

The Christmas period is a time for celebrations and enjoying time with friends and family. Sadly during this time there are increases in calls for service for Police and support agencies to attend property crime, disorder and Family Violence incidents.

There are a number of prevention steps we can all take to ensure that these incidents are reduced and the harm they can cause individuals, families and the wider community are minimised or hopefully eliminated.

Family safety

One thing we can all do is know the signs that someone is in danger of being hurt and take steps to keep them safe. If you see signs in a relationship or family you know it's serious and should not be ignored.

You can:

- Challenge the behaviour – but never put your own or others' safety at risk
- Offer to support the victim and find out what they need
- Call the It's not OK information line on 0800 456 450 for advice
- Call the Police on 111 if you believe someone is in danger
- Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

For more information go to <http://www.areyouok.org.nz/>

Property Crime

Unfortunately it is also a time when dishonesty crime escalates. For a thief to be successful three things happen at the same time and in the same space.

1. A suitable target is available.
2. There is the lack of a suitable guardian to prevent the crime from happening.
3. A motivated offender is present.

In order to prevent the thief from being successful remove one or more of these elements.

It is usually an opportunistic crime, but you can take precautions to protect your vehicle from theft. Taking responsibility for your property and ensuring there is nothing on display in your vehicle can make your car less of a target for thieves.

- Keep your vehicle keys with you. Keep spares keys at home or work.
- Always lock your car, including the boot and, if applicable, the sunroof.
- Park in busy, open, well-lit areas.
- If you garage your vehicle at home, ensure the garage and car is locked.
- Don't leave things on display. Keep bags, luggage, coats locked out of sight.
- Keep valuables on you or at home - not in the glove box or under a seat or in the boot.
- Install a car alarm and electronic engine immobiliser.
- Use a steering wheel club or lock, lockable fuel cap and wheel nuts.
- Etch your registration or Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) on windows, windscreens and headlights.

If you see something suspicious and it doesn't seem right it usually isn't. Thieves usually scope out areas before they make their move. They might drive slowly down the road looking for opportunities. They may send in a person to walk past cars or properties looking for items to steal. It only takes seconds for a thief to do their business, don't be a victim of opportunity!

Disorder

If you have noisy neighbours and observe parties getting out of control, call police sooner rather than later to avoid the situation escalating. You can also report excessive noise to noise control by calling Auckland Council (09) 3010101.

This time last year we also had a number of wilful damage and graffiti incidents. A large majority of these incidents were caused by young people aged between 11 - 16. If you witness any of these incidents please call Police, we need to ensure these jobs are attended to ensure risks are reduced and referrals are made to appropriate agencies for support.

The Ranui Neighbourhood Policing Team is appealing to the community to take a guardianship role over these community resources and ensure that any offending is reported to Police.

What you can do?

- Call 111 when crime is happening (you witness thefts/burglaries, suspicious activity, disorder, you see/hear neighbours fighting, you feel unsafe etc).
- Call (09) 839 0600 to report historic crimes.
- Record their descriptions and what they are wearing.
- You can also report graffiti to Auckland Council (09) 3010101.
- Information on known criminals and criminal activity in your area can be reported anonymously to Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111 (do not use this number in an emergency).

Thieves also work on the hope that no one is going to challenge them. If you see someone walking around your property or lurking around a car that doesn't look like they should be there, grab a friend and ask them if you can help them, this can often be enough for the thief to move on. If you feel scared and are unable to approach call the police and let them know what is happening and they can advise you of the best plan of action.

Police will endeavour to continue working hard towards targeting known and active offenders, who both live in and visit your area. We need your help to catch these offenders, please report any crime you observe. The NPT are committed to helping the community reduce crime and improve safety in your community. We are also here to help connect people to support agencies to help address their offending and offer solutions to help prevent problems escalating.

By working together we can further reduce these incidents from happening in your community. Research has shown that neighbourhoods involved in a neighbourhood support network record fewer crimes. Contact Sharon Peters on (09) 834 5815; email neighbourhoodsupportwaitakere@gmail.com or Louise Grevel, email jnswaitakere@gmail.com if you are interested in becoming a member of the network on your street. You will receive a weekly newsletter informing you about what's happening in your community.

If you have any information/suggestions that could help reduce crime and victimisation in your area you can contact the Ranui NPT by emailing StarlingParkNPT@police.govt.nz.

For more detailed advice visit the NZ police website; www.police.govt.nz; Neighbourhood support; www.ns.org.nz; Crimestoppers; www.crimestoppers-nz.org