

Notes from LAPD SLO Chris Baker & Cheviot Hills HOA Neighborhood Watch

If you have ever been to one of my community meetings you have heard me preach about crime prevention through environmental design.

Environmental design refers to the arrangement and manipulation of physical elements within a space to shape human behavior and activities.

Here are some steps you can take to prevent home burglaries through environmental design:

- * **Install a security system:** A security system that includes motion sensors, door and window alarms, and surveillance cameras can deter burglars and alert you in case of a break-in.
- * **Trim bushes and trees near windows:** Overgrown vegetation can provide cover for burglars, so it's important to keep plants trimmed and away from windows.
- * **Use solid doors and windows:** Installing solid core doors and double-paned windows can make it more difficult for burglars to break into your home.
- * **Install outdoor lighting:** Proper lighting can deter burglars and make it easier for you to see who is at your door or approaching your home.
- * **Secure sliding glass doors:** Sliding glass doors are a common entry point for burglars, so make sure to install a bar or lock to prevent them from being opened from the outside.
- * **Reinforce entry points:** Adding deadbolts and security bars to doors and windows can make it more difficult for burglars to gain entry into your home.
- * **Display security signs:** Displaying security system signs or window decals can signal to potential burglars that your home is protected and may discourage them from attempting a break-in.
- * **Keep valuables out of sight:** Keeping valuable items, such as jewelry and electronics, out of plain sight can reduce the incentive for burglars to target your home.

Remember, environmental design is just one aspect of home security.

I want to bring to your attention some recent trends that we have observed. Increasingly we are seeing suspects use surgical masks to conceal their identities. There has been an increase in crimes where the suspect(s) are wearing dark hoodies, gloves, baseball caps, and surgical

masks, carrying backpacks or fanny packs during mid-day hours and hours of darkness. Please be aware of such individuals.

I also advise you to bolt down your safes with actual lag bolts to concrete or studs on the floor to secure your valuable possessions. Additionally, consider placing a personal GPS device inside valuable items like a purse or safe, which can allow us to track such items in the event of a burglary.

Lastly, I have observed a trend where suspects are calling victims on their landlines multiple times before committing a burglary, to verify if the victim's residence is unoccupied. Please be mindful of this. This information is extremely important, and any leads can help us identify suspects and locations where stolen goods could be found.

Your cooperation and vigilance are crucial in preventing and solving these crimes. If you have any information related to these trends, please contact me.

With the summer around the corner, I also wanted to inform you about my Vacation Check Program. This program has been designed to provide you with peace of mind while you are away from your home on vacation or business travel.

The Vacation Check Program is a free service that I offer to all residents within my basic car area. During the period that you are away from your home, our officers will periodically check your property to ensure that everything is secure and there are no signs of criminal activity. I will also check to make sure that your doors and windows are properly secured and that there are no signs of forced entry.

To participate in the Vacation Check Program, all you need to do is send me an email (39796@lapd.online) with information about the dates that you will be away from your home, as well as any contact information that we may need to reach you in case of an emergency. Once I have received your information, I will add your property to the watch list and will begin conducting periodic checks.

I would like to remind you that the Cheviot Hills HOA spends a bulk of the annual \$100 dues payment on security. One of the perks in paying your HOA dues is that APS will do a vacation watch for residents. They will call to verify that dues are current. This is a gentle reminder that if you have not paid your annual dues, it can be done on our website. <https://cheviot hills.org/join/>

Once your dues are paid, APS will drop off a yard sign if you request one. If you have any questions or want to verify payment, respond to this email, or send it to secretary@cheviot hills.org

Please do what you can to harden your target. Set your alarms when you leave, secure your gates, check that your doors and windows are locked, use motion lights. Barking dogs are a deterrent, leave music on or the TV. Use cameras that alert you about motion. Get to know your neighbors and look out for each other.

In addition, the HOA pays APS to patrol the neighborhood. Program their number into your cell phone. The number is 310-606-2727; option 2 should take you directly to the patrol car. APS cars are generally in the area. They can respond quickly to a call. Our LAPD station covers a rather large geographic area. A patrol car can be as far as the Pacific Palisades area and it will take time for the officers to arrive on scene.

Finally, do you know who your block captain is? Many blocks within Cheviot Hills do not have block captains. It's easy to get started. Reach out to neighborhoodwatch@cheviothills.org for information. Our Neighborhood Watch program is only effective if we have enough participation.

Forward this email to your neighbors. Not all residents are on the Cheviot Hills HOA email list. If you are reading this and would like to be added to the list, reply to emailchanges@cheviothills.org.