

CRIME ALERT

Ruse Burglaries



Please be advised that criminals masquerading as Village of Wheeling employees have used their mock “authority” to get into victim’s homes so that they can steal cash and/or other valuables from the victim. These crimes are known as “Ruse Burglaries”, or “Burglaries by Deception”.

In an effort to minimize the likelihood that this may reoccur, **the police department is asking for your assistance.**

Many of you who live & work in the neighborhoods have an opportunity to be at the right place at the right time, should these crimes occur. If you know of homes that are occupied by seniors, please keep an extra eye on those homes as you drive by. If you see vehicles in the driveway or in front of the house that you don’t recognize, slow down and take note. Even if you feel nothing is amiss, writing down a license plate number and noting the address may be of assistance in the event that it turns out to be a crime. If it turns out to be nothing, that’s OK too—the more eyes and ears out there helping, the better. Of course if you know there is a problem, call 9-1-1.

Simply being aware that these crimes occur on a daily basis throughout the suburbs will put you in the right frame of mind to possibly prevent another incident. As you walk/drive around, observe who is outside. When coming across seniors in the community, pay special attention. Is the senior talking to someone on the property? Is there a second individual with the first, or close by? Does the senior appear to be upset or confused? While the conversation you are witnessing may be perfectly innocent, we ask that you take an extra minute or two to observe what is going on. Also, remember that these criminals will “case” the neighborhoods, looking for seniors outside doing yard work, etc., so it doesn’t hurt to pay attention to multiple subjects in “work” vehicles as well.

What if someone approaches you or knocks on your door, claiming to be with the Village? First, we recommend you do not open the door for anyone you are not expecting. Ask through the closed door why they are there, and then call the Village to verify that they are supposed to be there. We also recommend that while inside or outside, you keep your doors and windows locked, to lessen the likelihood that someone could distract you while another individual sneaks into your home to steal valuables.

Here are 2 recent examples of Ruse Burglaries that occurred in Wheeling.

-Offenders claiming to be with the water department entered home of senior citizen to check pipes. While one subject distracted the senior, the other went into the senior’s bedroom and stole cash and jewelry. Subjects left scene in white minivan with lettering on the side.

-Offenders claiming to be with the Forestry Dept. stated they were at the residence to trim some trees in the backyard. While one subject distracted the senior, the other went inside and stole items from within. Subjects left scene in black truck.

With your help, acting as a force multiplier for the village, we can take some concrete steps towards preventing these scams from happening again in the future. If you have any questions, please contact the Crime Prevention Unit at 847-459-2994.