



Protect Your Home from Increased Crime During Summer Months

While the summer months are often characterized by warmer weather and the smell of sunscreen, they're also the peak season for burglaries.

According to police departments nationwide, there's an uptick in crime rates during the summer months, but many people don't think it will happen to them. Burglary and theft are two of the most common household property crimes, and they're also the easiest to prevent.

According to the Department of Justice and the FBI, property crimes are 11 percent more common during the summer months and almost three out of four burglaries occur at a residential property. The average loss per burglary is \$2,322.

"Small actions make a big difference when it comes to preventing a burglary," Sandy Gaskins, Board President of the Pee Dee REALTOR Association, said. "It's important that homeowners are aware of actions they can take to protect themselves and their property."

The Pee Dee REALTOR Association, along with information from local police, compiled the following list of tips to help homeowners protect their property and themselves during the summer months:

- **Lock doors and windows.** Open doors and windows are one of the most common points of entry for a criminal looking to break into a residence. It's important to keep doors and windows locked at all times, even when you are outside working in the yard.
- **Use specialty locks.** Not only should doors and windows be locked at all times, but homeowners should make sure the locks they're using are a bit more complicated than the average lock. On average, burglars will spend less than a minute trying to break into a home, so using a lock that will frustrate thieves is an easy way to prevent a break-in.
- **Lock and label large items.** It's important to protect all personal property, including larger items that you store in a garage or outside. Lock larger items such as lawn mowers, bikes, grills, etc. and engrave them with your initials so that you can identify your property in case it is stolen.
- **Light things up.** Outdoor lights are a great deterrent to criminals who don't want to be seen. Focus especially on the rear and sides of your home.
- **Be aware of neighborhood activity.** You know your neighborhood better than most, so be a good neighborhood watchdog, and alert police to unusual activity.
- **Protect yourself.** Not only do you have to worry about your property, but you also have to worry about protecting yourself. Beware of con artists running home improvement scams and deception burglaries, and be sure not to leave personal information lying around.