



# Community Crime Prevention Newsletter

Plymouth, MN

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## Burglary: Simple Ways to Secure your Home or Business

Plymouth is a safe community. However, because residents feel safe, they tend to let their guards down, creating the opportunity for crimes to occur. Burglary is a crime that can damage the sense of safety everyone should have in their own home. It is important to take basic safety precautions to help reduce the chance of becoming a victim of burglary.

Burglary is when someone enters a home (including an attached garage) or business for the purpose of committing a crime. Burglars do “break-into” buildings, but simply walking through an unlocked door to commit a crime is still a burglary! In fact, in 60% of burglaries, criminals gained entry through *open* or *unlocked* doors. The best thing you can do to prevent burglary is to use the locks you have!

To prevent forced entry, you need to take additional steps. In residential burglaries, criminals often gain entry by kicking in or prying open doors. Make sure you have solid doors secured with quality deadbolt locks. Heavy duty strike plates should be placed on the door frame to secure the bolt. Sliding doors can be secured by adding a track lock or bar and making sure the door can't be lifted out of its track. In business burglaries, criminals typically pry open doors or break glass doors or windows. Make sure locks are protected by latch guards and frames are reinforced. Be aware of weaknesses in shared walls. There are many other ways to secure homes and businesses. For prevention recommendations specific to your home or business, call 763-509-5147.

Even if you take all steps, there is no guarantee a burglary, or other crime will not happen. It is always important to be aware of suspicious activity. *Suspicious activity is anything that seems unusual to you*, such as people lurking around homes or businesses, hiding from passing traffic, or trying doors or windows. Call 911 immediately if you see suspicious activity happening. See something, say something!

### Burglary Prevention Tips: Home

- Keep your overhead garage door closed.
- Lock all exterior doors to your home, even when you are home. Many burglaries occur during the day!
- Keep windows closed and locked.
- Make your home look occupied when you are gone, especially when gone for long periods of time.
- Have a free premise security survey done for crime prevention tips specific to your home. Call 763-509-5147 for an appointment.

### Burglary Prevention Tips: Business

- Lock doors during non-business hours.
- Keep good key control.
- Make sure employees know how to use the alarm system to reduce false alarms.
- Have a free premise security survey done for crime prevention tips specific to your business. Call 763-509-5147 for an appointment.

### Pharmaceutical Waste: How to Dispose of Unwanted Medications

In the past, people got rid of unwanted or expired medications by flushing them down the toilet. However, this has now been found to cause water pollution and unintentional exposure to various chemicals in fish, aquatic wildlife, and humans. To safely dispose of medication, follow these steps:

1. Keep medication in its original container. Be sure to cover your name.
2. Discourage consumption. For solids, add a small amount of water. For liquids, add salt, charcoal or other nontoxic spice like mustard.
3. Tape the medication bottle shut and place in a non-transparent container. Do not put in food.
4. Throw away in the trash-not the recycling!

For more information: [www.toxics.uspg.gov/regional/emc](http://www.toxics.uspg.gov/regional/emc) or [www.epa.gov/ppcp](http://www.epa.gov/ppcp) or [www.pca.state.mn.us/hhw](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/hhw)

### Crime Free Multi-Housing Corner: Theft from Auto

Car break-ins can happen anywhere you park your car: at work, the gym, a restaurant, school-even at home. Rental community parking lots and garages can be attractive targets because they offer criminals access to many potential targets in a small area. You have the power to make a difference and reduce the chance of becoming a victim of a car break-in.

**🔔 Do not leave valuables in plain view in your car!**

If you must leave valuables in your car, lock them in the trunk before you reach your destination. Commonly stolen items from vehicles are GPS units, cell phones, purses, wallets, bags, laptops, tools, and electronics.

**🔔 Lock your car.**

**🔔 Report suspicious activity by calling 911.**

By removing valuables, locking your car, and saying something if you see it, you can help prevent theft!

### Especially for Business Protecting Laptop Computers

The loss of a business laptop computer can be greater than just the monetary cost of replacing the machine. Business laptops can contain personal and confidential information on customers, clients, employees, company information, documents, and much more. An increasing number of businesses are providing combination locks to their employees to secure laptops at work. This can help protect the laptop from criminals who enter the workplace and steal unattended laptops. However, many employees unknowingly defeat this simple security measure by leaving the combination set on the lock. If your company isn't currently locking laptop computers, consider providing locks to employees. And, if locks are being used, remind employees to stay vigilant and always "mix up" the combination after opening and closing the lock. Stay safe!

**Traveling to Canada?  
Don't forget your passport and know what  
you can, and can't, take over the border!  
Check [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) for more info!  
Drive safely!**

### Fraud Stop: ER Scam Targets Seniors

Criminals in Minnesota have hit a new low. There have been several reports in Minnesota from seniors who have received a call claiming someone was injured and they need to respond to the local hospital right away. Criminals then burglarize the house while the victims are away. Like many scams, this crime preys on the victim's sense of needing to react quickly in an emergency. However, this scam is simple to stop. If you get a call saying there is an emergency, don't just rush out the door. Take a minute to ask the caller a few questions. Who is the person calling you? Do they have a callback number? What number is caller id showing? If they claim to be from the hospital, what is their position? What is the room number? What is the name of the person in the hospital? Criminals often have a good cover story, but are unable to provide answers to follow-up questions. Protect yourself. Before responding to an emergency, make sure to verify the story.

### Featured Program: [Beyond the Yellow Ribbon of Plymouth](#)

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon (BTYR) is a program to support Servicemembers and their families during and after deployment. Because deployment creates unique challenges for military families, BTYR helps create awareness and helps connect and coordinate organizations, agencies, and companies to provide resources and support to Servicemembers and their families during and after deployment. Plymouth is working on becoming a Yellow Ribbon community. Plymouth is looking for both Servicemembers who live in Plymouth and individuals and organizations who are willing to provide support. This is a wonderful way to thank our Servicemembers. If you are a Servicemember or family of a Servicemember who lives in Plymouth, or you would like to help, contact Officer Randall Richardson at 763-509-5008 x 7846 or [rrichardson@plymouthmn.gov](mailto:rrichardson@plymouthmn.gov).



[Beyond the Yellow Ribbon: United to bring Servicemembers all the way home. \(www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org\)](http://www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org)

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Emergency: **9-1-1**      Non-emergency: **763-525-6210**      CrimeStoppers: **800-222-TIPS**

If you have any comments about this newsletter, please contact Officer Angela Haseman at the Plymouth Police Department, 3400 Plymouth Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55447, 763-509-5147 or at [ahaseman@plymouthmn.gov](mailto:ahaseman@plymouthmn.gov). Thank you!