



Abbotsford Police Department

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Chief Constable Mike Serr

"Strength in Community"

NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday, May 14, 2019

AbbyPD tackles property crime by targeting prolific offenders

Between January 1 and April 30th, 2019, 509 crimes against persons (including assaults, homicides and robberies) were reported to the Abbotsford Police Department. During that same period, more than 2256 property-related crimes (break and enter, theft from vehicle, and theft of vehicle) were reported. Property crime may not directly put the public at physical risk, but it significantly impacts our community – from the financial cost and “hassle factor” experienced by the victim, to the enormous amount of AbbyPD resources used to investigate and combat this type of crime.

However, despite the high number of property-related crimes year-to-date, Abbotsford’s property crime rate is down 12.3 % from the same period in 2018. AbbyPD is working diligently to sustain this downward trend by focusing our efforts on the city’s most prolific offenders.

The majority of Abbotsford’s property crime is committed by a relatively small group of offenders who have long police histories. These prolific offenders are often responsible for multiple, simultaneous criminal complaints.

***Our Mission:
To make Abbotsford the safest city in B.C.***

The Abbotsford Police Department Intelligence Unit is responsible for identifying prolific offenders, and passing that information to the Patrol officers and the Crime Reduction Unit officers who investigate these crimes.

"We have identified offenders in our city who commit criminal acts on an almost daily basis," said Chief Mike Serr. "Assistance from the community – in the form of taking steps to deter property crime and to report crime when it does occur – is a key part of our property crime reduction strategy."

Many smaller property crimes are not reported, as many citizens believe that reporting is not helpful. The opposite is true – the Abbotsford Police encourages all victims of any crime to advise police by phone, online, or via text. When crime is reported, it is added to a crime mapping system. Area-specific increases in crime are reviewed, and steps are taken to allocate resources to address these crime "hot spots". This is done in a variety of ways, including:

- alerting the public through social media messaging and traditional media outlets;
- tracking and management of prolific offenders through court order checks and probation meetings, following up on crime tips, and conducting residence checks; and
- developing and implementing specific projects focused on property crime reduction.

"Our approach is a response to what's largely become a catch-and-release justice system — a revolving door for non-violent offenders, often back on the streets before their arresting officer's shift is over" continues Chief Serr. "By updating our community on prolific offenders who have been recently arrested, or those who remain in our community while wanted on outstanding charges, we hope to keep you vigilant. We encourage you to call in suspicious people and activity. Together, we can reduce property crime and make Abbotsford less vulnerable to these offenders."

Over the past year, the AbbyPD has encouraged citizens to report suspicious activity and to follow the 9 p.m. Routine. "The Routine is a relatively simple concept," says Sgt. Judy Bird. "At 9 p.m., before going to bed, get in the habit of double checking that your vehicles, property and residence are secure. Offenders will often walk through neighbourhoods checking for vehicles that are left open. Simply taking valuables out of your vehicle and locking it up will often avoid the hassle and expense of having your property stolen."

The 9 p.m. Routine recommends:

- Removing valuables from vehicles and locking them up.
- Checking that all house windows and doors – front, back, side and garage – are locked.

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- Turning on an exterior light.

AbbyPD is also working with Crown Counsel, Community Corrections and the City of Abbotsford to develop an Integrated Court model focused on reducing offender recidivism. A pilot project will be explored for implementation in the Fall, with a focus on connecting offenders to needed community supports to ensure the most effective use of available resources and services. Support will include access to housing, addiction support, health care, community care and intensive Probation and Police based compliance enforcement of release conditions.

We continue to ask our community to report suspicious persons, vehicles and incidents by calling 604-859-5225 , texting 222973 or reporting online to <http://www.abbypd.ca/Online-Crime-Reporting>.

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