



Rochford Neighbourhood Watch NEWS



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ESSEX POLICE

Summer 2015

Seven mistakes that raise the risk of theft

BEING a victim of crime is never your fault. If you are a victim of theft, then the only person who could ever be held to blame is the criminal themselves.

However, there are a number of very common things many of us do out of habit that could make us more likely to be targeted by criminals, so it's worth being aware of the seven common mistakes that put you at risk from theft.

1. Opening the window. In hotter weather most of us will throw open the window to let the breeze in. The trouble is many of us will leave it open when we wander into another room - or even when we leave the house. Almost a third of all burglaries are the result of someone leaving a door or a window open and then forgetting to close it when we wander off. The summer is the peak risk, so if you want to stay safe you need to remember to close the window, and to fit catches on all your windows that prevent them being opened more than a crack.

2. Leaving the key in the lock. It can be difficult to know the right thing to do to stay safe. Most people lock the front door when they are at home, but many will leave the

key in the lock so they can find it in an emergency. Unfortunately, this is as good as an open door to a burglar. They may be able to turn the lock through the letterbox, or hook the keys through the letterbox and open it from the outside. Essentially leaving your key in the lock is roughly as secure as leaving the door unlocked.

3. Leaving curtains open at night. In 2011 a burglar was told to write a letter apologising to his victims. Instead he decided to write to them, explaining that it was their fault, because they had left their curtains open when they went to bed, so it had been easy to spot nobody was around, and the house was safe to target.

4. Putting your mobile in your back pocket. Most people check their phone so often nowadays that occasionally they slip it into their back pocket without thinking. According to the Metropolitan Police this is one of the key places targeted by pickpockets. They say you should keep it in a zipped pocket, ideally in a bag slung across your body where you can see it at all times.

5. Checking your phone at the station. The Metropolitan Police warn that thieves will

target the areas around tube stations, because when people emerge and get reception, they will often check for messages, or make a call. This offers the double-whammy of someone not paying attention to their surroundings, and showing thieves exactly where they keep their phone. It's best to keep walking, find a secure spot, and then check your phone.

6. Leaving your gadgets on the train table. It's easy to get lulled into a false sense of security on the train, so we get all the things we need for the journey out of our bag, and place them on the table. British Transport Police warn that criminals will commonly enter the train and wait until it is about to leave the station, before snatching items and jumping off the train.

7. Falling asleep on public transport. If you're stuck on a train for hours, it's easy to find yourself drifting off to sleep. Unfortunately, if you have any luggage with you, this offers a perfect opportunity for a criminal to lift your luggage. The British Transport Police say it's best to avoid drifting off, but if you can't, it's vital to keep your possessions in close contact to deter thieves.

Many thanks to THE ROSCA TRUST for continuing to sponsor our newsletter

Intelligence chiefs issue a warning over bogus police officer

THE National Fraud Intelligence Bureau Proactive Intelligence Team has identified that courier fraudsters are telling telephone victims that they are Detective Constable Martin Benton of New Scotland Yard Fraud Department. However, Essex Police has pointed out that no such person exists at the Metropolitan Police.

If you receive a call from someone purporting to be this individual, terminate the call immediately. Protect yourself against courier fraud because your bank will never send a courier to your home; your bank and the police will never collect your bank card; and your bank and the police will never ask for your pin number.

If you receive one of these calls end it immediately. If you have been affected by this, or any other scam, report it to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040, or visiting www.actionfraud.police.uk. If you have handed over any details to the fraudster, call your bank and cancel your cards. If you want to call your bank, then do it from another telephone.



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Rayleigh Police Station, High Road, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 7QB
NHW Direct Dial: 01268 770519 Email: nhwrayleigh@gmail.com.



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Council cracking down on scam mail crooks

HAVE you received scam mail through your door recently? The likelihood is that you probably have.

Scam mail is sent by fraudsters, often from overseas, trying to persuade residents to part with money or personal information.

These scams can result in considerable financial loss to the victims.

Essex Trading Standards have become aware of an incident where a resident was sent a scam letter enclosing a photograph of a cheque with the victim's name on.

The victim was asked to post a considerable amount of cash in order for the cheque to be released. This was a scam and the victim lost the money.

These types of scams are often time limited which puts pressure on the potential victim to reply quickly. Once the letters are replied to the residents personal details are added to a list of potential targets then circulated to other fraudsters.

Residents who respond to scams can then be bombarded with similar scam mailings. Please keep an eye on vulnerable neighbours, family or friends to help prevent them becoming the targets of these types of scams.

Essex Trading Standards encourage you to forward letters to Royal Mail Scams Department, Freepost, Scam Mail, PO Box 797, Exeter EX1 9UN or report the information to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

If you are concerned about a mailing call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline, who handle calls for Trading Standards, on 03454 040506.

For further advice and information please visit www.thinkjessica.com

Be Sure campaign

A NEW campaign has been launched to protect the elderly from rogue traders. Essex County Council has teamed up with Essex Police and Age UK Essex for Be Sure at the Door.

It follows frauds totalling more than £1million when 18 pensioners in Colchester and Tendring were targeted.

Five members of the co-ordinated gang were subsequently jailed for a total of more than 27 years, but many more appear happy to take advantage of the elderly.

As part of the campaign special "community agents" will visit homes to offer advice on cold callers and how to spot genuine traders.

Fridge magnets will also be handed out, including contact details of who to call if you have concerns.

People are urged to only use traders registered with the Buy With Confidence scheme.

For details, visit buywithconfidence.gov.uk or call 08454040506.

Names on a suckers list

ESSEX Trading Standards officers visiting victims on a so-called scammers suckers list discovered one person had been sent over 300 letters in just two months.

Officers are currently working their way through the thousands of names on the list which they were given in the summer.

They have repeated their warning to people not to fall victim to scams such as prize draws and special offers which are sent through the post.

"We cannot emphasize enough that these mailshots for lotteries, today-only offers, vouchers, a promise of a holiday or whatever are scams," said county councillor Roger Walters.

"We know victims of these scams get sucked in because they are lonely. So far, the majority have denied these mailings are scams. One of them even asked us not to take away his hope, even though he had never won a prize."

One person visited by officers had received 311 letters from 15 different countries in two months. Anyone concerned should call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline.

Don't pass the parcel

ESSEX Police is warning residents to be alert to a potential parcel scam after a home owner in Rochford was targeted by a parcel delivery company.

A courier attempted to deliver the parcel at the end of May, but the resident declined to accept it because they did not recognise the name of the recipient.

Police suspect that this was an attempted scam and not a legitimate delivery and have warned residents to be on their guard.

"If an unexpected delivery is attempted where it is addressed to someone else we recommend that you do not accept it and inform the Police on the non emergency

Security advice

Sainsbury's has produced a home security PDF guide offering advice to improve the security of your home, internally and externally. The guide has been approved by BSI Kite mark. To download go to <http://www.sainsburysbank.co.uk/home-insurance/guide-to-home-security.shtml>

number 101," said a police spokesman.

Scam parcel deliveries are often linked to a phone number which the recipient is asked to call to confirm who they are, but only discover much later that they have been calling a costly premium rate number.

Volunteers required

CAN you spare a few hours a week to help your local community ?

We have a vacancy in our office in Rayleigh Police Station to work on a Thursday morning 10am to 12 noon dealing with telephone queries, (not many!) replying to emails, liaising with the police and various administrative tasks.

There are other activities you could get involved in if you have more time but these can be discussed if you are interested.

A reasonable computing knowledge is required eg. email and Word, a basic knowledge of Excel would be a bonus.

If you are interested and would like to know more please contact us on 01268 770519, between 10am and 12 Noon weekdays, you can leave a message outside of these hours, or email us at nhwrayleigh@gmail.com

Electronic newsletters

IN our Spring Newsletter we asked if more of you would like to receive it on line. The response was not great but those who volunteered will get it electronically, if not please let us know.

Should you receive both an electronic and hard copy of our Summer edition please do not blame the coordinator as this change will not be implemented until the Autumn edition.

Community messaging

Sign up to receive information, crime prevention advice and notifications from Essex Police and other key partners - simply paste the following link into your browser- http://www.essex.police.uk/contact_us/community_messaging.aspx

Your co-ordinator is...

Name.....
Address.....
.....
Tel.....
Mobile.....