

OPP remind residents to secure seasonal properties

OPP reminds residents to ensure seasonal residences are secured in the off season. These types of crime are not new, and are very often preventable through community engagement; empowering communities to play an active role in crime reduction initiatives. Cottages and summer homes are most vulnerable to thieves from the week following Thanksgiving to the weeks prior to Victoria Day, especially if the owners are not using them for fall, winter or spring getaways. Remember, if there is no one living at it or checking it regularly, the cost of owning a seasonal property includes the frustration and irritation of repairing damage and replacing stolen property.

Tips to Consider:

? Pack up all food and alcohol.

? Don't leave firearms or weapons at the cottage.

? If you are leaving vehicles, make sure they're winterized, secure and disabled - for snow machines remove track and hide keys; ensure boats are covered and locked; outboard motors locked and slightly disassembled; ATVs disabled - leave nothing on trailers unless it is locked or disabled.

? Leave no valuables at cottage ? electronics, personal items, tools etc. unless you are prepared to lose them.

? Who is your contact (key holder) for: alarms, thefts, weather damage or animal problems? Do you have their contact information numbers? Are they paid to check your cottage regularly or are they friends/neighbours? Your insurance company may give you a deduction if you have one.

? Secure your windows and doors ? close window curtains or blinds and put up shutters to protect interior from marauders (both animals and human).

? Record serial numbers of anything of value left behind. Sporting goods ? fishing rods & equipment, water skis, toys etc. ? if they're not secured, locked up, hidden or both don't expect them to be there next spring - Lock them up or be prepared to lose them!

? Make a list of where everything is and make copies ? store one copy on your home computer and put a copy with property that will go back up to the cottage on the first or next trip (use your phone to take pictures).

? Know which police force patrols your cottage area (which OPP Detachment and the phone number).

Police are reminding residents to contact the OPP Communications Centre immediately at 1-888-310-1122 to report any suspicious activity or suspicious vehicles in the area. Information such as suspect physical descriptions, suspect vehicles and direction of travel are useful tools for investigators.

Crime-Stoppers allows the public to submit their information anonymously online at crimestoppersdm.com or by calling the tip line at 1-800-222-8577 24 hours a day. Your information could make you eligible for a cash reward of up to \$2000.