

Burlingame Hills Improvement Association, Inc.
Crime Prevention Forum
Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 7PM
Burlingame Rec Center

Host: Burlingame Hills Improvement Association, Amy Sanford, President

Presenters:

Sheriff's Office, San Mateo County

Eamonn Allen, Acting Captain and Chief of Police, North County Patrol
650-259-2300
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Antonio Baggetta, Detective #1102
650-363-4192
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Jason Reed, Sheriff

Burlingame Police Department

Mike Bolanos, Sergeant
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Rich Scheno, Inspector

Ms. Marin, Officer

Flock Safety

Dannie Higgins

BHIA Board Members in Attendance:

Michael Corbett (treasurer), Susan Dan, Michelle MacKenzie-Menendez, Jeani Delagardelle, John Keller vice president, Jan Akers (secretary), Amy Sanford (president)

Forum purpose: To address the concerns of Burlingame Hills residents regarding recent burglaries and offer recommendations to residents on how best to protect themselves and their property.

If you experience an emergency in your home in the unincorporated area of Burlingame Hills, CALL 650-363-4911 – add this to your “favorites”

This number routes direct to SM County Sheriff Dispatch. Calling 911 from your home landline *should* route to the Sheriff's office. If you are dialing 911 from a cellphone, calls made in close proximity to I-280 may route to the CHP. If you are not at home, and calling 911 from a distant location, your call will go to that local dispatch.

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Is it true that burglaries have increased in the Hills? Yes

The Sheriff and Police representatives shared stats for 2020-2023 for both Burlingame City and Burlingame Hills. Year-to-date break-ins in 2023 are above prior years.

Why here?

The Peninsula 101-280 corridor between San Bruno and Los Altos Hills is an easily accessed, affluent area.

Why now?

2019 criminal justice reform resulted in reduced or no probation, parole, and bail and reduced sentencing guidelines.

Unfortunately, many of the burglars that are caught are let back out of jail after arraignment before trial

But there is good news, San Mateo County prosecutes home invasions and puts the thief in jail. The county also requires defendants to show proof of bail – a pay slip or other real income in order to get out of jail.

Law enforcement has also learned that like many things, burglaries follow the 80:20 rule, 80% are by the same people. Once we identify, prosecute and get these people off the streets, burglaries will abate.

Are there patterns and/or commonalities? Yes

- Burglarized home is located on a street that makes it easy for perpetrators to access the home from 280 and exit the home back to 280 in a short time
- Homeowner is not home/traveling
- Entry is generally rear door, often glass sliding door
- Time of day: 7pm – 6am (but some have occurred during the day)
- Day of week – no pattern

What do we know about the perpetrators?

- They operate in groups of 2-4 per vehicle
- The vehicle is stolen or has “cold” plates (stolen license plates)
- The vehicle is high end, Mercedes, Lexus, etc. in order to “blend in”
- Masks, sweatshirts and gloves are worn to avoid identification
- They do not carry cellphones in order to avoid identification (however, some of the cars used have wifi and therefore can be identified by celltowers)
- Many are *local* residents (East Palo Alto, Hayward, Redwood City)
- They are generally in their 20s

- Their objective is to spend 5 minutes or less in the home. Because of the short timeframe, they don't care about cameras or alarms – BUT THESE ARE STILL IMPORTANT TO HAVE
- Sometimes the vehicle is parked in the driveway, sometimes the driver remains in the car sitting out front

What do they steal?

- Anything of value that cannot be traced – jewelry, high-end hand bags, clothing, and watches (jewelry is melted down within a day so cannot be recovered).
- Small to medium sized safes. The larger the safe the better and best if bolted to a concrete floor
- Laptops, cellphones and electronics are generally not taken though in car break-ins along Sawyer Camp and other long-term parking spots these are stolen

How do they know when no one is home?

- House is dark for a couple of nights
- Curtains/window coverings are closed and not opened for a couple of days
- Trash cans are not out on trash day and/or trash cans remain out on the street after trash day
- Mailbox is overflowing with mail
- Amazon deliveries remain at front door
- Newspapers pile up
- Flyers left at front door are not removed

Should we be concerned about our gardeners, housekeepers or other service workers?

- The police have not seen connections with gardeners and housekeepers
- They do question dog boarding facilities, Uber and Lyft drivers – consider leaving from a place other than your home
- Don't share any travel information with people you do not know
- Place a "hold" on mail and newspapers is a good thing to do unless you arrange to have a friend or neighbor collect these things for you

How should we protect ourselves and our property?

- Get to know your neighbors; let them know when you plan to be away
- Have someone house sit or look after your dog or cat at your home when you are away
- Set an alarm and have your alarm connected to the Sheriff's office. Also have your alarm company call the SM County Sheriff FIRST (650-363-4911), not you. Most alarm companies will call the homeowner first, but you can ask to have law enforcement called within a certain time frame (For example you can ask that the police are called within 30 seconds of the alarm being triggered and then hey can call you!)
- Make sure your alarm has battery back-up
- Install security cameras (while the burglars don't care about being caught on camera, the more detail on what vehicle they are in, what time it is, etc. is very helpful to the police investigating the crime)
- Register your security camera with the Burlingame Police Department. (Yes, Burlingame Hills residents can and should do this. It allows our SM County Sheriff and Burl PD to coordinate evidence). <https://brm.crimegraphics.com/2013/>
- Large dogs can be a deterrent.
- Anything that delays their entry (such as film for glass that makes it more difficult to break) and exit is a deterrent.
- Help our local law enforcement by reporting anything unusual; high end cars that you have not seen in your neighborhood that have 3-4 young men inside are suspicious

What should we do if we are home when a burglar breaks in?

- Do not confront
- Lock yourself and family in a room and call 650-363-4911
- Follow the rule: Run, Hide, Fight – Armed confrontation is a last resort – many of these recent groups do carry guns

Are there new tools or procedures used by our local law enforcement? Yes!

- Flock Safety cameras flag cars entering an area that are stolen or have “cold” plates and also keep track of how many times and where that vehicle has been seen
- If a burglary has already taken place, the cameras assist the sheriff and police in identifying the vehicle
- There are already several of these cameras in Hillsborough and Burlingame with plans to add more (Atherton has 48! and other unincorporated communities have already invested in them: Ladera, Woodside, Portola Valley)
- San Mateo County Chief of Police noted that the Sheriff’s office has been pushing the county supervisors to invest in these cameras
- Our SM County Sheriff office covers Millbrae, HMB, San Carlos and Burlingame Hills
- The Millbrae Sheriff station has 3 cars at all times and 4 cars from 10am – 10pm (each has one officer). When there is a power outage the Sheriff calls in additional patrols
- While you may not know it, the Sheriff is out and about every night, often with lights off

What should Burlingame Hills consider as a community?

- Purchase of 4-6 Flock cameras placed in strategic ingress and egress locations (Sheriff and Burl PD will assist with placement recommendations)
- Possibly eliminate overnight street parking and/or require parking permits