

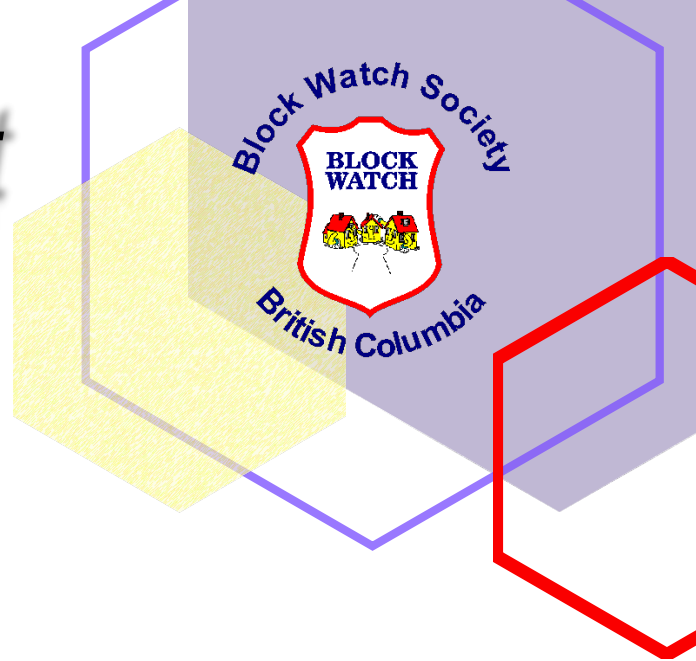
# Block Watch Beat

Summer 2019

A Newsletter for B.C. Block Watch Groups

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## Tenacity Pays Off for Bike Theft Victim

By Kimberly Kelley  
Victoria Police  
Department

Summer months often coincide with a rise in bike thefts. For many across B.C., the theft of a bicycle isn't just the loss of a hobby. Losing one's bike can mean the loss of transportation to work or school. While many police departments are stepping up their efforts to help prevent bike theft, through information campaigns, partnering with or creating their own bike registries and targeting prolific offenders, here's a story of how a Victoria woman got her bike back – by being tenacious.

After making a police report that her bike had been stolen from an underground parking garage, the Victoria woman decided to keep an eye out on local used goods websites in case her bicycle was posted for sale. Six days later she spotted her bike for sale online.

A friend called the seller and offered to meet to purchase the bicycle. When the suspected thief arrived for the morning meeting, he was met not by the friend, but by plainclothes Victoria Police Department officers.

He was taken into custody and the bicycle returned to the rightful owner.

The victim, here, did everything right before, during and after the crime, and you can, too. Remember to lock your bicycle behind at least two layers of defence – a bike lock and a secure location. Report your bike stolen right away, have serial numbers, and a recent photograph, and description on hand. And if you find your bicycle for sale online, make a report to the police and let officers meet with the seller. Never put yourself in harm's way.

## Call bc211 – now serving all B.C.

By Gabriel Pelletier  
Surrey RCMP

We all know that calling 9-1-1 will get us “police, fire or ambulance”, but not many know about 2-1-1. The **bc211** service is a non-profit organization that provides referrals and information on government, community and social services.

We at Block Watch spend so much time explaining when to call police, and city bylaws, but **bc211** covers almost everything else. It can also be

effective at preventing crime in the long-run by enabling your neighbour and participant.

You can find resources on a specific topic such as a developmental disorder or shelter bed vacancy. Also, calling 2-1-1 can connect people to a government service, or third-party organizations such as VictimLink BC or the Youth Against Violence Line.

**bc211** started in Vancouver, but since 2010 has been rapidly expanding through the province. As of 2017, United Way partnered with **bc211** to make its online services province-wide on a user-friendly platform and the choice of connecting to a specialist via web chat.

Quickly connect by computer, tablet or smartphone at [www.bc211.ca](http://www.bc211.ca)

Block Watch – the operational crime prevention program

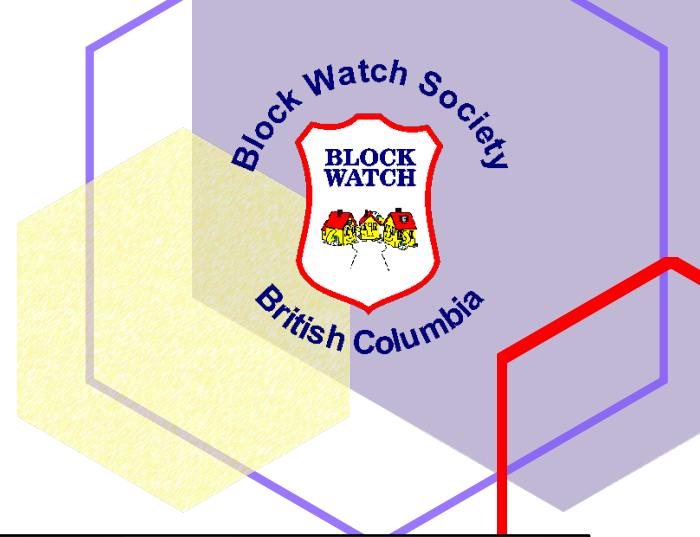
# Identity Theft

By Roy Morgan  
Regional District Central  
Okanagan

Identity theft is when a person gets your personal information (e.g. name, date of birth, banking, credit card etc.) and uses it to make purchases, obtain funds, create social media accounts in your name and/or open up a bank account.

Tips to help prevent identity theft:

- Be cautious when and on what platform you give out your personal information.
- Keep your social insurance card, passport and birth certificate stored in a safe place.
- Be very skeptical of offers that require your Social Insurance Number, credit or financial information as an enrolment condition.
- Avoid using easily identified PINs on any accounts you use (e.g. date of birth, "ABC123")
- Be careful regarding personal information when posting on social media.
- Try to be aware of [frauds and scams](#) online. If offers sound too good to be true, they are often scams.
- Do not discard credit card statements or utility bills into your trash or recycling bin without first shredding them.
- Keep a list of all your credit and bank accounts in a secure place so you can quickly call the issuers to inform them about missing or stolen cards.



- Be cautious when performing online transactions by making sure the site is secure, has a privacy policy and the company is reputable.
- Regularly check your monthly statements for any unapproved or missing transactions.
- Review your Equifax and TransUnion Canada credit history every year to make sure no unauthorized accounts were made in your name.
- Report fraud to the police. In addition, all scams, even if not successful, can be reported to the [Canada Antifraud Centre: Online](#) or by calling toll-free: 1-888-495-8501.

# Cycling Safety

By Christine Kirby, ICBC

Whether you're a driver or a cyclist, we all have a role to play in sharing the road responsibly.

Cyclists, like pedestrians, are vulnerable to significant injuries or death in crashes with cars. While the top contributing factors attributed to crashes with cyclists are driver distraction and failure to yield, there are things that both drivers and cyclists can do to commute safely.

## Sharing the road

On average, nearly four out of five crashes involving cyclists occur at intersections in B.C. Here are tips for drivers to share the road and to help reduce the chances of a crash:

### Don't get distracted.

Watch for cyclists on the road and make eye contact if you can, so they can anticipate your next move.

### Yield the right-of-way.

Yield to cyclists and signal well in advance if you need to cross a designated bike lane or pull over to the side of the road.

### Look out.

Shoulder check for cyclists before turning right and watch for

oncoming cyclists before turning left. Scan for cyclists before you enter the roadway from an alley or get in and out of a parking spot.

### Keep a safe distance.

Maintain at least three seconds behind cyclists and at least one metre when passing a cyclist. Don't risk side-swiping or running a cyclist off the road.

### Dooring is dangerous.

To avoid [dooring](#) (video, 30 secs) a cyclist, both drivers and passengers must shoulder check before opening doors. This will also help you avoid a [violation and fine](#).



# How to: Prevent Motorcycle Theft

By Eling Lau, Burnaby RCMP

Police advise people to take extra steps to secure their vehicles, including extra locks and chains, and to also be mindful of barriers that might deter thieves, such as driveway gates or cameras. They also encourage people to speak with their neighbours, join Block Watch and call the police if they see anyone suspicious in their neighbourhood. It takes a matter of seconds for a thief to steal a moped, scooter, dirt bike or motorcycle, especially if they are left unsecured.

## Vehicle Locks & Alarms

Consider fitting a Thatcham-rated 1 or 2 alarm system with tracking, immobilisation, anti-grab and movement sensors can help protect and trace your vehicle.

## Marking & Identification Systems

Marking your bike as much as possible will make it more difficult for criminals to sell parts, and therefore less attractive to steal. It will also help

police identify parts and return recovered stolen motorcycles. Datatag ID - Datatag is a piece of technology which can be attached to various parts of your motorcycle. Datatag assists Police identify the owner of the vehicle should it be stolen and later recovered even if the motorcycle has been taken apart.

## Tracking Devices & Key Removal

Tracking devices will assist police in tracing and recovering the vehicle quickly. Tracking devices vary in price and features. You should seek advice from your local motorcycle dealership.

Always use the steering lock and remove the ignition keys, even if you are close by or away for a few minutes. It only takes a few seconds for a thief so don't make it easy for them. Never rely on just using your



steering lock to secure your motorcycle as thieves can break the steering lock and simply wheel the motorcycle away.

## Social Media

The increased use of Social Media and fitness tracker apps is making it easier for criminals to plan their thefts from the comfort of their homes. Think twice about what you share, and help prevent the theft of your motorcycle and other possessions.

Digital References:

[1\) BC RCMP](#) – [2\) Scotland Police](#)

# A Block Watch [Facebook] Group Facebook ≠ Block Watch.

By Gabriel Pelletier  
Surrey RCMP

There are groups on social media founded around all kinds of shared interests. The prevalence of "crime watch" groups on Facebook in particular requires the Block Watch Society to provide some guidance to Block Watch groups and Block Watch cities.

This is not an endorsement of Facebook, but it is an acknowledgement that social media is here to stay. Despite privacy breaches and a disarming ability to chip away at fraud prevention best-practices, Facebook can still be useful.

On the positive side, people connect on Facebook and other social media platforms to share information around local areas of concern. Simply put, they can help Block Watch groups better connect as neighbours.

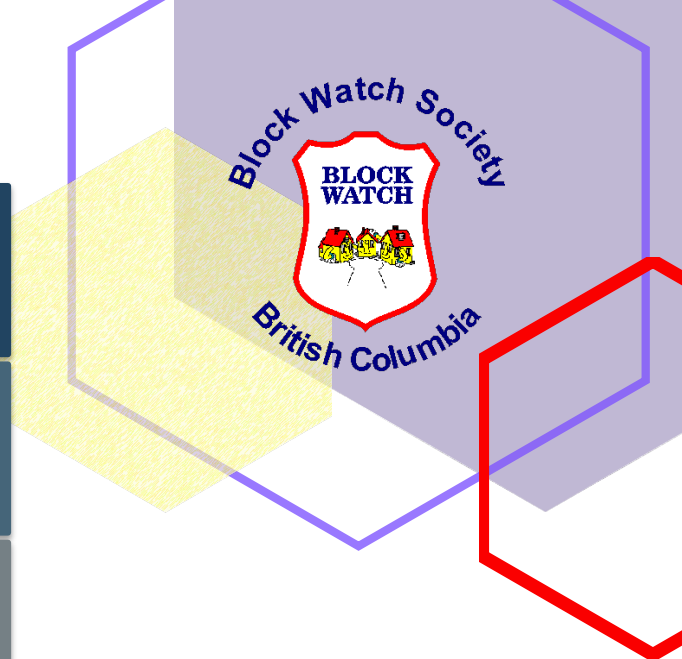
**\*Special Note: Please do NOT write "Block Watch" on your group unless it adheres to the principles of Block Watch.**





## Golden Rules for social media groups.

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Restrict | Restrict it to your Block Watch area  |
| Keep     | Keep it private – invitation only   |
| Know     | Know your members – ask them to submit their full name and address to be accepted into the group. |



## FACEBOOK GROUP GUIDELINES. A TEMPLATE.

Below is a non-exhaustive sample guideline adapted from several online examples. If you choose to administer a Facebook group for your neighbours, these rules will help you navigate most problems that arise. But remember that managing a social media group is not risk-free, and no group can thrive without a dedicated administrator.

**The purpose** of this group is to share information about crime and suspicious activity in [specify area]. We welcome all members to listen, report and recommend advice on events as they happen. That said, we have a few rules to keep the group on topic and prevent the need to remove any members.

**Should a death occur**, we ask that no names (or hints) are posted before the police or media have released it first.

**No advertising** OF ANY KIND.

**Comments will be removed if** they are RUDE, RACIST, OR THREATENING. Members will be warned once, and should they continue such posts they will be removed from the group.

**Photos of people** SHOULD NOT BE POSTED UNLESS THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY IN THE PROCESS OF COMMITTING A CRIME. Do not post pictures of minors or people who appear to be minors, regardless of the circumstances.

**Never advocate violence** AGAINST ALLEGED CRIMINALS, EITHER DIRECTLY OR BY

**IMPLICATION.** Vigilantism is counter-productive and, in most cases, illegal.

**Do not post off-topic**, including memes, rants, business or people bashing.

**Do not post names** OR OTHER PERSONAL INFORMATION. Many in this group are strangers that just happen to live near you. Anything you post could be screen-captured and shared with outsiders.

**When posting an alert** FOR A SUSPICIOUS EVENT, be sure to include the date / time and both cross-streets in the description.

**Do not hesitate to call** 9-1-1 for an emergency or the non-emergency number at [enter number specific to your city].

**Admin support:** If you have any concerns about a comment or post, please message a member of the admin team or use the “report to admin” option on the post rather than reporting to Facebook, we can often resolve the issue sooner and with local understanding

# Home Security

By Cst. Romi Mattu, Vancouver Police Department

Do you know why there is an increase in Break & Enters during the warm, summer months?

Open windows and open sliding doors are opportunities for thieves to easily gain entry into your home. Here are a few ways to secure an open window or door while still allowing fresh air to enter... but not the thief!

## 1) Wooden dowel

Place a wooden dowel into the track of your window. Cutting the dowel length slightly shorter than the window track allows the window to be opened slightly but not enough to allow someone to

reach in and remove the dowel. Also, the dowel does not have to be very thick to be strong – just find one that is practical for the space. Wooden dowels are readily available at your local hardware store and are inexpensive.

## 2) Kick lock

Consider additional hardware such as a 'kick lock' to your sliding glass door. They allow you to lock and unlock the door with a tap of your foot, keeping your hands free. These locks are great because they have two operational positions. Notice in the picture below, the two channels in the lock. These allow for your patio door to be locked when it is in a closed position or slightly opened to let in the breeze. With a kick lock in the second position, the opening is still not wide enough for someone to force entry into your home.



## 3) Portable alarm

While not a substitute for a lock or security bar, a portable alarm can quickly let you know if your door or window has been breached. In comparison with some other alarms, these are easy to set up and relatively inexpensive. The sound of the alarm alone may be enough to scare off a thief, and if it's not, you will be alerted to the intruder and can call the police

*Although there are never guarantees, making these small changes to your windows and glass sliding doors will greatly decrease your risk of a break & enter, and yet still allows you to enjoy the warm summer breeze!*



# Message from the President

By Regan Borisenko, City of Vernon

It's summer and the "pickens are easy" as one thief put it.

Crime Prevention is at its height during the summer months and this is the time we all need to be at our best.

As a Society we have pledged to our Members that we would continue to support them with the necessary training to maintain this consistent message to our Crime Prevention Groups throughout BC.

Our first Society-conducted "Train the Trainer" class was held in Kamloops on July 17<sup>th</sup> and all those that attended agree that holding these sessions is important to bringing everyone up to speed on the latest topics with a clear presentation of that message.

These one-day training classes will become the standard for our Coordinators and if we can't do them in person we are working on e-training methods to allow those that can't get away to still receive and participate in the session.

Our new "Participant Manual" has been updated and is ready for shipment. This contains updated information on policy and

procedures, and I know it will answer many of the questions we have received from you on coordinating your Group.

Our goal is to complete a standardized training manual for all Coordinators to ensure the highest quality of training and consistent messaging. We have the information available in our Operations Manual but will work towards turning that into an easier-to-use Coordinator Training Manual.

## For Coordinators:

If you don't have the current version of the Operations Manual, please contact the Block Watch Office and Kathie will email you a copy.

More Symposium / AGM information will be arriving on your computer soon. Please make sure to attend, not only for the great training but to have a say in how we can improve your Program and what you would like to see in the future.

I look forward to seeing you all on October 2 in Vancouver!



## Upcoming Events...

### Block Watch Symposium & AGM

Granville Island Hotel, Vancouver  
Contact Block Watch Society of BC at [blockwatch@blockwatch.com](mailto:blockwatch@blockwatch.com)  
When: October 1-2, 2019

### CPTED Course

Maple Ridge RCMP Detachment  
Enquire through Liahona Security:  
[www.liahonasecurity.com](http://www.liahonasecurity.com)  
When: October 21-24 2019

### BC Crime Prevention Association Training Symposium

Firefighters Banquet & Conference Centre, Burnaby, BC  
When: October 29-30, 2019  
Information at [bccpa.org](http://bccpa.org)

### CPTED Course

Vernon - Contact Lee Elliott at (250)-547-2171 Ext.203 or cell phone (250) 503-8486  
When: Spring 2020

*We acknowledge the support of the Province of British Columbia.*

### BLOCK WATCH SOCIETY OF BC

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E-Mail: [blockwatch@blockwatch.com](mailto:blockwatch@blockwatch.com)

Visit us on the Web!

[www.blockwatch.com](http://www.blockwatch.com)

### OTHER WAYS TO CONNECT

Visit us on YouTube:

[Block Watch of BC](https://www.youtube.com/blockwatchofbc)

Follow us on Twitter:

[@bcblockwatch](https://twitter.com/bcblockwatch)

Follow us on Facebook:

[@bcblockwatch](https://www.facebook.com/bcblockwatch)