



CRIME PREVENTION UPDATE

WWW.OCPA-OH.ORG
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CENTRAL OHIO PLAGUED WITH THEFT OF LAWN CARE EQUIPMENT

Over the summer months Columbus and the surrounding suburbs have experienced an alarming increase in the theft of lawn care equipment. These thefts aren't from garages or homes, but are being taken right off trucks and trailers of lawn care companies while the employees are just feet away. The equipment taken is usually trimmers, blowers or other items that can be carried away from the scene. They are easy to carry, fit in a pickup truck or car and can be sold at area pawn shops. These professional pieces of equipment are worth more than \$500.00, making this a felony level crime, but the real crime is how devastating the loss can be to a small business.

The typical scenario involves a crime of opportunity. The thieves cruise neighborhoods and apartment/condo complexes looking for areas where lawn care specialists are working. When the employee(s) move from the area while cutting the grass or other chores that take them out of vehicle sight, the thieves move in, grab the items, and are gone before the employee(s) make the next turn on the lawnmower. No one is exempt. They will even take equipment from city/village vehicles. This crime takes less than 15 seconds!

What can you do to protect yourself? The most important thing you can do is to record serial numbers. Take a digital photograph of each piece of equipment and don't put a new piece into service before it's been properly documented. Recording the serial number and taking a photograph requires only a few minutes and can save you valuable time if the worst happens. If you have multiple trucks, assign equipment to each truck and worker. Do not allow workers to move equipment without documenting where, when and who has control. Inventory the truck(s) each morning and night. If an employee discovers a theft, don't wait to make a police report. The thief could still be in the neighborhood and responding officers may be able to recover the equipment and arrest the bad guy. Another way to protect your investment is to divide and conquer a job. If one worker is going to be out of sight, have at least one other worker stay in the area of the truck/trailer. If only one worker is present, buy and use locks.

How do you balance convenience and timeliness with crime prevention? Most lawn care equipment is hanging unsecured on the edge of the trailer or in the back of the truck. Consider buying chains and keyed alike padlocks for equipment

that must be left unattended. Thieves are looking for an easy opportunity and just the simple act of using a chain and lock will send them elsewhere

How do you train your employees? The best locks in the world don't work if they aren't used. It only takes seconds to secure/unsecure a lock, so encourage your employees to develop good habits. Have your employees think about the way they accomplish a job and remember to "divide and conquer". Tell employees to look around when they get to a job sight. Is there someone driving slowly through the neighborhood? Have they seen the same vehicle/person several times? Have they seen the same vehicle/people at different jobs?

With just a few simple and inexpensive changes you can save your business time, frustration and money. Think of criminals as water; they will take the path of least resistance. The more diversions you place in their path, the more likely it is they will search for another victim.

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UPDATE FROM OCPA PRESIDENT ERIC FRANZ

What an amazing year this has been for the Association. Despite the tremendous economic downturn which has literally obliterated many longstanding associations, we continue to operate as a strong and successful entity. While doing well, we unfortunately have had to temporarily eliminate the position of Executive Director due to less than expected revenue.

In the interim we have moved Brenda Kuba into the position of Director. As a long-term employee of our association, I cannot put into words the dedication and vision she brings to this position. We have

seen an immediate change in the way we have been doing business for the past dozen years, all of which have been for the better of the association.

Despite the economic setback, the Board of Directors recently met with Karlton Moore, the Director of the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services. Director Moore expressed his support of our organization and outlined the future of grant based funding for the board, giving us a much better understanding of what we must do to flourish in these changing times.

Internally we continue to see membership rise and will be rolling out the Volunteer in Policing (VIPs) membership category before years end. Volunteers are a strong resource for our association. The majority of VIPs are retired professionals who will bring a wealth of knowledge to our association along with new perspectives in crime prevention which will move us forward in the arena of prevention.

Eric E. Franz, OCPA President
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OCPA 2010 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MARK THE DATE AND PLAN TO ATTEND the OCPA 2010 Annual Training Conference. It is scheduled to take place April 12—14, 2010 at the DoubleTree Hotel Columbus Worthington located at 175 Hutchinson Avenue, Columbus, OH 43235.

Our group room rate is \$99/night and includes a breakfast buffet, complimentary high speed wireless internet in guest rooms, complimentary parking, heated indoor pool and hot tub, exercise facility on site and a convenient

location that offers a large selection of entertainment, dining and shopping venues within walking distance.

You can make your reservations by calling 614.885.3334 or 1.800.870.0349. Please identify yourself as a part of the 2010 Annual Conference. Reservation requests for the conference must be received by 3/21/2010 12:00 AM.

The Conference Committee is currently planning the training sessions that will be offered at the conference and all other

conference details.

We expect to have the conference agenda posted to the OCPA website no later than mid December. As conference details are finalized, they will be posted to the OCPA website and e-mail broadcasts will be sent to our members.

Don't miss out on this excellent training and networking opportunity.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

OCPA UPDATES & INFORMATION

New Web Site Design

On November 10th OCPA officially launched their new website and has a great new look. Our website will be updated on a continual basis with OCPA training opportunities, district meeting information, conference information and up-to-date crime prevention resources for your use. Please make sure you check it out!

www.ocpa-oh.org

OCPA Established On:

Linkedin.Com -

http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=1865739&trk=anet_ug_hm

Facebook.Com -

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=163245664767>

2010 Training Calendar

The training committee is currently working on the 2010 Training Calendar—January thru June. As training is finalized, it will be posted to the web-site and e-mail broadcasts will be sent out.

If you have a one-day training that you could conduct on behalf of OCPA, please contact the Training Committee Chair Jeff Newman at jnewman@westchesteroh.org or 513.777.2231.

OCPA Board Meeting Dates

All Board meetings are held at the Columbus Police Training Academy located at 1000 N. Hague Road in Columbus, Ohio.

- ◆ December 11, 2009
- ◆ February 19, 2010
- ◆ April 2, 2010

District Meetings Schedule

November 13	District 2-8-9 District 4 District 6
November 20	District 7
December 16	District 1
January 15	District 6
January 22	District 2-8-9 District 7
February 17	District 1
March 19	District 2-8-9 District 7
April 21	District 1

E-Mail Addresses

If you change your e-mail address, please remember to update your records at OCPA. Forward your new e-mail address or contact information to Brenda Kuba at brenda.kuba@ocpa-oh.org.

E-mail broadcasts will be our main communication to the membership.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO ABOUT CYBERBULLYING

Parents can help stop cyberbullying. You can start by talking to kids about the issue and teaching them the rules below that will help prevent cyberbullying from happening to them or someone they know.

What Kids Need to Know:

- Never give out personal information online, whether in instant message profiles, chat rooms, blogs, or personal websites.
 - Never tell anyone but your parents your password, even friends.
 - If someone sends a mean or threatening message, don't respond. Save it or print it out and show it to an adult.
 - Never open emails from someone you don't know or from someone you know is a bully.
 - Don't put anything online that you wouldn't want your classmates to see, even in email.
- Don't send messages when you're angry. Before clicking "send," ask yourself how you would feel if received the message.
 - Help kids who are bullied online by not joining in and showing bullying messages to an adult.
 - Always be as polite online as you are in person.

Since most cyberbullying takes place at home, it's important that parents know about cyberbullying and that they get involved in preventing it. Just like parents help their kids avoid inappropriate websites, they can protect them from cyberbullying.

What Parents Can Do

- Keep your home computer in a busy area of your house.
- Set up email and chat accounts with your children. Make sure that you know their screen

names and passwords and that they don't include any personal information in their online profiles.

- Regularly go over their instant messenger "buddy list" with them. Ask who each person is and how your children know him or her.
- Print this list of commonly used [acronyms](#) in instant messenger and chat rooms from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and post it by your computer.
- Discuss cyberbullying with your children and ask if they have ever experienced it or seen it happen to someone.
- Tell your children that you won't blame them if they are cyberbullied. Emphasize that you won't take away their computer privileges - this is the main reason kids don't tell adults when they are cyberbullied.

OCPA COMMITTEES NEED VOLUNTEERS

OCPA currently has several standing committees that need volunteers to serve on them and help the association build a strong future.

This is a great way to get involved in the association and we need your expertise.

Alot of the committee work can be done via e-mail but may require you to attend a couple of meetings throughout the year.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- OCPA Past Presidents Only
OCPA President Eric Franz
eric.franz@cincinnati-oh.gov

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

OCPA Past President Shari Robertson
srobertson@ci.mansfield.oh.us

FINANCE COMMITTEE

OCPA Treasurer John Hunkler
jhunkler@westchesteroh.org

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

OCPA Secretary Matthew Dunn
mdunn@ci.centerville.oh.us

TRAINING COMMITTEE

OCPA Vice-President Jeff Newman
jnewman@westchesteroh.org

If you are interested in serving on one of these committee, please notify the Committee Chairperson or Brenda Kuba at
brenda.kuba@ocpa-oh.org.

HOME SECURITY SURVEY CHECKLIST

Complete this security checklist to find out if a home or structure may be vulnerable to thieves.

DOORS

- Doors have 180 degree peepholes
- Inside locks are at least 1 meter from glass
- Exterior doors are solid-core
- Exterior doors have 2.5 cm deadbolt
- Exterior door hinge pins are non-removable
- Door jambs are security fastened
- Strike plates are secured to door jambs with 6.35 cm screws
- Deadbolts extend sufficiently into strike plates
- Locks have been changed or re-keyed since you have moved in

WINDOWS

- Double hung windows are securely pinned
- Metal windows and basement windows have auxiliary locks
- Basement windows have auxiliary locks
- Curtains cover windows completely
- Window air conditioners are secured from inside

GARAGE

- Garage door closes tightly
- Overhead garage door has quality lock
- Doors are locked and closed when not in use
- Remote garage door opener is customized for your garage door
- Keys are removed from vehicle while it is in the garage
- Garage light can be turned on from inside the house

EXTERIORS

- Shrubs are cut below window level
- Tree limbs cut above window level
- Residence number is visible from the street, at night and from the lane
- All entrances to the house and garage are well lit
- Bicycles, lawn movers, ladders, etc. are kept inside
- You know your neighbors and watch out for each other's property or you belong to a Neighborhood Watch program

VACATIONS

- You have stopped all deliveries
- You have left shades and blinds in their normal positions
- You have notified your Neighbors

- You have set timers on lights and radio
- Someone is taking care of your yard
- Your mail is being held or picked up

ADDITIONAL CHECKS

- You keep most of your cash in the bank
- You keep a list of all valuable property, credit cards and serial numbers in a safe place
- Valuable property is engraved with a PIN number
- Contact your local police service for further information

ADDITIONAL NOTES:



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GAS STATION THEFT PREVENTION

Recently, there has been increased media coverage across the country regarding theft at gas stations. The unique setting allows thieves to catch their victims by complete surprise — when they are pumping gas or paying their tab inside the station. Most of the time, gas station customers leave their car doors unlocked and items like purses and wallets are often left in plain view.

A thief is able to drive up next to the victim's car, open an unlocked door, and grab any valuables within reach.

Then, the thief quickly drives off. It happens in a matter of seconds.

But these thefts can be easily prevented if the appropriate precautions are taken. The Ohio Crime Prevention Association recommends the following tips to prevent citizens from becoming victims of theft at area gas stations.

- Pick stations that are well-lit and have video surveillance cameras at the pump.

- Always remove your keys and lock the doors while you are pumping gas.
- Keep valuables out of plain view in your vehicle and lock the doors even if you are going inside for a moment.
- Pay attention to your surroundings.
- Don't let your cell phone distract you.

SAFETY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON WITH CHILDREN

- Always require your children to stay with you at all times while shopping.
- Always accompany and supervise your children in public facilities, including restrooms.
- Always have a plan in place in case you become separated, including a pre-designated spot to meet.
- Always teach your children to look for people who can help, such as a uniformed security officer, salesperson or a mother with children.
- Always remind your children to remain in the area where they became separated.
- Always turn shopping trips into opportunities to practice safe shopping.
- Never dress your children in clothing displaying their names, prompting unwelcome attention from people looking for an opportunity to start a conversation.
- Never leave your children in toy stores or public facilities expecting supervision from store personnel.
- Never go shopping or attend a public event with a child if you feel you're going to be distracted. Make other arrangements for child care ahead of time.
- Never allow younger children to shop on their own to purchase surprise gifts for friends or family members.
- Never drop off your older children at a mall or public place without agreeing on a clear plan for pick up; including where, when and what to do in case of a change in plans.
- By following these simple holiday safety tips, you should be able to eliminate some of the stress that comes along with this busy holiday shopping season.

O C P A C O N T A C T

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