



Chowchilla Police Department

Jay A. Varney, Chief of Police
122 Trinity Avenue, Chowchilla, California 93610



Press Release

The last couple of months have been extremely frustrating for the Police Department, Public Services Department and the community as a whole. If you have been anywhere in the city lately, it appears the talk of the town is the number of vehicles broken into, homes broken into, cars stolen, and all of the graffiti that has shown up in a number of locations throughout the city.

In the last month, from January 1 – January 30, 2011, officers of the Chowchilla Police Department have taken 11 residential burglary reports, 3 commercial burglary reports, 9 vehicle burglary reports, 1 motor vehicle theft report, 21 theft reports, and 24 vandalism reports including graffiti, broken windows and damage to other property.

Some of the cases listed above as they relate to theft could have been avoided altogether had the property owner taken some steps to deter the theft. There are a number of things that can be done that will help keep your property from being stolen.

Light up your residence, **lock** your doors at all times, and call the **Police** when you see something suspicious.

- Make your home look occupied and make it difficult to break in.
- Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed. Even if it is for a short time, lock your doors.
- Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away for a length of time, connect some lamps to automatic timers to turn them on in the evening and off during the day.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked.
- Don't allow daily deliveries of mail, newspapers or fliers build up while you are away. Arrange with the Post Office to hold your mail or arrange for a friend or neighbor to take them regularly.
- Arrange for your lawn to be mowed if you are going away for an extended time.
- Check your locks on doors and windows and replace them with secure devices as necessary.
- Pushbutton locks on doorknobs are easy for burglars to open. Install deadbolt locks on all your outside doors.
- Sliding glass doors are vulnerable. Special locks are available for better security.
- Other windows may need better locks. Check with a locksmith or hardware store for alternatives.

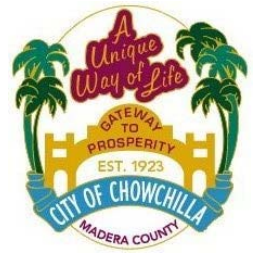
Service & Safety

Office (559) 665-8600 Fax (559) 665-7416
www.ci.chowchilla.ca.us/police/policemain.htm



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Don't Tempt a Thief:

- Lawnmowers, barbecues and bicycles are best stored out of sight.
- Always lock your garden sheds and garages.
- Use curtains on garage and basement windows.
- Never leave notes on your door such as "gone shopping."

Locks...Get the Best:

- No lock, regardless of its quality, can be truly effective. Key-in dead bolt locks provide minimum security. Ask a locksmith for advice on your situation.
- Change locks immediately if your keys are lost or stolen.
- When moving into a new home, have all locks changed.

Targeting the Outside:

- Have adequate exterior lighting. A motion-sensitive light is recommended for backyards.
- Trim trees and shrubs so that they cannot be used as hiding places for intruders.
- Make sure your door hinges are on the inside.

Windows:

- Most windows can be pinned for security.
- Drill a 3/16" hole on a slight downward slant through the inside window frame and halfway into the outside frame - place a nail in the hole to secure the window.

Alarms:

- An alarm system is excellent for home security. It provides peace of mind to homeowners, especially while on vacation. There is a wide variety of alarm systems on the market.
- Make several inquiries to different companies for the best security system available to you.
- **If you have a home alarm system, use it!** *Activate your alarm system* — alarm systems are only useful when you remember to activate them.
- Many individuals have alarm systems but do not arm them because it is inconvenient. Many burglars know this and will not be deterred by a window sticker or sign indicating that the home has an alarm system.

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- *Please notify the Police Department immediately with emergency contact information if you have an alarm installed. Also be sure to notify them immediately if you have a false alarm to avoid being billed for the response.*

If Your Home Is Broken Into:

If you come home to find an unexplained open/broken window or door:

- Do not enter - the perpetrator may still be inside.
- Use a neighbor's phone to call police.
- Do not touch anything or clean up until the police have inspected for evidence.
- Write down the license plate numbers of any suspicious vehicles.
- Note the descriptions of any suspicious persons.

Other precautions you should take:

- Never leave keys under doormats, flowerpots, mailboxes or other “secret” hiding places -- burglars know where to look for hidden keys.
- Keep a detailed inventory of your valuable possessions, including a description of the items, date of purchase and original value, and serial numbers, and keep a copy in a safe place away from home — this is a good precaution in case of fires or other disasters. Make a photographic or video record of valuable objects, heirlooms and antiques. Your insurance company can provide assistance in making and keeping your inventory.
- Trim your shrubbery around your home to reduce cover for burglars.
- Be a good neighbor. If you notice anything suspicious in your neighborhood, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Mark your valuables with your driver's license number with an engraver you can borrow from your precinct. Marked items are harder for a burglar to dispose of and easier for police to recover.
- Form a Neighborhood Watch Group. We can help you work with your neighbors to improve security and reduce risk of burglary.
- Consider installing a burglar alarm system.

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Car Burglaries

Tips on how to avoid car break-ins:

- Do not leave valuables in plain view:
(GPS devices, lap tops, PDAs, cell phones, MP3s, wallets, purses)
- Do not leave windows or sunroof open.
- Do not leave doors unlocked.
- Do not leave keys in the vehicle.
- Do not leave the garage door opener in plain view.
- Do not leave out items with personal information.
- Do not move valuable items to the trunk while in public view.
- Slow down and use common sense before you leave your car.

Sgt. Dave Riviere states “The MOST important thing YOU can do is CALL THE POLICE to report a CRIME or any SUSPICIOUS activity. You have to be the eyes of your neighborhood. And remember you can always remain a pair of anonymous eyes!”

The police department is asking for the community’s help. Should you have information regarding any crimes, please contact the Chowchilla Police Department at 559-665-8600 or the anonymous tip line at 559-665-8624.

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