



BERKELEY POLICE DEPARTMENT

2100 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 981-5900, TDD: (510) 981-5799, police@ci.berkeley.ca.us



Scam Preys On Elderly Bad Guys Pose as Water Repairmen

Media Contact:

Sgt. Kusmiss S-6
Public Information
Officer (PIO)
(510) 981-5881

Chief of Police
Douglas N.
Hambleton

City of Berkeley
Main Line
(510) 981-CITY

Berkeley, California (Thursday, November 1, 2007) - City of Berkeley Police Department (BPD) Property Crimes Detectives are warning the community after a disturbing crime trend has been making it's way to the city.

These crimes, dozens of cases that have plagued the South Bay, Peninsula and San Francisco since October 2006, involve a scam that leads to burglary. A group of male suspects, ordinarily two or three, pose as water repairmen seeking out an elderly homeowner and tell him/her that their home's water lines have been contaminated. The suspects then inform the resident that the lines must be flushed, repaired or inspected. Once the resident allows the men into the home, one of the suspects preoccupies the resident by feigning some task while the other or others steals cash, jewelry and valuables.

The victims typically describe the suspects as:

Latino/Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Eastern European, Italian or Portuguese males ranging in age from 20-40 years old.

Wearing hard hats, safety vests to appear "official"

BPD would like to remind community members of the following crime prevention measures:

- Be alert/aware of activity around your home & neighborhood.
- Do not allow anyone in your home that you do not know, have not hired or screened.
- Call BPD to report any suspicious people or activity, in particular anyone that matches the general description or MO noted above.
- If you have an older neighbor or neighbors, get to know them and please give attention to any unusual activity in or around their home(s).
- Program the local direct 911 - emergency number into your cell phone.
In Berkeley - dial (510) 981-5911

For additional resources, visit the BPD website www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/police. If you notice any suspicious individual(s) or activity, please contact BPD's non-emergency line at (510) 981-5900. For crimes in progress, dial 911 or (510) 981-5911 from your cell phone.