

# Block Watch Beat

A Newsletter for Block Watch Community Safety



## VACATION HOME SECURITY

By Kimberly Kelley, Victoria Police Department

Going on vacation or a local long weekend getaway? Before you leave home here are a few home security tips you'll want to add to your pre-vacation checklist:

- Tell a trusted neighbour your travel dates and ask them to keep an eye on your home.
- Arrange for a house sitter to stay in your home or have someone check on your house regularly.
- Ask a neighbour to park in your driveway.
- Cancel newspaper and mail delivery.
- Lock up valuables and important documents in a safe or deposit box.
- Ensure your home and vehicle insurance are up to date.
- Ask a neighbour to take your trash can/recycle bin out on collection day.
- Plan to have your lawn and garden maintained.
- Make sure all windows and doors are closed and locked.
- Set up a timer for your lights and TV.
- Make sure valuable items are not on view from the outside.
- Keep tools and ladders out of sight and locked away so they cannot be used to gain entry to your home.
- Disconnect the garage door.
- Set your house alarm and turn on security camera (if you have one).
- Don't post on social media that you are away on holiday. This advertises an empty home.

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## ONLINE BUY & SELL SAFETY TIPS

By Celina Dominelli, Ridge Meadows RCMP

Peer-to-peer online selling and swapping sites, such as Facebook Marketplace, continue to grow in popularity. They make purchasing new or used goods as simple as pressing a button. While these sites are convenient and eco-friendly, they are not without risk. A number of people have become victims of crimes, such as robberies or frauds, while attempting to conduct in person purchases and exchanges. In order to mitigate the possibility of crime, here are some tips on how to protect yourself:

- Finalize any in-person transactions at a designated Buy/Sell Exchange Zone. These Zones are offered at select local police departments and are monitored via 24-hour surveillance.
- Complete in-person transactions during daytime hours.
- Use the “buddy-system” and bring a friend or family member with you, so that you are not alone. If no one is available to attend with you, let someone you trust know when and where you will be completing the transaction.
- To reduce the risk of fraud, never complete any transaction via mail.
- Limit the amount of personal information you provide online, such as your home address.
- Meet unfamiliar people at a public location, that is well lit and busy.
- Stop. Pause. Think. If something seems too good to be true, it likely is.



## SECURITY TIPS WHEN SELLING OR RENTING YOUR HOME

By Leah Marlay, Vancouver Police Department

If you are selling or renting out your home and have an open house, beware of tricky thieves! Some thieves will use open houses as opportunities to scout your home. Once inside, they may unlock a door, sliding door or window and return later to gain easy access. When the open house is over, be sure to check and lock all of the doors and windows.

When touring your home, opportunistic thieves can look for your hidden jewelry. Be sure to lock away or remove all valuables - they know the best hiding places. Thieves look for all types of items to sell, trade or pawn; you may want to remove certain medications from your bathroom cabinets.

Although anyone can make an appointment to view an open house, showings by appointment only are likely safer.

If you are in an open house and witness a theft, alert the realtor and then discreetly and quickly call 9-1-1. Remember, your personal safety always comes first.



## LOVE WHAT YOU DO!

By Gabriel Pelletier, Surrey RCMP

If you are reading this newsletter, then you most likely work or volunteer in the crime prevention or community safety space. So do I, and have for the past 8 years, I have wondered what it is, exactly, that makes me absolutely love it. In Surrey, where I work, it helps that we have a Love Where you Live and Love Where you Work campaign. So, in my own research, I read a book called Love + Work, by Markus Buckingham. Since he provided insights about why and where my passions come from, I want to share some of them with you.

### *Do something you love each day*

Part of it is the connection. I am, by nature, an introverted person, so it has taken a job in this field to give me an excuse to get out there and make connections with people in a way that gets me doing things that I love each day. In other words, I am not independently driven to every aspect of my job, but there are parts of my job that drive me to feel excited and fulfill me.

This aligns with one of the bold statements in Markus's book. He says it is a fallacy to tell people to "do what you love." Instead, do something you love each day. The field of medicine is similar to police work in terms of frontline service to the community, so I found it interesting that recent research into the well-being of doctors and nurses contains a powerful cause-and-effect relationship: "spend 20 percent of your time at work doing specific activities you love and you are far less likely to experience burnout." Markus also says that his own research suggests that whether or not you are good at performing these tasks that you love, you are "3.6 times more likely to be highly resilient." This applies directly to our Block Watch program - everyone can be involved on the things they love to do, and it makes your neighbourhood team resilient to internal and external pressures.

### *Love lies in motion - not balance*

Another fallacy that Markus refutes is the idea of framing what you love to do in terms of work-life-balance. The whole premise of the book is about redefining what work is. In essence, anything we do to add value to something for others is work. The act of our labour - done well and/or with care - is a kind of art, which by definition is an act of love. There is a direct connection between the two. So, although having a healthy work-life-balance is a good thing on the face of it, it gets complicated if you are like me, and you love what you do at work!

Needless to say, this is stating the obvious for volunteers, since they have known for eons that although they are doing what they love in the community, they must find balance or face burnout. For volunteers, the balance is better framed as public-private, personal-community, or family-neighbourhood. But Markus takes this a step further and makes the point that "love lives in motion," and that seeking balance is static and unnatural to working with the things we love. "A healthy life is one where you are in motion, where you are moving through life - all aspects of your life - in such a way that you draw strength and love from it, and this then gives you the energy you need to keep moving." This will actually set you up to draw out more volunteers to help with Block Watch to contribute in the ways that energize them.





## MAIL & PARCEL THEFT PREVENTION

By Rita Leung, Richmond RCMP

Mail left unattended presents an opportunity for thieves. Stolen personal and financial information from mail can lead to other types of crimes, such as identity theft or fraud. Furthermore, a mailbox filled with mail suggests the homeowner is away, which can lead to a break and enter. Without the proper habits or security measures in place, mail theft becomes an effortless crime for thieves.

- Keep your mailbox in good condition and make sure it is properly installed and locked.
- Clear your mail regularly and as soon as possible.
- Do not leave mail in your mailbox overnight.
- Ask a trusted friend or neighbour to pick up mail when you are away.
- Sign up for electronic statements whenever available.
- Add good lighting and security cameras to increase visibility and surveillance of your mailbox.
- Time your deliveries to have someone at home to receive your packages.
- Contact the courier directly to schedule a delivery on a day that works best for you.
- Send packages to the nearest access point and pick it up on your way home.
- Track your deliveries with provided tracking number from the courier/vendor.
- If you see anything suspicious or you are an unfortunate victim of mail theft, report it to the police.

## NEW VPD BLOCK WATCH LIAISON OFFICER

By Leah Marlay, Vancouver Police

Vancouver Police Block Watch is very pleased to welcome Constable James Hooper as the new Block Watch liaison.

James has been a police officer with the VPD for 21 years, and has been an acting sergeant in both the patrol and investigations divisions.

James' career highlights include being a part of Vancouver's 2010 Olympic security deployment, creating the VPD's Identity Theft Unit, where he was a detective for 5 years, and leading several high profile investigations as a member of the General Investigative Unit where he investigated robberies, extortions and threats.

James is also part of the VPD's social media team (@4Echo13), and conducted two "virtual ride-along's" while on patrol that resulted in an online audience of more than 100,000 on both nights.

James has been the Neighbourhood Police Officer for the Kerrisdale, Oakridge, and Marpole neighbourhoods for the past 5 years, and is eager to continue his community policing role as a member of the VPD's Block Watch team beginning in April, 2023.

