



# Mt. Washington Police Department Crime Tips

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## **Residential Tips:**

**House Numbers:** House numbers should be visible day or night from the front. In rural areas, name and number should be displayed on the mailbox. This is important for the police officer or EMS unit responding to a complaint at your home.

**Property Identification:** Engrave all valuable property with a readily identifiable name or number of your choosing, starting with KY. Take recorded pictures of all valuables in your home and record all serial numbers. Keep this information in a safe place (other than at home), such as in a safe deposit box, or with a friend or relative.

**Neighborhood Watch:** If your neighborhood does not currently have a neighborhood watch program, please contact the Mt Washington Police Department and ask for Mrs. Jordan St John. She would be happy to assist you.

**Locks and Keys:** An unlocked lock is not a lock! Habitually locking your home, closing and locking Garage doors when away or at night is something everyone needs to do, even when working in the yard. You should re-key door locks whenever you move into an apartment or house. Re-keying locks is relatively inexpensive. Hiding a key outside your house is NOT a good idea and should always be avoided.

**Shrubbery:** Are the doors and windows of your house hidden by shrubbery? If so, trim the shrubs so the burglar is denied the opportunity to hide behind them.

**Lighting:** External security lighting is important, as well as interior lights. Exclusive use of lighting when the home is unoccupied might tip off the burglar. It is smart to use interior lights on a timer whenever you are going to be away from home at night. Motion detectors or dusk-to-dawn lights may be considered. Leaving a radio or TV on may give the appearance someone is home.

**Strangers:** Do NOT let a stranger into your home until you are satisfied that you know who they are and what the purpose of their visit is. Identification of salespeople, public utilities workers, repairmen, plainclothes police officers, and stranded strangers should always be required before opening the door. A wide-angle view (190 degrees) door viewer is an absolute must if visibility of callers is not possible. Partially opening the door with a door chain should be discouraged.

**Vacation Plans:** Make planning your security a part of your vacation plans. Secure your home and leave some lights on a timer. Leave a key with a trusted neighbor. Plan to have your lawn mowed. Stop mail and newspaper delivery. Contact the police department and ask for a house watch. Ask a neighbor to park their car in your drive while you are gone; move it periodically.

**Smoke Detector:** Make sure that your smoke detector is working properly. Check the batteries regularly.

**Burglar Alarms:** Alarms are an excellent tool for protecting your home, but they need to be serviced and tested periodically.

**Firearms:** If you keep a firearm in your home, please store and handle it properly; preferably in a safe. Never leave a loaded firearm where a child can find it. Use a trigger lock to prevent a tragedy.

## **Business Tips:**

**Create High Security Zones:** Move your hot products (most frequently stolen items) into higher security zones with more staff surveillance.

**Make Shoplifting Inconvenient:** Alert employees may be your best defense. Have them greet customers when they enter the store. Teach them to be attentive in a helping way. Make sure that all your

employees are familiar with shoplifting laws in the state of Kentucky and establish procedures for them to follow if they suspect shoplifting.

**Make them Aware:** Announce and observe a policy to prosecute shoplifters. The threat of being caught, questioned by police, put on trial and maybe even put in jail, may be enough to turn most shoplifters away. If someone ignores your warning, follow through. An empty threat is meaningless.

**Watch:** Watch for groups of people—especially if one attempts to keep you distracted. Some experts believe that businesses lose more to employee theft than to burglary, robbery and shoplifting combined. Examine your management practices. Make your employees feel that they've got a stake in your business.

#### **Tips for Employees:**

- Keep your purse, wallet, keys, and other valuable items with you always or locked securely in a drawer or closet.
- Make certain the receptionist or front office personnel check the identity of any stranger entering the building/office. Someone should escort them to their destination or call the person they wish to meet up to the front.
- Don't advertise your personal business, including social life, vacations, work schedules, etc. to strangers.

#### **Vehicle Safety:**

Though professional car thieves have entered the field in increasing numbers, most cars are still taken by amateurs who can be stopped easily. You can greatly increase your protection against this type of crime by taking the following precautions.

**Keys:** NEVER leave the keys in your vehicle. NEVER place hidden keys in the car.

**Lock Up:** Always lock the doors, even when you are away from the vehicle for a short time. Always roll up your windows when you leave your vehicle, even when it's parked in the driveway or garage.

**Personal Items:** Place items out of sight before you reach your destination. If you can't take personal property with you, lock items in the trunk. Do not place them under the seat. This includes your purse or wallet, CDs, books, cash, keys, cell phone, laptop, garage door opener, gym bag, briefcase, jewelry, tools, packages, etc. If a thief breaks into your vehicle and steals your garage door opener and keys, they have access to your home. Do not leave ANY mail in your vehicle. These have your name, address and possibly contain personal financial information.

**Parking:** Park in well-lighted areas. At home, park your vehicle near porch lights if you don't have a garage. Install motion detectors. At night park in well-lighted areas with pedestrian traffic.

Avoid alleys. Set any alarm or anti-theft device.

#### **Fraud:**

**The criminals involved in fraud are getting smarter. If it's too good to be true IT IS. Hang up. Block the number.**

- If you didn't call them, chances are, it's a scam.
- If a bank, credit agency, IRS, etc. calls asking for private information it is a scam. They would already have this information from when you worked with them in the past. Hang up and call the correct agency to alert them.
- Scammers prefer payment methods that are untraceable, such as Western Union. Be very suspicious, as a genuine business will have genuine banking details. But don't pay anyone advance fees by any means if you have the slightest suspicion it is a scam. Scammers will often put pressure on their victims and urge them to pay immediately or lose the opportunity.