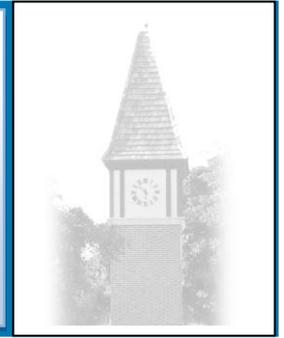


# Neighborhood Watch Newsletter



Volume 17 Issue 1

January – February 2009

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## Robbers Are Equal Opportunity Criminals

*Information Courtesy the National Crime Prevention Council*

It isn't that robbers are around every corner. But they do take us by surprise and they can target anyone.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics at the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, robberies have declined from 5.4 per 1,000 in 1995 to 2.6 people per 1,000 people in 2005—better than a 50% decline. The biggest year for robberies since records were kept was 7.4 robberies per 1,000 people in 1981. That means that the rate in 2005 was almost two-thirds less.

The FBI defines robbery as “the taking or attempting to take anything of value under confrontational circumstances from the control, custody or care of another person by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear of immediate harm.

That's a pretty grim definition. However, there are lots of things you can do to reduce your chances of being robbed and there are ways to react while being robbed and after. The most important thing to do in all circumstances is give the robber what he or she wants: don't fight back and risk your life. It simply isn't worth it.

### Tips for Home

- Don't allow strangers into your home, even if they are hurt or say they need help. Keep the door locked and call the police for them.
- Don't advertise that you live alone.
- Don't be afraid to call law enforcement to investigate suspicious circumstances, unusual people or strange noises. It's better to be safe than sorry.
- When you move into a new house or apartment, change the locks if you own it or ask the manager to change them if you rent.
- Don't leave notes on your door announcing when you will be home.
- Keep outdoor lights on at night.
- If you arrive home and your door is open or things appear to be out of place, don't go in. Leave and call 911. 🚓

### **Westminster Police Department**

8200 Westminster Blvd.  
Westminster, CA 92683  
**Emergencies Call 911**

Business Line:  
714-898-3315

Dispatch Ext: 326  
Traffic Division Ext. 339  
Records Bureau Ext. 371

Business Hours:  
Sunday- Saturday  
7:00a.m. – 7:00p.m.

Website:  
[www.westminster-  
ca.gov/depts/police](http://www.westminster-ca.gov/depts/police)

## **Online Auction Fraud**

*Information Courtesy the National Crime Prevention Council*

Millions of people take part in internet auctions every day, bidding on times from around the world. Buyers and sellers alike benefit from the great opportunities that online auctions provide, but these auctions also give criminals the opportunity to perpetrate fraud. According to the National Consumers League, online auction is the number one fraud committed over the internet.

### **HOW AUCTION FRAUD OCCURS**

Both consumers and merchants can be victims of online auction fraud. Here are some ways that fraud occurs during or after an online auction.

*Failure to deliver goods.* The seller places an item up for bidding that does not exist or fails to deliver merchandise after the buyer purchases it.

*Nonpayment of delivered goods.* The seller sends the merchandise to the highest bidder in good faith but fails to receive payment.

*Misrepresentation of merchandise.* The seller gives false information about the item, or attempts to deceive the buyer concerning its true value.

*Hidden charges.* Instead of a flat rate for postage and handling, the seller adds separate charges for postage, handling and the shipping container, causing the buyer to pay more than anticipated.

*Fake bidding.* The seller bids on his or her own items or has someone else bid, in an attempt to drive up the price.

*Credit card fraud.* The seller uses the buyer's name and credit card number for fraudulent purposes or the buyer uses a fraudulent credit card when purchasing an item.

*Black market goods.* The seller offers goods that are stolen and/or copied (e.g., software, music CDs, and videos.) Often they arrive with no warranty, instructions or box.

### **PREVENTING ONLINE AUCTION FRAUD**

- Understand how an online auction works before you bid on merchandise. What are your obligations as a buyer? What are seller's obligations? Does the auction site provide insurance that covers buyers up to a certain amount? How would the auction site handle a dispute between buyer and seller?
- Don't judge by initial appearances. It can be hard to validate a seller's claim about the value of an item, and descriptions or photographs on websites can be misleading. Know as much as you can about the item you wish to purchase.
- Investigate the seller as much as possible. Be wary of sellers who provide only an email or post office box address. Check the seller's feedback rating if available on the auction site. Call the seller to see if the phone number is working, or send an email to see if the email address is active. If the seller is a business, check it out with the Better Business Bureau.
- Contact the seller before bidding to find out what type of payment is required, when you can expect delivery, what the return policy is, if the merchandise is covered by warranty, and if shipping and delivery are included in the price.
- Try to pay the seller directly with a credit card, so you can dispute the charges if the merchandise does not arrive or was misrepresented. If possible, avoid paying by check or money order.
- Protect yourself from identity theft by not giving out such personal information as your social security card, driver license number, or bank account number, as sellers do not need this information. 🛒

## How Can I Protect Myself?

### Basic Crime Prevention Information

The way criminals operate is by looking for the easiest opportunity. You can make crime difficult by looking for and removing opportunities before criminals spot them.

#### **AT HOME**

Consider these tips:

##### **KEEP DOORS LOCKED**

- Install easy to use deadbolt locks.
- Install new locks if you move to a new home or lose your keys.
- Keep garage and basement doors locked.

##### **LOCK WINDOWS**

- Draw the curtains and blinds at night. Also, put fire department approved grates on the ground floor and fire escape windows.

##### **INSTALL AND USE A PEEPHOLE**

- Never open the door to strangers or let them know you are alone. Ask service people for an ID before you open the door. Remember, chain locks can be forced open.

##### **PROTECT VALUABLES**

- Keep money and securities in a bank.
- Have your payroll, Social Security or pension check deposited directly into your account.
- Mark all valuables with an ID number (like your license number) and your state's abbreviation.

#### **WHEN YOU ARE OUT**

Play it smart:

##### **SECURE YOUR HOME**

- Leave outside lights on.
- Leave a radio or TV and a light on.
- Make sure all entries are locked.
- Travel with a friend. (You are safer if you have company.)
- Don't carry large amounts of cash.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you should arrive.

##### **WHEN YOU RETURN HOME**

- Have your key out and ready.
- Be alert for anyone hiding nearby.
- Don't enter an elevator alone with a stranger. 🕵️

#### **REMINDER:**

All issues of the Neighborhood Watch Newsletter are available online at:  
<http://www.westminster-ca.gov/depts/police/community>

## **City of Westminster Department Directory**

Animal Control:  
714-898-3315 Ext. 365

**Chamber of  
Commerce:  
714-898-9648**

City Hall:  
714-898-3311

**Code Enforcement:  
714-893-3311**

Consumer Affairs:  
714-952-5210

Fair Housing  
Department:  
714-569-0823

**Family Resource  
Center:  
714-903-1331**

**Graffiti Hotline:  
714-895-2876**

Health Department:  
714-677-3600

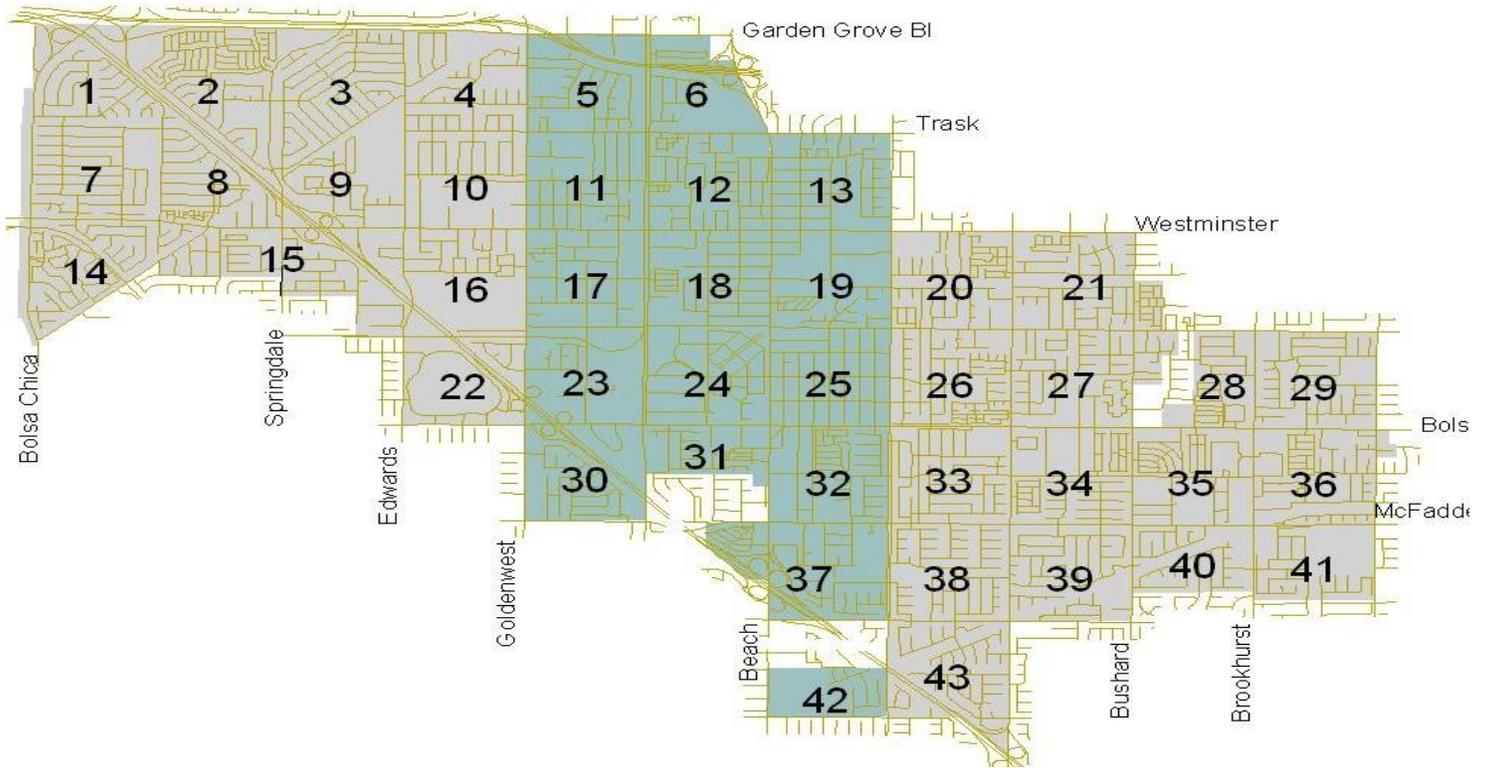
West Justice Center:  
714-896-7111

**Recruitment:  
714-898-3315 Ext. 395**

Westminster Senior  
Center:  
714-895-2878

Vector Control:  
714-971-2421

# NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER



## RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES

| AREA | NOV | DEC | YTD | LAST YEAR | AREA | NOV | DEC | YTD | LAST YEAR | AREA | NOV | DEC | YTD | LAST YEAR |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----------|
| 1    | 1   | 0   | 4   | 5         | 16   | 0   | 1   | 7   | 6         | 31   | 0   | 0   | 3   | 0         |
| 2    | 0   | 0   | 5   | 11        | 17   | 1   | 0   | 5   | 8         | 32   | 0   | 0   | 3   | 4         |
| 3    | 1   | 0   | 7   | 4         | 18   | 3   | 1   | 6   | 6         | 33   | 1   | 0   | 12  | 17        |
| 4    | 0   | 0   | 4   | 10        | 19   | 0   | 0   | 6   | 3         | 34   | 1   | 1   | 10  | 12        |
| 5    | 0   | 0   | 11  | 11        | 20   | 1   | 2   | 22  | 15        | 35   | 1   | 1   | 9   | 13        |
| 6    | 0   | 3   | 7   | 3         | 21   | 1   | 0   | 22  | 15        | 36   | 0   | 2   | 12  | 12        |
| 7    | 0   | 0   | 4   | 6         | 22   | 0   | 0   | 2   | 3         | 37   | 0   | 0   | 2   | 4         |
| 8    | 1   | 1   | 6   | 6         | 23   | 0   | 1   | 1   | 3         | 38   | 0   | 0   | 8   | 11        |
| 9    | 0   | 0   | 7   | 5         | 24   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0         | 39   | 1   | 1   | 5   | 7         |
| 10   | 0   | 0   | 8   | 8         | 25   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0         | 40   | 0   | 0   | 2   | 9         |
| 11   | 0   | 0   | 5   | 8         | 26   | 0   | 0   | 7   | 9         | 41   | 0   | 0   | 5   | 5         |
| 12   | 1   | 0   | 9   | 18        | 27   | 0   | 0   | 10  | 10        | 42   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 2         |
| 13   | 0   | 0   | 4   | 11        | 28   | 0   | 2   | 13  | 4         | 43   | 0   | 0   | 7   | 6         |
| 14   | 1   | 0   | 5   | 3         | 29   | 0   | 0   | 5   | 16        |      |     |     |     |           |
| 15   | 1   | 1   | 13  | 10        | 30   | 1   | 0   | 6   | 5         |      |     |     |     |           |

|                         | NOV | DEC | YTD |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>TOTAL BURGLARIES</b> | 17  | 17  | 289 |

