

## How to Prevent Residential and Auto Burglary

On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019, three members of the Glenhurst Community attended a presentation by the Oklahoma Police Department, Southwest Division, on *How to Prevent Residential and Auto Burglary*. The event was held at the Canadian Valley Baptist Church in Yukon, OK. MSgt Michael Loruse of Southwest Division was the primary speaker and MSgt Robert Skalla represented our Hefner Division.

A few of the notable quotes prior to the presentation were:

***“Safety is everyone’s responsibility”,***

***“Community helps to reduce crime”, and***

***“Sometimes you do it all right and a burglary can still happen.”***

The opening slides defined a few key terms for first and second degree burglary, both felonies:

**First degree burglary** consists of breaking and entering into a dwelling (a house or structure normally occupied by a person) while a person is inside, with the intent to commit a crime once inside. (Maximum penalty is 20 years)

**Second degree burglary** is defined as breaking and entering into any building or any part of a building, room, booth, tent, railroad car, automobile, truck, trailer, vessel or other structure or erection, in which any property is kept, or any person who breaks into or forcibly opens, any coin operated or vending machine. (Maximum penalty is 7 years)

Most of the presentation material was in a bullet format. I tried to capture as much of the information as possible. There are some variations from the original content:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Burglary “Thrill Crime”
  - Most often occur at nighttime
  - Burglar is intentionally entering while the house is occupied
  - Burglar is sometimes armed
  - Burglar may leave evidence of crime for excitement
  - This type is normally rare
- 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Burglary Home Invasion
  - More violent entry
  - Residents may be assaulted and bound
  - Most often occur at nighttime
  - Burglar knocks on the door with only one person visible.
  - After the door is opened, 3 – 4 people rush in

- 2nd Degree Burglary
  - Occasionally at nighttime
  - Frequently while victims are away or on vacation
  - Normally one or two burglars
  - Burglar is normally not armed
  - Burglar is careful to ensure no one is at home (scanning house, knocking on door, etc.)
  - Most entries are at the back or side of house through a door or window
  - Exit is through the front of the house
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Burglary Statistics
  - Most violated rooms
    - Bedroom
    - Living Room
  - Least violated rooms
    - Kitchen
    - Laundry Room
  - Property most taken
    - Electronics
    - Jewelry
    - Guns
    - Money
- Auto Burglary
  - At night in housing communities
  - During the day in shopping areas or work environments
  - Burglar searches for unlocked vehicles
  - Break and enter is when high valuable items are in sight
  - Previously, the trend has been the burglar lived near the victim
  - New trend is the burglars are traveling further to hunt for targets – especially in upscale neighborhoods (like ours)
- Common items stolen from **Unlocked** Autos
  - Electronics / Computers
  - Wallets
  - Purses
  - Medication
  - Store Purchases
  - Guns
- Burglar Profiles
  - Organized
    - Premeditated
    - Carries tools
    - Scans area to establish routine
  - Disorganized

- Spontaneous / Opportunistic
  - Items in open view or available
- Prevention Awareness
  - Be aware of your surroundings away from home
  - Burglars follow people home from banks, stores, and shopping centers
  - Notice who may be watching you and others around you (does someone look out of place?)
  - If you get that creepy feeling something just isn't right – dogs barking, sound of fence gates, call 911.
  - Report suspicious or unusual persons, vehicle or incidents to 911 (before it is an emergency)
- Home Prevention
  - Be cognizant of your home and habits
  - Scan your house and surroundings each time you leave and return home
  - Do you send a message to potential burglars that you are not home?
  - Do you ALWAYS open the window shades when you are home and close them when you are away?
  - Use of lights is one of the greatest deterrents. LED lights provide natural colors and improved views.
  - Check the screens in your windows at least once a month to make sure they have not been tampered with
  - Call 911 on harassing or threatening phone calls
  - Keep an eye out for your neighbors – let them know their garage door is open
  - Does your house have
    - Open perimeter to prevent hiding places
    - Bushes neatly trimmed
    - 8' canopy on trees in front of house to prevent blocking view of house from the street
    - Plants such as cactus and rose bushes that are natural deterrents around windows
  - Deceive/deter the burglar
    - Open the blinds
    - Leave TV turned on
    - Home alarms / Even the home alarm signs are a deterrent
    - Door/home cameras
    - Make it seem that you are home
    - If someone knocks at your door in the middle of the night – Don't answer the door. Instead, tell them to wait there while you call 911.
    - Special note for single females living at home or apartment – put some men's clothing or shoes in your closet
- Social Media
  - NextDoor and Facebook are not police reporting tools.

- Don't tell EVERYONE that your house will be empty for a week while you are on vacation—wait until you get back to post those pictures.

There is also an accompanying handout for a “Home Security Checklist” that I will scan in and have posted to the Glenhurst Security web page.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,  
Steve O. Smith  
Glenhurst Neighborhood Patrol