

## Article for Park Patter May 31 2018

### Rural Crime Prevention through RCW

What will we do when we experience criminal activity? Recent examples provide opportunities for us to reflect and plan our own responses.

A resident in central Springbank notices a truck hanging around the area. She uses her vehicle to get close enough for a good description of vehicle, driver and licence. Follows vehicle from the area and watches at a safe distance as the suspect proceeds to and through other areas. She called in to RCMP as suspicious activity.

Resident near Springbank schools has a truck stolen over night. The long driveway with parking is hidden from the road. Vehicle is ¾ ton diesel. Vehicle was in driveway and not locked. Vehicle had been advertised online. The ignition keys were taken from key rack in house. Vehicle recovered several days later in an area known for stolen vehicles.

A north Springbank community has persons looking for directions at 6:15 am. One comes to door and asks about 'another area'. That person was possibly high? The other person waited in their vehicle at the road. The pair proceeds to neighbours with same MO. Neighbours alerted each other. Not called in as inadequate description of vehicle.

Residence in Elbow Valley has surveillance video at 2:30 am of prowler casually approaching and then retreating quickly. Scared off by security cameras? Or?

Residence in Highway 8 area was entered and ransacked and many items stolen. Security gate is usually closed. Gate was left open midday as just going out for a short time. Nobody noticed the intrusion. Vehicles were sometimes seen parked in the entrance to vacant nearby property.

These examples are likely to happen again in our community. What are things that can be done to deter thieves? Scouting by thieves is likely before an incident, looking for possible and preferred targets. We know some markers. Vehicle driving slowly. No apparent destination. Driver is evasive when an 'inquiry of help' is made. May meander through other roads in area. This is the most effective time to act by attention to and recording of details. Call in immediately to RCMP. These descriptions can be pieced together with others to provide the pattern of habitual intruders. Promptly alert or inquire of neighbours. Use cell phones and apps for instant communication.

Thefts do occur. Stuff is stuff and not a trade for personal safety. Record all details. Have a description of items, possibly by digital photos. Call to RCMP immediately. Then neighbours and insurance.

Active membership in Rural Crime Watch includes many tips to deter criminals. Being active means:

- Join with neighbours to alert each other promptly of suspicious activity or intruders.
- Show active membership by displaying 'Member of Rural Crime Watch' signs.

- Participate in community meetings on crime prevention topics. Research and share information on topics such as security and surveillance systems.
- Observe, Record, Report. (**ORR**) Report suspicious activity to law enforcement
- Post alerts and incidents on the Reporter App available to all CFPA/RCW members

The collective and mutually supportive effort of neighbours is the key ingredient to RCW success in our community. As RCW area directors, we offer to meet with members and their neighbours to provide general information and to assist with setting up effective mutual support groups.

Rural Crime Watch (Cochrane Foothills Protective Ass'n)

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