



Mayor
Robert J. Lovero

BERWYN POLICE DEPARTMENT

"Serving with Pride"



Chief of Police
Michael D. Cimaglia

April 16, 2019

NOTICE OF RETRACTION: In April of 2019, the Berwyn Police Department published an article in its "Berwyn WATCH" community newsletter to inform Berwyn residents about transient crimes. In this article, a physical description was included that could be interpreted as insensitive to certain racial and ethnic groups. This was not our intention, and we extend our sincerest apologies to any groups or individuals that may have misconstrued this as an affront. The members of the Berwyn Police Department consider ourselves fortunate to not only be a part of a community that is made better by the diversity of its residents, but more importantly to be a part of a community whose residents engage, inform and enlighten us so that we can better connect with them moving forward.

The following is the amended article, which will also be replaced in the online version of the Berwyn WATCH newsletter.

Transient Crime Alert

Spring and summer are very active times for transient-related criminal activities. Three major crimes are:

- Home repair fraud
- Ruse Entry Burglary
- Burglary

Transients who commit these types of crimes are usually career criminals, and specialize in this kind of criminal activity. Note that it is the "style," and not the "con" that identifies the crime as transients. Traditionally, these types of transient crimes are generally non-violent.

A look-out is often used and usually sits in the vehicle and may sound the car horn if the police are spotted. You should note that transient criminals are experts at false identification and will use a variation of family names and birth dates.

These particular career criminals specialize in home repair fraud and ruse entries. They primarily target the elderly, who are ideal suspects for their crimes. Transient criminals are experts with profiling senior citizen's homes. They will target a home by the style of drapes, poorly maintained lawns, single garbage cans, and four- door sedans.

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Home repair fraud:

Transient criminals cruise residential neighborhoods searching for elderly persons outside their homes. Once located, they approach the elderly person and offer to do some sort of home repair work (driveway seal coating, tree trimming, roof repairs, etc.) The price might be very low, or very high, depending on the mental state of the victim. If the price quoted is low, generally when the work is completed, the money asked is much higher. Any work done is usually substandard in nature. If given the opportunity, the suspects may commit a residential burglary to the home by distracting (occupying) the home owner while another crew member searches the home.

Ruse Entry (burglary):

Again, after selecting a home by profiling it, a transient criminal will claim to be a utility worker, city employee, or a contractor. They then will enter the home using the ruse of checking something (water pressure, fuses, pipes, etc.). While one criminal keeps the victim occupied (running water, checking lights, or even directing the home owner to the rear of the house to view out the back window), one or more additional criminals enter the home (undetected) and commit a burglary.

How to protect yourself:

- Never allow someone to perform driveway sealing, or home repairs on the spot. Ask for a business card to check on the reputation of the business, and end the conversation. If possible, get a vehicle plate number and inform the police department of the activity. Do not deliberate or debate work that needs to be done. Transient criminals will press a sense of urgency.
- Never let anyone into your home - if someone claims they need assistance, tell them you will contact the police to assist them. If they indicate they are with a utility company, call the utility company to verify the work.
- If you are approached while you are outside, do not let anyone roam your property. This usually gives them an opportunity to check for open doors while you are being distracted.

There are other types of transient criminals, who do similar types of cons. All of the above advisories should be followed, regardless. CALL THE POLICE.

If you have further questions on transient crimes please contact the Berwyn Police Department at (708) 795-5600 and ask for a patrol car to come by and speak with you.