



DenverDA

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Crime Alert!!!

Door to Door Thieves Are Burglarizing Elders' Homes

Thieves masquerading as security alarm employees are burglarizing older Denver residents inside of their homes by claiming their alarms are in need of repair. Last summer, similar cases were reported of criminals posing as roofers, fence installers, utility workers and those of other trades. Such criminals are also referred to as “distraction thieves” because they lure their unsuspecting victims outdoors under false pretenses, such as to help locate property lines, or to assess “damaged power lines”, or trees in need of pruning. While the victim is detained, another partner in on the crime goes into the home, burglarizes it, and then disappears before the victim realizes that a crime has taken place. Unlike the more widely known con artists who pitch home improvement scams door-to-door, “distraction” burglars pose potentially greater harm to their older victims, especially if the elder confronts the burglar in his/her home.

With the warmer weather approaching, it’s likely there will be resurgence in these kinds of crimes. As a general rule, residents should also be cautious of any stranger who goes door-to-door asking to use the phone or bathroom, or who tells a “down on their luck” story in an attempt to get a foot in the door. Neighbors can be helpful by reporting any suspicious activity to police.

Other precautions to consider:

- Never open the door to anyone that you don’t know, and never let a stranger into your home without first checking their credentials. Utility companies and other solicitors that operate in the City of Denver must display visible identification. To be on the safe side, refuse the service, shut the door and call the company represented by the solicitor to verify their legitimacy.
- Only talk to strangers through a closed and locked screen door. For peace of mind, consider installing locks on all front-door screens.

Denver DA’s Fraud Line: 720-913-9179

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DENVER, CO - Denver Police would like the community to be aware of two suspects who are preying on the elderly posing as alarm security employees. There have been two separate incidents in the North City Park Neighborhood with the most recent occurring on Tuesday, March 12, 2013. At approximately 7:10 p.m., two unknown white males came to the door of a 74 year old victim. They stated they were with a security company and they were there to check the alarm system. Once inside the males walked around and checked part of her alarm system and left. The suspects were seen leaving in a dark van. The victim checked her purse sitting on the couch and found her wallet and items missing.

On Saturday, March 2, 2013 at approximately 4:00 p.m., two unknown males knocked on the door of a 76 year old victim telling her there was trouble with her alarm system. Once inside one of the suspects began working on the alarm system. Shortly thereafter her husband arrived and began asking the suspect questions about the alarm. The suspects immediately left and were seen driving away in a dark green colored car, unknown make and model. The elderly couple then realized the suspects had taken the elderly females wallet which was later returned after money was taken and her credit card used. The white male suspects are described as wearing black suits, the first suspect is believed to be in his mid twenties, approximately 5'8, slim build, and the second suspect is believed to be in his mid thirties, approximately 6', medium build.

It is unknown yet if these incidents are related but there are some similarities.

Safety Tips

Don't be afraid to be rude. You are not obligated to open the door for anyone you don't know. Don't open the door to anyone before you've checked who it is – look out of the window or use a spy hole in your door. If you open the door, keep the chain on while you find out who is knocking and what they want. If you're not expecting someone and you don't know them, don't let them into your home, no matter what they say to you. If someone claims to be from a company, such as a gas or electricity provider, always double check their identity – see the section below for tips on how to do that properly.

If someone is asking for a favor, such as to use your bathroom, borrow a pen or retrieve a ball, don't let them in. Instead direct them to a shop, office or public place. It's only natural to want to help someone, but sadly that's one of the techniques often used by

distraction burglars. If you have any concerns about someone who has knocked at your door, call police immediately. If you have a chance try to note what they look like and any vehicle description they have with them, so police can investigate.