This time of year there is always an increase in crime. Please take time to secure your belongings and don’t leave anything within sight. Theft is not a common occurrence at Otterbein, but it is a crime that all too often happens on college campuses across the country. Whether it is the thief that steals a backpack, or an employee that takes home a ream of paper, it is still theft. Between November 2012 and November 2013 the Otterbein Police Department investigated 34 thefts and 4 burglaries where property was confirmed as stolen.

From these incidents alone, and almost surely not all incidents were reported, a substantial worth of property was taken from students, faculty, staff members, or the University itself. While all unsecured property is vulnerable to theft, some of the most commonly reported stolen items included bicycles, laptop computers, GPS devices, MP3 players, musical instruments, digital cameras, wallets, keys, cash, clothing, and textbooks.

So what can students, faculty and staff do to decrease their chances of becoming a potential victim? The following pages offer some easy crime prevention measures to increase your safety and decrease the chance of you becoming a victim of a theft.

Please feel free to call with any questions or concerns, 614-823-1222
Larry Banaszak, Chief of Police

Special Points of Interest:

- The vast majority of thefts can be prevented by simply securing your property or locking your doors.
- Otterbein Police has an engraver and UV pen to mark your items for easy identification.
- Remove the opportunity, remove the crime!

Inside This Issue:

- Chief’s Note
- Securing Your Office and Residence Hall Room
- Identity Theft
- Laptop Safety
- Winter Vehicle Preparation
- Securing Property in Vehicles
- Volunteer Your Time

While most thefts at Otterbein have occurred in common areas such as the Campus Center or Rike Center, there have been reported burglaries into student’s rooms in the residence halls. Here are several important safety tips that could protect your property while on campus and prevent the heartache of becoming a victim of crime:

- Only bring items to campus that are necessary for your success. Rethink your decision to bring irreplaceable items such as family heirlooms, expensive jewelry, etc.
- Lock your door at all times when you are not in your room or office. It may seem inconvenient to do so if you’re running to the restroom or down the hall to speak with someone, but it could be the difference between keeping your property or losing it.
- Do NOT prop doors to any building. This impacts everyone’s personal safety as well as that of their property.
- Do NOT let anyone into your building, room, or office that you don’t know.
- Immediately report any suspicious activity or people to the Police Department.
Laptops are the computer of choice for professionals and students. Because they're small, easy to hide, have a high resale value, and are easy to carry away, laptops are a primary target for thieves. Surveys from the Computer Security Institute say that one in ten laptops sold this year will be stolen for an average of 1000, with an estimated 1000 laptops stolen each day across the country.

Colleges are especially fertile territory for laptop thieves with a large number of open residence hall room doors, easily distracted students, and many common areas. Suddenly your 85 page thesis has vanished, research files and homework are history, and it all happened in a blink of an eye. So how can we deter these thefts?

Here are some simple ways you can decrease your chances of becoming a laptop thief's next victim:

- Always use an anti-theft device. Portable locking devices and motion sensor alarms are fairly inexpensive and easy to use.
- Never leave your laptop in plain view while it is in your car. Lock it in your trunk.
- Never leave your laptop in plain view in your office or residence hall room. If you can, lock it in a desk or file cabinet.
- Carry your laptop in an unassuming, well-padded bag. This avoids the unwanted attention a traditional laptop computer bag or a fancy leather briefcase can generate.
- When travelling, never put your laptop on the airport security x-ray machine belt before you have a clear path and view to the end of the belt.
- If you’re in a common area such as the Library or Campus Center, take a few moments to secure your laptop if you’re getting up to take a bathroom break or grab a cup of coffee. If you remove the opportunity, you remove the crime!
- Back up all irreplaceable information daily.
- Contact the University’s Information Technologies Services Department for anti-theft device advice or questions regarding laptop (and desktop) computer safety.
- Additional information on different types of anti-theft devices for your laptop is available on-line.

Identity Theft

Identity Theft is the fastest growing crime in America. Identity Theft is a crime in which an imposter obtains key pieces of personal identifying information such as Social Security numbers and driver’s license numbers and uses them for their own personal gain. It can start with lost or stolen wallets, pilfered mail, a data breach, computer virus, phishing, a scam, or paper documents that have been thrown out by a business (dumpster diving).

What to do if you think you are a victim — http://www.privacy.ohio.gov/citizens/

1. Place a fraud alert on your credit reports and review the reports carefully.
2. Close any accounts that have been tampered with or established fraudulently.
3. File a police report. A police report will help you with creditors who may want proof of the crime.
5. After filing a police report, ask the officer handling the case to apply for an Identity Theft Verification Passport. The Ohio Attorney General's Passport program allows victims of identity theft to verify to law enforcement and creditors that their identity has been stolen. The program can be found online at the Ohio Attorney General’s web site.

Visit our website at: http://www.otterbein.edu/public/CampusLife/HealthAndSafety/Police.aspx
Winter Vehicle Preparation

Prepare your car for the winter by checking items such as the brakes, spark plugs, battery, and tires. Check your owner’s manual for the recommended interval for a tune-up.

Be prepared for emergency situations on the road by having a winter “survival kit” in the vehicle including items such as, a working flashlight, extra batteries, reflective triangles, compass, first aid kit, exterior windshield cleaner, ice scraper, snow brush, wooden stick matches in a waterproof container, and non-perishable, high energy foods like unsalted canned nuts, dried fruits, and hard candy.

Securing Property in Vehicles

PREVENT THEFTS FROM AUTOS! Criminals roam lots and streets looking to steal items from vehicles. They use the “smash and grab” method: smash a window-grab the valuables. This takes no more than seconds. When possible, take property with you. Laptops, purses, bags, cell phones, small electronics are popular items for thieves. If you must leave valuables, secure them out of sight, or locked in the trunk.

We are now on Facebook. Search for the Otterbein Police Department and become a fan today.