime Free Workshop for Managers & Owners of Rental Property

January 23, 2008 – Abbotsford

March 13, 2008 – New Westminster

- Role of Police
- Identify Illegal Activity
- Applicant Screening Techniques
- Residential Tenancy Act
- Security Tips

Call 604-529-2494 to register.

Property Cop

PropertyCop.org is an innovative program that allows people to register their property on a website that is searchable by police in real time. Individuals can register as many items as they would like, listing just a first name, contact phone number, and serial number of any item. The free program is available throughout BC, 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and allows police officers the opportunity to verify whether or not items found may be stolen, and return that item to its owner. Property Cop is a nonprofit society, and is not a police database.



Top Ten Stolen List

Bicycles	Cameras
Cell Phones	Laptops
Jewelry	Stereo Equipment
Tools	Music Discs
Credit Cards	
Personal Music Players – (iPods, MP3 players)	

Source: <www.PropertyCop.org>



NW Fire Inspector Charles Calogiros talks to families about fire safety at London Square's annual Safety Social. Member of the Crime Free program since 2003.

Lock Bumping

What is it and is it a concern?

“Lock Bumping” is a technique in defeating common pin tumbler locks as found on most homes or businesses. The process is done by altering a key blank and using it in a specific manner to gain access to locks of the same type. While this technique has been around for many years, it has recently gained undue attention through media broadcasts and via the internet.



Should one be concerned of this potential breach of our most basic security?

While being aware of potential risks to security is always advised, the danger of having your locks bumped does not appear to be significant. To date, there have been no documented incidents involving lock bumping in New Westminster. This is because the technique is not as easy to carry out as is rumored. Most persons responsible for break-ins usually use methods that are more likely to produce quick and reliable results. Break-ins are far more likely to occur by forcing open a window, door or lock, or entering through an unlocked door or window. Reinforcing or target-hardening all vulnerable areas of your property is still advised. Remember that an open or unsecured door or window is a far more common occurrence for break-ins.

Here are some suggestions on how to protect your property from this risk:

- o Use a good quality high-security lock. Since a bump key must have the same blank profile as the lock it is made to open, restricted or registered key profiles are much safer from bumping, as the correct key blanks cannot legally be obtained without permission and/or registration with relevant locksmiths' associations.
- o Electronic and magnetic locks (not including their mechanical key backup), and locks using rotating disks are not vulnerable to this attack.
- o Locks that have spool or mushroom tumblers are designed to temporarily or momentarily jam the lock cylinder at the time of attack. These special tumblers will make lock bumping more difficult but not impossible.
- o Never underestimate the value of a good home security system. Home security systems have become more affordable and are a crime deterrent.
- o For advice, consult a reputable locksmith on the best types of locks available for your property and which offer protection against this risk.

Keep informed on what's happening in New Westminster.

Get valuable news releases and other crime prevention information emailed directly to you. Simply provide your email address by sending a message to vmetchie@nwpolice.org providing your name and property address.



The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is designed to help owners, managers, and residents of multi-unit rental property work with the police and other agencies to keep illegal and nuisance activity off such property. The result of this team effort is a safer, more habitable environment in which to live.

The program consists of three phases:

Phase One: Residential Managers attend an 8-hour workshop

Phase Two: Meet minimum requirements from a Security Assessment

Phase Three: Management hosts an annual Resident Safety Social.

Following completion of all three phases, the management will earn the privilege of posting signs on the property and using the CFMH Program logo in advertising.

For more information, contact:
Veronika Metchie
CFMH Program Coordinator
New Westminster Police Service
Tel: 604-529-2494
vmetchie@nwpolice.org

This newsletter is published by:
New Westminster Police Service
555 Columbia Street
New Westminster, BC V3L 1B2
Tel: 604-525-5411
www.nwpolice.org

