



Braintree District

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

14th July 2011

BOGUS TELEPHONE ENGINEERS

Please be advised regarding an incident that has occurred within the Epping area. It appears that last Sunday evening a male called at a property claiming to be a BT engineer and that he was calling to repair the line which was faulty. The caller produced some ID which was fake. Unbeknown to the victim the bogus engineer had cut the phone wires before calling.

The victim would not have allowed the bogus engineer in at this point but the engineer pointed out to the owner that he could check he was genuine by checking the phone. When the victim checked the phone, line was dead. This made him believe the caller was genuine and he allowed him in. Even if the victim had thought to check the caller out with BT at this point he couldn't because the line had been cut.

Having got into the house the caller resorted to the usual modus operandi. Before moving away from the front door to check the phones in the company of the victim, he pretended to close the front door but actually left it ajar for his accomplice to come in and search the house whilst the victim was kept busy by the caller.

On this occasion, the fact that the telephone line was dead was enough additional circumstance to convince the householder that the caller was genuine.

If you are faced with a similar situation regarding a telephone fault that you were unaware of, don't let the caller in! Use your mobile phone or a neighbours phone to contact your service provider and make an appointment for one of their engineers to call.

Please be advised that we have not suffered with the above type of incidents within Chelmsford or Braintree, but I always believe in the saying

' Forewarned is forearmed'

Another tactic in use

About 10.30am last Sunday, an Ongar resident went to use the cash machine outside Barclay's Bank in the High Road. As she approached the ATM, she was not aware of any other person standing in the vicinity. She keyed in her pin number to request a balance of her account and at this point a stocky man pushed his way in between the lady and the ATM from the side. In his hands he had a magazine which he placed on the ATM. The victim says that he spoke with a foreign accent saying something like "Your card has been taken". The lady realised something was wrong and tried to push her way back towards the machine but to no avail. The man held her

back then walked away towards Sainsbury's where he or an accomplice removed £250 from the victim's account using the Sainsbury's ATM.

Prior to this incident, the thief has obviously been tucked away near Barclay's Bank looking for a potential victim. As the lady used the machine he must have approached very quietly and, from the side or over her shoulder, watched her enter her pin number in the ATM. He has then pushed past her as the bank card has emerged from the machine and used the magazine to hide his hands as he stole the card. A pretty clumsy effort but very effective.

Please note the time and location of the crime. 10.30am on a Sunday morning, broad daylight in the middle of the high street.

The victim has very kindly allowed me to circulate details of her experience in the hope that it might make others a little more aware. She was not injured but was very shaken.

So, what can you do?

- If you are with a friend get them to stand with you during a transaction. Thieves are unlikely to take on two persons and your friend can watch your back
- Always cover your hand as you enter a pin number even if you are **sure** nobody else is watching you.
- If you see anybody who you feel is suspicious or makes you feel uneasy, trust your instincts and don't use the ATM. Come back later.
- On this occasion, the lady tried to fight back. She was very lucky she wasn't injured. You can cancel your card immediately with no loss to yourself. Don't put yourself at risk, it's not worth it.
- Most ATM's have an exclusion zone of some sort around them. You have a right to ask a person not to enter that zone whilst you are using the machine. If they refuse take your card and walk away

These are just some basic precautions in the light of this incident. *Remember.....sometimes paranoia is not a bad thing.....because sometimes you are being watched!*

Incidents

Arson - Coggeshall Road, Feering

Between 09/07/2011 23:15:00 and 10/07/2011 09:45:00 SUSPECTS UNKNOWN HAVE SET ALIGHT TO LARGE GREEN BIN WHICH HAS MELTED COMPLETELY

THEFT

Colchester Road, Halstead

Between 11/07/2011 14:00 and 11/07/2011 18:00 - SUSPECT UNKNOWN HAS REMOVED TWO HEAVY DUTY BATTERIES AND A ENERGISER FROM THE VICTIMS FIELD BY MEANS UNKNOWN

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Please find below information on how to report incidents or any suspicious activity to the police.

Listed below are some helpful tips that may assist you when calling Essex Police.

What number should I call?

101

If it is an emergency such as a crime happening at the time call **999**
If you are victim of crime try to touch as little as possible until the police arrive.

If you want to give information anonymously you can call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

What can you do to help reduce incidents of crime?

Be extra observant. The only persons who really know the area in which you live are the people that live there. The police may not note a suspicious person within your road, but you probably would.

Neighbourhood watch area the eyes and ears of the community.

Have you noticed persons hanging around the area? These persons may be on foot, on a bike or in a vehicle.

Have you noticed a tool or a piece of equipment that has been discarded? This may have been used to commit a crime. Have you noticed anything in an odd location and thought it strange? Then report it
101

Did you hear something?

Perhaps you may have heard a noise during the evening or at night. Have a look out your window. If you note someone or a vehicle acting suspiciously then please call Essex Police straight away. Do not think that you are wasting Police time.

Did you over hear something?

Perhaps you may have over heard someone talking about a burglary / crime and can share the information with us.

How as Neighbourhood Watch can we make the area more secure?

Ensure this information is known to others within your watch group.

Some members may walk their dogs regularly during the evening and may notice something.

Look at security, Trisha Staerck the Essex Police Crime Reduction Officer can offer advice. Have a look at the Sold Secure or Secured by design websites. There are a whole host of products on sale to secure property

Mark any property with a UV or permanent marker pen – just write your house number and postcode.

Take photos of any valuable items

Think about having an alarm installed, the Crime reduction officer can assist you with this and give you advice on what you need.

What number do I use to call Essex Police?

If someone is committing a crime at the time call 999

The Non Emergency number is 101

If you are victim of crime try to touch as little as possible until the police arrive.

What information will help the Police?

A description of the suspect(s)

Male/ Female, Ethnicity

Clothing (any patterns or logos)

Age, Height, Build, Hair colour/style

Was the suspect holding anything, goods / backpack?

Tattoos, Glasses, beard

Give any directions that the suspect is heading towards.

Do not worry if you do not have answers to all the above, just try to remember as much as you can. Keep a pen and pad to hand if it helps you.

Vehicle information

Try to make note of the following

Index number

Make

Model Number

Was the vehicle sign written?

Direction of travel.

If you note something strange report it straight away. Tel the Essex Police call taker that you are a Neighbourhood Watch member.