

Burglary 101

Crescenta Valley Weekly

At about 2 a.m. an unknown person entered the office complex in the 3800 block of La Crescenta Avenue. The only description of the suspect was that s/he was wearing a dark sweater hoodie, with the hood up, a facemask and shorts. The suspect entered the parking lot and went to several offices. Soon after entering the well-lit parking lot the lights went out. It is suspected the person found a power box to turn off the security lights.

The suspect was able to break into one downstairs office and ransacked it but nothing was reported stolen. The suspect attempted to enter another office by cutting through a shared wall with the kitchen area of the complex, but was not able to enter the office.

The suspect was able to enter an upstairs office by breaking a side window. It is thought the suspect then reached in and opened the door. Several rooms were ransacked and a number of items were reported missing.

This comes a few months after a vehicle in the parking lot of the complex had a window shattered and items stolen.

As CVW reporters we are used to reporting the news and not being part of the news; however, this time that fourth wall was broken - we are the burglary victims. One of those burgled offices was ours.

Burglaries have gone down in Glendale by 21.87% year-to-date; however, when you are a victim of burglary those numbers don't seem that important.

Interviewing those who have been a victim of burglary, the common first feeling is one of violation followed by a feeling of being unsafe - almost like waiting for the second shoe to drop.

There is a lot of information on tips how to prevent a burglary but not a lot of information on what to do

after you are burglarized. Here is the little bit of what we have discovered:

Call law enforcement. Do this first even though you may be certain the suspect/suspects are no longer on the property. Let the officers walk through the property first. This is done for several reasons including making certain the location is safe and the suspect is gone. And officers/deputies can go through the location making sure none of the evidence is disturbed. Then law enforcement will more than likely get the Forensics Unit out to take fingerprints or find other evidence.

Once law enforcement clears the location for victim/victims to enter, take photos. This will be valuable for an insurance report. See what is missing; remember, this is an ongoing process as people discover missing items over the next several months.

If you have any banking or credit card information missing or if it looked like someone has gone through past bills that have personal information on them make sure to contact your bank and credit card companies. Either close the accounts or put them on pause as you search to find what is actually missing.

For those who itemize everything in their office/home prior to being burglarized that is great; however, for those who haven't try to make a list as near to the value and replacement value of any stolen items. You will want to gather as much documentation you can of the stolen items.

Most insurance companies and banking institutions will require a police report, so make sure you have copies on hand.

Deciding if you want to report this to your insurance carrier is a personal decision. If the loss is not as much as your deductible, then that is an easy decision - take the loss; however, if your loss is greater talk to your agent about what will happen if you file a report. There are several stories of people losing their insurance after filing a claim, even if it is their first claim.

According to ABC7 in a 2021 report, a woman had been the victim of a vehicle burglary. After talking to her insurance agent about her fear of her policy being canceled, and being reportedly told it was very rare for an insurance company to cancel, about a month after she reported the theft her policy was canceled.

So it is important to have an honest talk with your insurance agent to see if your insurance policy costs will increase if you file a claim. If you find you have issues with your insurance the consumer advocacy group United Policy Holders is a good place to find information.

But being a victim of burglary goes beyond the items lost; it is an emotional event. Even those who look at it as “Well, it could have been worse” or “Thank goodness they didn’t take more” feel violated.

According to the U.S. Dept. of Justice, the British Journal of Criminology report published in 1980 found that 25% (40% of all victims are female) of burglary were seriously shocked or distressed at having their location burglarized. And more than a month after the incident only one-third of the victims said they had fully recovered from the experience.

“The overall impression was of people struggling to regain a lost sense of security,” the findings showed. “A more general problem is the sense of insecurity caused by the knowledge that threatening strangers have entered one’s [property] – a place considered to be one’s private territory under personal control.”

It is important to acknowledge your feelings, including fear, anger or loss. Understand that all of these feelings and concerns are valid