

SCAMS REPORT
MILTON TOWNSHIP S.A.L.T. COUNCIL MEETING MAY 10, 2021 (VIRTUAL)

Submitted by Arnold H. Shifrin

Ruse Burglaries

A ruse burglary is one in which an offender lures a homeowner outside or to a different part of the home (e.g., the basement) to “fix a problem.” While the homeowner is distracted, other offenders enter the home undetected and steal cash, jewelry, and valuables. These crimes increase during the spring and summer months when the weather is warm and usually occur in the morning.

Elderly homeowners are excellent targets because offenders know that these individuals are not apt to report crimes in which they are the victims. Offenders also know that older individuals make poor witnesses during a legal proceeding because they often don't recall the details of what transpired during the commission of a crime. Any homeowner, however, should be considered a potential victim.

Excuses used by criminals to gain entry into one's home or lure a homeowner outside

- They have to test the water pressure due to a broken pipe.
- They have to check the fuses or circuit breakers due to an electrical outage in the area.
- They pose as utility company or public works employees doing “annual inspections.”
- The chimney, fence, or gutters need repairs.
- The fence is on a neighbor's property and must be moved.
- Tree branches on the property are resting on utility wires and must be trimmed.
- The driveway needs repairs or resurfacing.
- They're seeking information about homes for sale in the area.

How to protect yourself

- Keep all doors locked, including screen doors.
- Don't talk to anyone at your door whom you don't know.
- If you choose to speak to an individual at your door, be sure the door is closed and locked.
- Keep all items of value locked up and out of sight. Do not store them in bureau drawers. Use a wall safe if possible
- Check the credentials of anyone claiming to be a utility worker or public works employee. These individuals should be driving “official” vehicles that are appropriately marked.
- Place a sticker on your door stating that peddlers and solicitors are not welcome.
- If you choose to go outside to look at a “problem,” lock the door when you leave.
- Do not allow transient workers to do repairs on your property until you've checked the reputation of the business.
- If a person persists on entering your house against your wishes, keep the door closed and locked. Do not allow the individual to enter. Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Report unusual activity in your neighborhood to the local police department. Try to provide vehicle information, license plate numbers, and descriptions of suspicious individuals when filing a report.

[Resources various]