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708.386.3800

## **Police seek robber in fourth similar incident; caution urged**

**04.20.11**

A fourth incident in less than a month involving late-night robberies of lone female residents has Oak Park police urging caution, further stepping up patrols and asking the public to be alert for suspicious individuals and vehicles in their neighborhoods.

The latest incident occurred at about 11:50 p.m., Tues., April 19, in the 200 block of South Harvey Avenue. The victim, in her mid-40s, had just parked her car in the garage and was robbed as she entered her rear yard. As in three similar incidents, the offender approached from behind and grabbed the victim around the neck. He took a small nylon bag from inside a grocery bag and fled. Estimated loss was about \$40.

Unlike previous incidents, however, the offender said nothing and neighbors reported seeing a man enter a light-colored, newer-model Ford SUV and driving westbound on Pleasant Street.

This latest incident was not far from the Lake Street corridor where three similar late-night robberies of lone women occurred. These incidents occurred on March 30 in the 200 block of Lake Street, April 2 near Lake Street and Austin Boulevard, and April 4 in the 200 block of North Oak Park Avenue. All occurred between 11:40 p.m. and 12:45 a.m., no serious injuries were reported and no weapon was seen or implied.

In each incident, the suspect is described as an African-American male in his 20s, about five feet 10 inches to six feet tall with a medium build. In the first three incidents he was believed to have been wearing a light colored jacket with a black knit hat. In the latest incident, the offender was described similarly, but with short hair and wearing a dark, hooded sweatshirt and dark pants.

The victim of the April 4 robbery, who was the only victim to get a good look at her assailant, helped police create a computer-generated composite picture of the suspect in at least the one incident. While Police cannot say for sure that the assailant is the same in all four incidents, the similarities suggest he could be.

Police will continue to have increased patrols in the area as the investigation continues and until the offender is apprehended. Anyone with information regarding these incidents is urged to contact the Oak Park Police Department at 708.386.3800 or e-mail [police@oak-park.us](mailto:police@oak-park.us). Information can be provided anonymously via telephone to 708.434.1636 or on-line at [www.oak-park.us/police](http://www.oak-park.us/police).

In the meantime, Police are reminding residents they can call 708.386.3800 and request an escort – especially if arriving home late at night.

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Computer-generated composite created with help of victim of April 4 robbery.



# Robbery & Theft Prevention Tips

from the Oak Park Police Department

## Robbery Do's and Don'ts

**DO** obey an offender's instructions when it's practical to do so – particularly when they threaten to hurt you. Property can be replaced – you cannot.

**DO** pay attention to your environment and what's around you.

**DO** keep cash in a separate money clip or pouch so you can hand it over to a criminal without sacrificing credit cards, identification and other important items.

**DON'T** be distracted while walking or waiting for public transportation. Someone on a cell phone or listening to music can be enticing to a would-be robber.

**DON'T** carry a purse or bag loosely around your shoulder.

## Mass Transit Riders

Should you be targeted by a potential thief, make a mental note of the offender's race, age, height, sex, clothing, color of hair and eyes, etc. Note anything unusual such as scars or tattoos.

Note the number of accomplices and how they left the area, direction of travel, what type of vehicle, the make, color and license plate.

Note the type, size and color of a weapon.

When riding on the train, don't wear headphones.

Travel in pairs if you can, do not sit alone in a train, car or bus – or if you must travel alone, sit near mass transit employees.

Do not sit near an aisle seat or door with exposed valuables.

If you are carrying a bag or purse, make sure the items are secured (zipped up) and away from the aisles.

Keep personal belongings between yourself and the aisle.

## Personal Safety

Avoid carrying a purse. Keep your wallet in your pocket instead.

If you wear jewelry, conceal it under your clothing.

Carry your cell phone separately from your purse or backpack. If someone steals your bag, your cell phone is still accessible to call 9-1-1.

Avoid walking alone in the street at night. When unavoidable, use well-lit streets to get to your destination.

Walk near the curb and away from shrubbery where someone could be hiding.

Keep an arms length away from strangers.

If you think someone suspicious is approaching you or following you, cross to the other side of the street and head for the nearest public place.

Carry a whistle and use it when your personal safety is in danger.

Don't make it obvious that you are in unfamiliar territory.

Pay attention. Suspects look for victims who are not alert.

Moderate alcohol intake and remain in control of your senses. Offenders target those who are most vulnerable.

Walk briskly with confidence, your head up and look at those around you.

## Oak Park Police Department

*Committed to community, integrity and excellence  
in public safety*

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708.386.3800 non-emergency

708.434.1630 crime tip hotline

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**Always call 9-1-1 in an  
emergency.**