

Deter Home Burglars

The e-mail below was received from our Universal City Police Department. It provides some helpful hints to keep your home safe. Another useful tip I just received concerns fictitious utility workers. They will sometimes wear fake shirts with emblems and say they need to get into your house. Real utility workers should also have a photo ID. If you did not request the visit, an even better precaution is to call the utility company. They can verify if they sent someone and identify who it is. Please pass this info on to all your neighbors.

----- Original Message -----

Sent: Monday, July 09, 2012 9:22 AM

Subject: Fw: Ideas for keeping your home safe

As you know, my husband works for the Alamo Heights Police Department and they recently had some residential burglaries and the offender was actually caught by Windcrest PD. I know what you're thinking – what does this have to do with Universal City? The reason I wanted to pass this on, is the offender was interviewed by my husband and another Alamo Heights Detective and he (the offender) told them what he looks for and how he “picks” the houses he wants to break into. I'm hoping this info may help our citizens stay safe or look less appealing to a burglar.

First, most folks know not to leave large cardboard boxes out by the trash that show what they just purchased – like a big flat screen TV for example – that's just a big invitation for a burglary to break into the house since he knows what will be inside. Same with new computers, lawn equipment, etc. It's best, if possible, to tear up these boxes at least until they are small enough to put in a trash can – just so the bad guys don't know what house has a new TV!

Next, a common way a burglar will pick a home – especially in older communities like Alamo Heights and even here in Universal City – is they will ring the door bell or knock incessantly on the door. Sometimes folks don't want to answer the door or do not recognize the person so they just don't answer – this is not always the best idea. The burglars will knock on a door and if no one answers they assume no one is home and many times they will break into this home. I'm not saying that folks should answer the door, but if someone is ringing their door bell or knocking a lot and they don't recognize the person – I would ask that they call the police and let us talk to the person. Better safe than sorry right?!

This particular burglar told the Alamo Heights and Windcrest Detectives that he specifically looks for homes with alarm company signs in the yard or on the windows – this is one of the things that make that house less appealing. Even if you do not have an alarm – if you have a sign, this can be a great deterrent. Next, this burglar said he looks for “beware of dog” signs AND he looks for dog food and water bowls in the back yard. You can buy these signs at Home Depot, Lowes, any store really that sells signs for personal use – even if you don't have a dog – put the sign up anyway. Also, buy the dog bowls and put them in the back yard – you don't have to put food in them, just have them there to keep the burglars away. I personally think the bigger the bowl, the bigger the dog, the better protected you are!

Another tip that may help – my husband and I bought some “fake” cameras for the outside of our home. These came in a set of 4 with a sign that says “this home monitored by surveillance cameras”. The “cameras” are actually just the black bubble covers that you see on cameras in stores and outside of businesses – there is really no camera in them but they definitely look real. I believe the entire set was \$20 or \$30 but it was definitely affordable. We put them at all four corners of the house and the sign is by the front door – right under one of the “cameras”.

Just some things I thought you could share with family, friends, and the alumni.