

This is the first installment of a 12 part series on Crime Prevention for the Drayton Valley area, starting in April 2016 and wrapping up in March 2017. The Drayton Valley RCMP is committed to assisting this community, and the intent of this series is to educate and inform the public on property crime, and what to do when you become a victim of it. While these tips may not solve all of your crime issues in the area, these tips will go a long way in assisting the investigators of your local Detachment in hopefully either recovering property and/or detecting the culprits involved in these crimes.

**Part #1: Documenting and Recording personal items.**

This is the first step in knowing and recording what you have for personal property. A lot of times we purchase items, whether it is a new bike, stereo, television, or computer, most people figure just recording the serial number is enough. However, for the Police to enter a stolen item onto the nationwide system, we require the make, model and serial number of the item.

Some suggestions for most electronic items is to complete the following:

1. Take a picture of the item, both front and back. Clear photos with good detail are important as they can identify the item and what it looks like, but can also later assist you with your insurance company claim to prove that you did indeed possess the item you are claiming was stolen.
2. Find the serial number and take a clear picture of it, and manually record the serial number, along with the model and make. As noted above this allows it to be entered onto our system. A dollar value (bill of sale) is also helpful.
3. Mark it distinctively (and discreetly) somewhere with a way to identify quickly the item belongs to you. Some people use their driver's licence number, others may choose to use a company that can actually laser etch an identifying mark somewhere. This marking is also effective for things like tools or small power equipment.

Suggestions for things like jewelry or family heirlooms is to do the following:

1. While we can't add it to the Canadian Police Information System (CPIC) like items with serial numbers, the best route to take is to take good pictures of the item. As an example, a piece of jewelry should have both a front and back side picture, and if possible, proof marks showing carat of gold (10, 14, 22 and so on) and pictures of any distinctive designs or patterns. This information can be possibly fanned out to other jurisdictions in case similar such items are located with an individual. The same for heirlooms is to get as many quality photos as you can showing what the item looks like, and in the case of smaller items, to lay a ruler next to the item to give perspective of the size. It is important to ensure the measurements are clear in the picture. The larger the item, utilize a tape measure for dimensions and to record this information. This is important as when the item is possibly recovered, if it looks the same and has the same dimensions it may be possibly an item that belongs to you.
2. Lastly is again to record any distinctive feature, and to document the location of the distinctive feature. The more detail you have, the better chance of linking it to you, should a personal treasure be stolen and later recovered.

It is best to store this list of recorded items and pictures (digital if possible) somewhere off site at a trusted location. Sometimes this will be with a family member, or some choose to use a safety deposit box. How you choose to do this is up to you. This way it is available very quickly, and can assist Police in getting these items' descriptions out to other investigators.

Next Month, in May 2016, we will look at motor vehicles, and ways to discourage theft from a motor vehicle or the vehicle actually being stolen.

Yours in Service,

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