

## **Protecting Yourself from Burglary Media Release, Jasper County Sheriff's Office**

Burglary is a very frustrating crime for both the victim and law enforcement. The victim, of course, feels violated, disgusted, angry, and upset. Law enforcement officers do everything they can to recover stolen items, but imagine a victim making a report that someone stole their game system. The victim doesn't know the serial number and has no way of identifying it from the one his neighbor has. As you know, game systems of any brand are all made the same; they all look the same. If there were five sitting in front of you, how would you know which one is yours? By following the tips listed below, you may just find out a few ways to help with this problem.

Here are a few tips you can follow:

Keep a log book that contains a description of all your items. Keep the log book in a safe/secure place where nobody else has access to it. The description of your items should include color, brand name, model number, and serial number. You should mark all your valuables with identifying marks such as your initials and/or the last four digits of your social security number, or anything that would distinguish the item as being yours. You should mark each item in several different areas with an engraving tool and note where you marked them on your log. You should mark your items even if they have a serial number plate due to the fact the serial number plates can usually be easily removed and typically have been removed before recovery. Obviously, not all items have serial numbers or even room to mark them, such as jewelry. You should take photographs of all your valuables to help identify them and add the photos to the log book, or download the photos to a disk so you can have the photos when you need them. Also, keep your receipts or bills of sale in your log book. Scratches and dents should also be recorded as it can help identify an item as well.

If you notice someone has broken into your residence, business, car, etc., do not enter the property as someone may still be there; immediately call 911. Do not touch anything to "see what may have been taken" as you may be destroying any evidence the suspect may have left behind.

Keep your doors and windows locked. If you keep a spare key, do not leave it in obvious hiding spots. If you will be away from your property for an extended length of time, ask someone to check on your property periodically and have someone pick your mail and newspapers up for you. If necessary, ask someone to mow your lawn. All of these precautions can protect against someone finding out you have been away and may not return soon. Unfortunately, surveillance equipment is expensive, but can be a very useful tool in possibly capturing an image of the suspect and/or suspect vehicle.

There is still a chance someone will take what is yours even if you do take all the precautions, however, the more difficult you make it for a thief the better chance they will move on. "Yes, the suggested tips above can be very time consuming and tedious work, but well worth the effort."

W."Archie" Dunn

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