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# Rockland County TRIAD Program

Reducing Crimes Against Seniors

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[www.co.rockland.ny.us](http://www.co.rockland.ny.us)



The following is an overview of two current crime problems committed by transient criminal groups, currently affecting the entire United States.

**You.....our senior population.....are the predominant targets of these groups.**

## DIVERSION BURGLARIES

Diversion burglaries are committed by transient offenders who have recently emigrated from Eastern European countries, to North America. Major groups of these suspects are currently based in New York City and the Chicago area, but travel throughout the United States to commit their crimes. Their targets are upper middle class residential areas that have a large population of elderly residents.

The burglary teams are normally composed of two to four people and can vary in male/female makeup. In many instances, a male will drive three females to the targeted area. The females will normally scout the neighborhood on foot and the driver will park away from the area or cruise. These females will walk through the area, singularly or in pairs, searching for targets of opportunity. In heavily populated areas, the suspects may focus on elderly victims out shopping and follow them home or befriend them and accompany them home.

If an elderly homeowner is observed working outside of the residence, one suspect will distract the intended victim with any number of questions, while the unseen associates go through the house. When the victim is inside the home.....If the door is unlocked, the subjects simply enter the dwelling. If the door is locked, the suspects knock or ring the bell. When contact is made with the homeowner, (either when answering the door or if accosting the suspect inside the home) one or two suspects distract the homeowner and direct them toward the kitchen with such ruses as:

- Feigning illness and asking for a drink of water
- Pretending to have a package to deliver to a neighbor
- Asking for paper to leave a note for a neighbor
- Asking if the house is for sale, flowers for sale etc.
- Looking for a lost dog or cat



If at the front door, the homeowner is distracted. The suspects may hold up a sheet, blanket, or small rug to mask the entrance of other suspects. The unseen suspect(s) go through the house looking for any items of value – specifically, currency, jewelry and silver.

There are generally no or very little signs of ransacking, as the suspects very carefully and quickly go through the jewelry, etc., taking only the most valuable items and putting everything back into its place. After the suspects leave, the homeowner may not realize that anything was taken until days or weeks later.

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# IMPOSTER BURGLARIES

The suspects are again, normally transient criminals, who will pretend to be legitimate workers, approaching senior citizen homeowners at their residences with a seemingly legitimate ruse. Their real purpose is to divert the homeowner while their accomplices search for currency and jewelry.

Some of the more frequently used ploys by these suspects are posing as:



*“If you experience this type of contact at your home and you did not solicit or expect their service - DO **NOT** LET THEM IN!!!!”*

- An employee of your local gas/electric company.
- Water department employee, to inspect the water pipes and/or to replace the water meter.
- Cable TV company employee.
- Roofers
- Paving company contractor.
- City or town inspector.
- Tree trimmer, looking for property boundaries.
- Fence installer, looking for property boundaries.
- Government personnel from a social service agency.

Many of these impostor burglars now have bogus photo identification cards, legitimate looking work uniforms, and vehicles made to look like government or company vehicles. They communicate with accomplices by hand-held radios or cell phones.

When posing as a utility company employee, the suspects may offer a partial rebate by giving the victim a \$100 bill and request change. This allows the suspect(s) to observe and determine where the victim keeps their money in the home. The victim is distracted, either inside the house by turning a light switch on and off, knocking on water pipes, turning faucets off and on, etc.; or showing the victim damage outside of the home, determining property lines, etc. Once the victim is distracted, the unseen associate/s enters the home and removes the money and jewelry. In some cases, the suspects have also removed small safes from the home.

If you experience this type of contact at your home and you did not solicit or expect their service - **DO NOT LET THEM IN!!!** Instead, while they remain outside, contact the utility company or agency this person claims to represent and determine if they have employees working in your area. If you have any doubts – **dial 911 and report it to the police.**

Although diversion and imposter burglaries are normally considered non-violent, some suspects have gotten extremely violent with the victims in the past when the victim either refuses to cooperate with the distraction or attempts to stop them by calling the police.

**STAY ALERT**



**STAY SAFE**