

Stolen goods

Thefts in the campus area have decreased in recent years, but students should still take precautions to prevent being victimized

By Jessica Nail • Freelance Reporter

According to the Eugene Police Department, about 200 University student homes are broken into each year. While robberies are fairly sporadic, there are several steps that make a robbery less likely.

While the Eugene burglary rate is up 0.8 percent from 2002, thefts in homes around the University have decreased. In 2003, there were 181 reported burglaries on or around campus. That number decreased from 2002 by 31 reports, according to EPD.

"Usually burglars are looking for stuff that they can sell fast," EPD Public Information Officer Kerry Delf said. "Most robberies are drug related. The burglar wants to get in, get stuff he can sell and get out."

In 2003, 20 of the reported crimes were solved. In the Eugene area last year, roughly \$6,039,597 of property was stolen for reasons of robbery, burglary and theft, according to EPD. About 8 percent of the property was recovered and returned.

"When my car got broken into and my CD player got stolen, I felt powerless, violated and really mad," pre-psychology major Lexi Meek said. "There was glass everywhere. I called the cops, and they didn't seem to care."

Some consider robbery a matter of disrespect. "You trust everyone until something like that happens," senior Megan Melich said. "After that it is hard to trust anyone or leave your belongings anywhere."

According to EPD, fewer robberies happen in the South University area than in the West University area. Most robbers choose to go through screen doors or open windows and take almost anything they can grab.

"Recording your serial numbers increases your chances of getting your things back," Delf said. "If you don't know the serial numbers, then police can't return your belongings even if they catch the thief."

Every piece of electronic equipment is encrypted with a serial number. It is a good idea to write those numbers in a safe place — preferably not stored in a computer in case it too gets stolen. Also, keep a list of CDs and DVDs to give

HOME SAFETY TIPS

There are many ways that students can prevent robberies, such as installing a home security system. That is not usually feasible, however, for students who are on a limited budget or are renting from a landlord. Here are some alternative safety methods:

- Make sure to lock windows and doors at night as well as when no one is home
- When looking for a place to live, make sure the doors don't have hinges on the outside
- Invest in flood lighting — it is an inexpensive robbery deterrent
- Look for doors that are solid hardwood or metal clad
- Take notice of shrubs or bushes that someone could hide in
- Don't leave extra keys under planters for mats
- Don't display expensive items such as electronics in a window
- Start or join a neighborhood or apartment watch

SOURCE: Eugene Police Department

to second-hand stores and pawn shops.

"The pawn shops can then keep an eye out for CDs that come in that may fit your description, and that may help us catch the burglar and get your property back," Delf said.

Jessica Nail is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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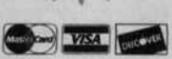
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