



# zone 3 newsletter

summer 2009

## ZONE 3 BORDERS:

Harlem, Chicago, Austin, and North Blvd.

## ZONE 3 MEETINGS

The 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month at 7:00pm in the Main Oak Park Public Library.

## MCGRUFF HOMES

McGruff Houses provide safe locations in neighborhoods where children can seek nearby assistance if they feel threatened or scared. Please consider making your home a McGruff House. For more information, please contact Officer Murphy, and attend your regular monthly zone meeting.

Resident Beat Officer Raphael Murphy / 708.305.9779 / [rmurphy@oak-park.us](mailto:rmurphy@oak-park.us)

## Burglary Awareness and Prevention

Burglary occurs when an offender enters or remains in a building or vehicle without permission with the intention of committing a felony or a theft. Burglary can occur to your house, apartment, business, garage or car.

In recent months there have been numerous burglaries to residences, garages and vehicles, but lately apartments seem to be the most commonly victimized dwelling.

Residential burglaries occur mostly during the day, when people are typically away from their home. The most common method for breaking in to apartments has been through rear windows and doors, sometimes unlocked, but also by means of force. Home electronics such as televisions, DVD players, laptops, and video game systems are among the most commonly targeted items.

The Oak Park Police have made numerous arrests of burglars in connection to these crimes, and continue to assign many resources to combating the ongoing burglary problem.

Regardless of the manpower the police assign to thwart burglaries and arrest offenders, the value of the public's participation in stopping these crimes cannot be overstated. Many arrests are made because the police are notified by residents and neighbors who witness a crime or suspicious behavior and immediately call 911.

It is also important to be mindful of your home's security. Keeping doors and windows securely locked will go a long way toward protecting your home. Alarm systems, used properly, can be very effective. Make sure your doors, door jambs, windows and casings, and locks are strong and working properly. Vulnerable windows can be reinforced with plexiglass.

Record the serial numbers from electronics and other valuables. These numbers are useful in recovery and identification of stolen items. Contact your Resident Beat Officer, who will meet with you in your home and provide a security survey.

To protect your possessions inside your garage, remember to always lock the side service door. Not locking this door is a common bad habit. And make sure the overhead door is closed when the garage is unattended. Adequate lighting, and motion activated lights are also a strong deterrent. Finally, keep your car doors locked, and make sure that there are no items visible in your car's interior. A few coins can entice a thief to break a car window.

Again, calls to the police reporting suspicious activity or crimes in progress have been an important element in the arrest of many burglars.

Your neighbors can be one of the most effective deterrents to crime. Get to know your neighbors. Talk with them about crime prevention, about looking out for one another, watching for suspicious activity, and knowing when to call the police. Consider getting your neighbors together for a discussion about safety and security with your Resident Beat Officer.

# Summer Security Tips

**Oak Park Police**  
123 Madison, Oak  
Park

PHONE:  
708.386.3800

**For Emergencies  
Dial  
911**

Summer is upon us with bright sun and heat, thunderstorms, holidays, village events, block parties, swimming, warm summer evenings, outdoor dining, parties, insect invasions, kids on summer break, travel...the list goes on. Let's all remember to take care of ourselves and our neighbors. More people out and about means more opportunities for criminals to target unsuspecting persons, unattended property, and empty homes.

## Empty Homes

If you plan to be away from home on a trip tell your close neighbors and your Resident Beat Officer when you plan to be away. Patrol officers will make periodic checks on your home. Stop deliveries of

mail, papers, etc. or have a friend pick them up daily. Put away your garbage cans, as empty containers can indicate that nobody's home. Make sure all doors and windows are secure, but leave blinds and shades in a normal position. Timers on lights and radios can further the illusion that someone is home.

## Personal Property

While you are out and about this summer in the parks, the pools, at a softball game, remember to keep your personal items like bicycles, purses, backpacks and the like as secure as possible. A purse left unattended on the deck at the pool, or slung over the back of a chair at a restaurant is an easy target for a thief,

even if you are only a few feet away.

## Personal Safety

While walking around, especially at night, stay in well lit, exposed areas, be aware of your surroundings, hold your property securely and confidently. Appearing confident and secure will go a long way towards dissuading potential attackers.

Remind your children that you need to know where they are at all times, that they must be wary of strangers, and how to act if approached or grabbed by a stranger.

Finally, don't forget: Drive safely, and wear sunscreen. Above all, enjoy yourselves this summer!

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**RBO Murphy**  
**708-305-9779**

[rmurphy@oak-park.us](mailto:rmurphy@oak-park.us)



## Block Captains

The Oak Park Police Department is currently looking for persons interested in being Block Captains. The Block Captain might aid the police in the dispersal of important information to

their neighbors, perhaps by maintaining an e-mail distribution list, or possibly by organizing and hosting a neighborhood watch meeting from time to time. Anyone in Zone 3 who is interested should contact

RBO Murphy at 708-305-9779. Or, if you know someone on your block that you think might be a good choice, speak to them about giving me a call.