



Abbotsford Police Department

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Chief Constable Mike Serr

"Protecting with Pride"

NEWS RELEASE

March 22, 2019

Police Warn of Increase of Distraction Thefts

The Abbotsford Police Department is investigating two distraction-style jewellery thefts this week.

Both victims in Abbotsford were elderly and were walking in their neighborhoods with their grandchildren. In both instances, a vehicle stopped and a female passenger asked the victim for directions to the hospital. After directions were provided, the female exited the vehicle and made an excuse to place jewellery on the victim. While doing so, the suspect discreetly removed the victim's own expensive jewellery.

The female suspect in both Abbotsford thefts is described as South Asian or Middle Eastern in appearance, 50-60 years old, with a heavy build and black hair. The male driver is described as South Asian or Middle Eastern in appearance, 20-30 years old, with black hair.

There has been a noticeable increase in similar distraction-style thefts in other Lower Mainland municipalities in recent weeks. The thefts involve the suspect getting out of their vehicle to make conversation with a victim wearing jewellery. The suspect then makes various excuses to make physical contact with the victim, at which time the thief smoothly removes the victim's jewellery. The unsuspecting victim often doesn't realize the theft has occurred until the suspects leave.

Our Mission:

To make Abbotsford the safest city in B.C.

The descriptions of the suspects and their vehicles vary, so it is possible multiple thieves are working as a group.

The Abbotsford Police Department is requesting that family members alert seniors or those visiting or new to our community about this 'switcheroo' type scam. AbbyPD recommends that you conceal valuable items under your clothing when in public, and not allow strangers into your personal space.

If you are approached by a stranger and you feel threatened:

- Clearly tell the person you are not interested and to leave you alone.
- Draw attention to the situation.
- **Call 911 and report the incident to police.**

Anyone with information regarding these incidents is asked to call AbbyPD at 604-859-5225, or text us at 222973 (abbypd). To report anonymously to Crime Stoppers, call 1-800-222-8477(TIPS) or report online at Solvecrime.ca.

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