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## Archive



### Serial Burglaries

Police Chief Dave Rohrer and Crime Prevention Officer Patrick Lucas answered your questions about the recent serial burglaries in our community. A transcript of this discussion is below.

**Dave Rohrer** : Thank you for joining us this afternoon for this discussion. We appreciate this opportunity to engage with you and look forward to answering your questions and hearing your ideas. These burglaries are a top priority for our department as well as for Fairfax County.

**FxCo Resident** : Should we be worried that two handguns have been stolen by this thief. Also shouldn't the people who left the guns in their cars be held partially responsible for negligence?

**Dave Rohrer** : Certainly we are concerned about this and we released this information to make sure residents were aware this person/persons may be armed. We ask that people not leave valuables/weapons in their cars.

**Anonymous User** : We keep our doors locked at all times, whether we are home or not. At night, we have six sensor flood lights covering all sides of our house. What else can we do to stay safe and protect ourselves? Should we consider an expensive burglar alarm system?

**Patrick Lucas** : Alarm systems are one layer of several that are available to you for your safety at home. Motion sensors can also be connected to radios and other device to notify you when they are activated. We are trying to detect movement or a change in the condition of a door or window. An alarm system is an investment and does have a reoccurring monthly expense if you have that within your budget. Some people use their alarm systems as local alarms and do not pay to have it monitored. Each police district has crime prevention staff that can schedule a free home security survey.

**LG** : Have any of the burglarized homes had a dog in residence?

**Patrick Lucas** : Yes there have been some. If you have an animal please do pay attention to any indication that it may be giving you to alert you.

**Bob W.** : Hello Chief Rohrer -- Are there any similarities in the neighborhoods that have been burglarized? Also, is there now another county being victimized?

**Dave Rohrer** : There are some similarities in the neighborhoods; larger, single family homes with larger lots seem to be a commonality. Detectives from across the region are working together and they may or may not be related. We work closely with our regional partners. As of this week, we understand that Prince William County has had similar cases and our detectives will continue to work with them to try to see whether or not they are related and to solve them.

**Anonymous User** : Has Oakton, VA had any burglaries attributable to this serial burglar

**Dave Rohrer** : Yes; Oakton has had several cases to include; the Hunter Mill Road, Vale Road, and Hannah Farm areas.

**rahul** : 1. Out of all the breakins, how many houses had security systems installed 2. What were Top 3 methods of breakin

**Patrick Lucas** : We would not release this type of exact number. Our advise would be that if you do have an alarm system it is a good practice to use it even while you are home. Most have a Stay setting. Another recommendation we are giving is to please use the door and window locks you currently have. The majority of these incidents have been through unlocked doors and windows. So please lock your doors and windows, especially if you have recently opened them for some fresh air. Get into the habit of checking them before you retire for the evening.

**Anonymous User** : Have you looked at construction crews in the area in relation to the robberies - same construction crews when robberies take place in different locations

**Dave Rohrer** : Every investigative lead is being followed up; we've created a departmental task force and these burglaries are a top priority.

**Anonymous User** : are we live? are we supposed to see all the questions/answers? thanks

**Patrick Lucas** : We are live, try refreshing your browser. We are answer previously submitted questions too so we are typing. We are here though.

**Alex** : Do residents seem to be responding to these crimes by being more careful about locking doors, covering windows and leaving valuables out of plain sight, or are there still plenty of targets for the thief to hit?

**Dave Rohrer** : We certainly hope so. People do seem to be paying attention, being more vigilant and staying informed. We hope they'll continue to pay close attention to the key message; secure your valuables and lock your doors (and windows) to your home and vehicles.

**Anonymous User** : What is the means of entry to most of the homes?

**Dave Rohrer** : Most homes were entered via unlocked doors.

**Fred L** : What types of homes have been hit? Single family, town house, multifamily?

**Dave Rohrer** : Single family homes.

**D** : This morning a suspicious death was reported in FX Station. The resident's Lexus SUV was missing. Any reason to think this was related to the

string of robberies?

**Dave Rohrer** : We haven't ruled it out; it would be premature to connect them at this point. Preliminarily, we don't believe there's a connection.

**Anonymous User** : Are these burglaries all happening at night?

**Dave Rohrer** : Yes; roughly between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.

**Mary** : Which houses seem to be targeted?

**Patrick Lucas** : Our current series of related burglaries have been targeting single family homes. You should still lock your doors and windows.

**Anonymous User** : is it better to leave outdoor lights off so the suspect needs some sort of lighting device that may be considered suspicious by neighbors or to have outdoor lights on and potentially make it easier for him?

**Dave Rohrer** : We strongly encourage outdoor lights be left ON. We also encourage people to go outside; take a look at their house during nighttime hours, think like a burglar, and look for vulnerabilities. Reach out to your local police station to request a home security check.

**Tee** : Has there any cases in Dunn Loring?

**Dave Rohrer** : None have been reported to us.

**FFX CTY** : When was the last time the burglar hit Fairfax County?

**Dave Rohrer** : The last reported case in Fairfax County was Oct. 1.

**mary** : Could you please provide a very short summary of burglaries. How many? Where? What's being stolen?

**Patrick Lucas** : The most up to date information is being updated on our website at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police) New Releases and Crime in our County links provide weekly summaries and the County does have an interactive mapping application you can search using an address.

**Resident** : Public notices have indicated one person suspected in all burglaries, but what about the possibility that there are several or more burglars at work?

**Dave Rohrer** : There is a possibility that more than one person is involved, and we have not ruled out either that possibility or the possibility that we have "copy cat" type cases.

**Sid** : Has there been any connection between the burglar you arrested in Oakton (Waples Mill) a few days ago and the serial burglaries? Have any burglaries happened since the arrest?

**Dave Rohrer** : We did make an arrest for unlawful entry, but we have not connected it to the serial burglary investigation. Detectives are following up with this and all other leads.

**Fred L** : How many burglaries have there been and where in the County?

**Dave Rohrer** : We have 91 cases reported to date that we have associated with this series. 60 of these are burglaries or attempted burglaries, the remainder are larcenies from vehicles, etc.

**Brad S** : Is there a regularly updated online map that we can access that shows the date/time and location of these breakins?

**Dave Rohrer** : Yes; it is located on the FCPD home page at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police).

**Anonymous User** : Have there been any new events in Fairfax related to the serial burglar, since the events earlier this week in Prince William County (Haymarket area)?

**Dave Rohrer** : No, we have had no reported cases in Fairfax County since the cases were reported in Prince William County. I stress "reported cases," because we could have cases not reported to us.

**log on?** : How do I follow this discussion?

**Dave Rohrer** : Please hit "Refresh" on your computer.

**Hank Thomassen** : I participate in neighborhood watch for my community. My question regards improving the response to Neighborhood Watch calls to the non-emergency police number. Several years ago, I asked for a "drive-by" by a cruiser just to check out four individuals hanging out at 11 PM in my neighborhood, who were not from the neighborhood and looked like they were looking the neighborhood over. At 1:30 PM I received a call from the FCPD asking if I still needed the drive-by. This has been the typical response from the FCPD. What can you do to address this type of concern.

**Patrick Lucas** : First may I say thank you for participating in your neighborhood watch. At any given moment we are handling calls for service and what I try to encourage people to do when calling is be as descriptive as possible when expressing the need for the officer. Focus and report the behavior. The more details you are able to provide helps get an officer to you faster. If it is a busy night it may take a little while to get to the drive through type request.

**Anonymous User** : Are most of the robberies middle of the night (ex. 2/3am) or are there an equal number in the daytime?

**Dave Rohrer** : We have no known reported cases during the daytime. All reported cases in this series have been at nighttime.

**Anonymous User** : Has anyone been injured?

**Dave Rohrer** : We are not aware of anyone being injured. However, we continue to stress that we are concerned that the offender(s) may be armed or dangerous, so report any crime or suspicious activity to us immediately. Do not attempt to confront an offender.

**Anonymous User** : Does "serial burglary" mean there are several in one night? Is there reason to think it is one person or several?

**Dave Rohrer** : It means that the cases are part of a related series, we believe the same offender or group of offenders are responsible.

**Wendy Bakken** : Just wanted to say THANK YOU for answering questions and for all the hard work you all are doing. :)

**Dave Rohrer** : Thank you. I appreciate all the community support and engagement and I'm proud of the detectives, officers, crime analysts, and commanders who are fully engaged and working hard to identify, apprehend, and prosecute the offender(s).

**Dave** : When was the last case reported in Vienna and Oakton in Fairfax?

**Dave Rohrer** : September 29 in the Hannah Farms subdivision.

**Gregory Licamele** : In an effort to tackle as many of your inquiries as possible, I'm a public information officer with the FCPD here to help answer your questions.

**Catherine** : What happens if we encounter said person? And is this the same person that has been breaking into peoples cars the past few weeks? I have had my car broken into a few weeks ago an was told that it was a group of men from DC.

**Patrick Lucas** : If you are to encounter someone we recommend making distance between you and that person as much a possible and calling for help. In most cases criminals do not want to be confronted. We ask for everyone to please lock their doors and windows which helps to reduce your risk. Breaking glass and using force makes noise which increases the chance of being detected. If you think someone has entered your home call 911 and get us started your way. You can always call us back if you no longer need us. I would need more informaiton about your case before I could comment. Please feel free to email me your question at patrick.lucas@fairfaxcounty.gov and I will do my best to follow up with you.

**Concerned** : Are police in the Fairfax area patrolling neighborhoods more often as a result of the burglaries? I have not seen any more of a police presence.

**Dave Rohrer** : Yes, we have stepped up patrols in various areas, and we have undertaken other investigative steps which I cannot discuss in detail. Obviously, most of these high-visibility patrols are late at night when the burglaries are reportedly occurring.

**mary** : Any area of the county more heavily hit?

**Dave Rohrer** : Unfortunately, we have cases reported in 6 of our 8 police districts. Most cases have been reported in areas in the western and northern sections of the County.

**Laurie** : Do you think these are drug related.... Are the things being stolen high end like computers or more like things grabbed quickly like money that a kid would take?

**Gregory Licamele** : We can't rule this out but we have no evidence to indicate that they are. Money appears to be the primary target.

**rose Piccigallo** : Whan did these burglaries start happening. I pretty sure that my daughter car was burglaried in Aug. Thank you

**Dave Rohrer** : The first reported cases we've associated with this series began on Aug. 24.

**Hank Thomassen** : Any thought to improving the interface with neighborhood watch groups like establishing a separate phone line just for them?

**Patrick Lucas** : The most efficient method to get a police response is through the Department of Public Safety Communications system. 911 and 703-691-2131 are your direct lines into the officers working patrol. Each district station's crime prevention officer would be the point of contact for follow up and additional communication.

**Anonymous User** : has a description or composite sketch been released? is it known if there is a vehicle involved or is the suspect walking the neighborhoods?

**Gregory Licamele** : We have very little/vague description of a suspect. It is not known whether or not a vehicle is involved. We encourage the public to contact police if they have information on this case and to report unknown/suspicious vehicles in their communities.

**FFX Station Resident** : Is there any reason to suspect that the burglaries may be related to the death on Ladue's End Court?

**Dave Rohrer** : We have answered this question previously, but we are getting it repeatedly. We have no reason preliminarily to link it with the burglary series, but we are being careful to not just summarily rule it out either although we do not believe it is related. The other cases have all occurred at nighttime.

**Fairfax Underground** : Is there a description of the suspect's vehicle? I've heard from neighbors (on the message board) that it's a Chevy Lumina but wanted to confirm this with official sources. Thank you.

**Dave Rohrer** : We have no possible vehicle information or description reported in our cases, so I have no lookout information to report in that regard. We would ask if someone has seen a suspicious Chevy Lumina or other vehicle that they contact detectives immediately.

**Joey** : You said think like a burglar - would you recommend walking the house perimeter at night? Or would you consider this dangerous?

**Patrick Lucas** : If you do not feel safe walking around your home at night then we would not recommend you do that. The suggestion is for you to look at your home from the outside with what would be the eyes of a burglar. If you can see items of value through windows you might want to consider relocating them. Blinds, window shears, and curtains help reduce the outsider from seeing into your home. If you have never taken a look at night we recommend you educate yourself about your own environment and what the criminal might see as an opportunity.

**Anonymous User** : What are the laws for using lethal force to defend against a home invasion?

**Gregory Licamele** : Any citizen is entitled to defend themselves against death or great bodily harm; however we encourage residents to be a good witness and we stress that they should contact police.

**Omar** : I understand that either Fairfax or Arlington caught some individuals robbing vehicles. If so, is there anyway to recover stolen items?

**Gregory Licamele** : If someone is victimized they can get a police report from their local police district station to determine whether or not they have recovered any of the property.

**Dave Rohrer** : We thank you for all your questions. I wish I had more time to answer all, but unfortunately we cannot answer all the questions. Officer Lucas will continue to answer some and we will try to answer others in a different forum or in FAQs possibly. I want to again assure the community that this investigation is a top priority for us and will continue to be. We take the fact that the offender or offenders are entering occupied homes during the night very seriously. Please report any crimes or suspicious activity or persons to us immediately. For emergencies contact 911, for non-emergencies contact 703-691-2131. I am confident that working in partnership, the police and the public can solve these cases.

**Whitney Rhodes** : Is there a list of where the burglaries have occurred? I saw the map on the county's site, but it's difficult to get a grasp of where/when these crimes happened since all are marked by large, neighborhood-filling dots. Can we get info by street block?

**Patrick Lucas** : Crime information is available from our website at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police) links on the upper left to News Releases and Crime in our County have summary information weekly. Email me and I can help you find them if you are unable: [patrick.lucas@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:patrick.lucas@fairfaxcounty.gov)

**Worried** : Is this person/persons on foot or is there a suspected vehical?

**Gregory Licamele** : We don't know. We have no information on a known vehicle at this time.

**D** : Do you have a template of things to remember to look for in case we see someone suspicious? For example, height, weight, what the person was wearing, type of vehicle, license #, etc.?

**Patrick Lucas** : We can try and get that posted on the website but if you email me I will send you some additional information.  
[patrick.lucas@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:patrick.lucas@fairfaxcounty.gov)

**Anonymous User** : Has the County ever experienced this many burglaries and never caught the offender?

**Gregory Licamele** : If you are interested in crime statistics, please visit our web site [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/crime/statistics](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/crime/statistics). In 2009, we had 289 residential nighttime burglaries reported to police, for example. There are times, unfortunately, that offenders are not apprehended.

**Jon** : Does the burglar target homes that are thought to be unoccupied, or does he knowingly enter occupied homes under the assumption the household is asleep?

**Gregory Licamele** : We do not know the mindset of the burglar. However, it seems that people being home does not deter the suspect(s).

**J** : I am the neighborhood watch coordinator for our area, and I have submitted several questions (last night and today). It appears you will not get to my questions, how will you answer them?

**Patrick Lucas** : We are working through them. This being our first time doing this we have been pleased with the interest. I will continue to work through them and appreciate your patients.

**J** : What does "attempted" burglary mean to your dept? Also, when the term "garage doors" are being broken into/through do you mean single swinging doors that enter garages versus large overhead doors? It is very confusing and misleading.

**Gregory Licamele** : Attempted burglary means that entry was not gained into the home. The term "garage doors" refers to both swinging doors and overhead garage doors. Both of these doors have been locations of entry.

**Katherine** : I heard that these burglaries take place at night. Are the homes occupied during the burglaries? Should we be concerned for our personal safety? What extra security measures can we take to prevent home invasions?

**Gregory Licamele** : The majority have been occupied. For extra security measures, please log on to the home page of the FCPD web site; [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police).

**J Neighborhood Watch Coordinator** : Garage door entry means entry through a swinging door or an Overhead door? I can not believe there are people that do not lock their doors and windows, especially when they retire for the evening.

**Patrick Lucas** : In a few cases the garage door opener from a vehicle parked in the driveway was removed and used to open the outside door. While driving around McLean last week I found 5 open garage doors. All were closed before I left.

**Worried** : Do you recommend keeping lights on at night inside our houses?

**Patrick Lucas** : I would recommend using timers on inside lights that go on and off randomly to create the illusion of occupancy.

**Anonymous User** : How likely is it that this burglar will resort to violence?

**Dave Rohrer** : We can never predict the future actions of the person(s) involved. We do stress that the person(s) may be armed and dangerous.

**J Arnold** : In addition to our neighborhood watch, what other suggestions can you provide to assist us in looking out for one another in the neighborhood.

**Dave Rohrer** : Continue to be vigilant. Call the police with any suspicious people or behavior. Know what belongs in your neighborhood. And what is not the norm. Be a great witness.

**Nicole Trifone (Oakton Patch)** : -Have there been any incidents linked to this case since Oct. 1? - Are the police any closer to making an arrest(s) in this string of burglaries? - Have the police been able to identify a suspect or suspects? - Has the M.O. changed since the last community meeting Sept. 30? If so, how? - Is cash all that is being stolen? Or are some objects also being targeted? If so, what? - Can police rule out the possibility of copy cats? - How many agencies have been involved with investigating these burglaries? Is there coordination with other counties? - How much money and manpower has gone into this investigation? - What advice would you give people out there to avoid this happening to them? - Is there a fear of more homes being burglarized with the holiday season coming? - Has there ever been a string of burglaries like this in the county in the past? - If so, when, where and how long did it last and was there an arrest? - It was reported that two handguns were stolen from a vehicle. What kind of guns were they? - Is there a fear that this person or people could grow violent? - What common factors are police looking into in regards to investigations to see if these are crimes being committed by the same people or person? - Is this gang related?

**Gregory Licamele** : Thanks for all of your questions; you have many excellent questions here and we'll try to answer a few of these today. We continue to follow all leads and the investigation is a top priority. FCPD is working with neighboring jurisdictions and following all leads. Tips and advice are located on our web page; [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police). Call the PIO office for follow up as we've run into time constraints this afternoon.

**Anonymous User** : I heard a suspect was taken into custody on Monday October 4 in Oakton. Was an arrest made or was this person released? Can you share any other information on that situation?

**Dave Rohrer** : That person was arrested and charged with "Unlawful Entry." We continue to look at that subject as we do for all subjects that may have criminal records. Every lead is being investigated thoroughly.

**J** : I think it is college students from Mason. The commencing date coincides with the start of school, they are young enough to have the energy to

do this nightly and walk miles, they have no one to report to during the hours of 12am-6am, etc... Have the police investigated or questioned students at the local colleges?

**Dave Rohrer** : We continue to explore every possibility, every suspect, every lead. Nothing is being ruled out. All leads are being exhausted.

**GM** : One of the news reports stated he walked by a homeowners security camera, walking from their house to the next one. Didn't someone get that video to help ID this guy.

**Patrick Lucas** : I can not answer specifically as this is an on going investigation.

**Jon** : After entering a house, what areas/rooms does the suspect typically search?

**Gregory Licamele** : We'd caution residents to lock doors entering homes from garages, kitchens, patios, basements. Suspects typically search main levels of homes.

**Dave Rohrer** : The previous questions have been answered by Lt. John Trace. Chief Rohrer has logged off.

**Worried** : It sounds as if there have not been any confrontations however, I heard there was an assault in the Fair Oaks Hospital parking lot. Is that related?

**Gregory Licamele** : We have no information on this incident being related to the serial burglaries.

**J** : What does ATTEMPTED BURGLARY mean?

**Gregory Licamele** : This means no entry was gained into homes.

**Whitney Rhodes** : Have all the burglaries happened only in county areas? What about the towns around the Fair Oaks area, Fairfax City, especially. How are county forces working with town departments on this? Is there any collaboration going on? Why/why not?

**Dave Rohrer** : Other jurisdictions have been contacted by our detectives and we continue to explore all similar cases. We are actively working together. We routinely support each other with staffing and resources when necessary. "Lt John Trace-Sully Station"

**Patrick Lucas** : Thanks for the opportunity to use this forum. I will continue to answer questions from the posted messages.

**homeowner** : There are not instructions on this webpage as to how to participate in this online discussion, so this appears to be of little value. thanks anyway.

**Gregory Licamele** : Homes with security systems have been victimized.

**Anonymous User** : Does the dog deter the intruder?

**Gregory Licamele** : No. But if your dog does alert or act unusually, pay attention to this behavior.

**Calling police** : Can you put the non emergency number back on the sides of the police vehicles other than 9-11. When ever I need to call from the road need to call 411 which now charges \$2 per call, only for me to report something I've seen and I don't want to tie up 9-11 with a non emergency such as a fender bender and such.

**Patrick Lucas** : If you are calling for an incident such as a vehicle crash or what you believe to be a crime that is occurring or is about to occur you may dial 911. The non-emergency number is 703-691-2131. If you are unsure it is more import for us to get your call than to miss an opportunity so use 911. It is also important for you to call as soon as possible too. Thank you for the question.

**Oakton homeowner** : When you say don't leave garage doors in unattended vehicles, does that mean even locked vehicles? Should we remove or hide the garage door openers in our locked vehicles that are kept outside?

**Patrick Lucas** : The garage door opener is basically a key to your garage. We recommend that you bring it in with you. As part of our education training we us the four "D's" delay, detect, deter, and deny. By bringing the opener in and locking the door from the garage to the house we can hopefully prevent someone from entering that way.

**Sid** : You mentioned putting on the Stay alarm while at home. Most of the alarms also have an Instant Stay setting where the alarm goes off immediately rather than after an entry delay of 1 - 2 mins. This can act as a huge deterrent for the burglar since he knows this can wake up the house. But you should turn on the Instant Stay setting only at night when you know that no family member is going to open the door until the next morning. If you think this is useful, do recommend it on this discussion board.

**Patrick Lucas** : Great tip. Every alarm system is different and I encourage anyone with an alarm to take the time to learn how to use their systems features. Locking the doors and windows and setting the alarm if you have one will help us with detecting and hopefully deterring a burglar.

**Patrick Lucas** : We will be working on building a faq list from this discussion as so many of the questions were very similar in nature. We appreciate everyone who participated with the discussion.

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