Neighbourhood Watch Tasmania

Research Report No. 6/2022

Analysis of Police Offence Reports for Sample Location, January-July 2022

This month's report is an analysis of the Offence Reports for the period of January – July 2022 for a sample NHW area in Tasmania. Summary crime and offence reports can be provided on a monthly basis by the District Community Policing office to the relevant NHW Co-ordinator. Coordinators share this information, and relevant crime prevention advice, so that members of their community can take action to improve their own safety and security.

One regional town was chosen for this analysis because of the ease of access to the summary reports which covered a seven-month period from January to July 2022. The summary report contains the offence details, reported date, offence report number, suburb and street details, and a description of the offence. Several key trends were identified in this analysis; the prevalence of property not being locked or secured; building sites being a key location; and power tools/building materials being commonly stolen items. Furthermore, motor vehicles were the most commonly stolen item, and prevalence of reported crime in certain streets.

Unlocked
Approximately 17 percent of all incidents (102) reported involved unlocked or unsecured property. Whilst the dollar value for the property stolen is not provided in the summary reports, it is not difficult to calculate the monetary significance of the theft from the property stolen as can be seen from the following examples:
° *Entire plumbing that was stored in an unlocked garage, stolen from residence under construction.*
° *Three vehicles with keys in the ignition, stolen.*
° *Cash stolen from an unlocked office of a business.*
° *Building site entered, power tools not locked up were stolen.*
° *Entry to a house through an unlocked window, white/electrical goods and a vehicle stolen.*
° *Chainsaws stolen from open, unlocked sheds and from the back tray of a vehic*le.

Building Sites
The prevalence of offences occurring on building sites is indicative that these sites are likely targets for offenders. There were 14 reported incidents and all but one related to property being stolen. Four of the thefts were of building materials, another four related to power tools which included one incident where the tools were not locked up. Plumbing featured twice and one of those reports included appliances being stolen, two reports did not specify what property was stolen, and one where nothing was stolen.

Power Tools
In addition to the building sites, garages, shipping containers and vehicles were the other most common sites for theft to occur (19 reported incidents). Nearly half of all property stolen in these reports was power and/or building tools (8).

Location

In the course of this analysis, it was identified that five streets in the whole region featured more prominently in the crime data. In total, these streets had 25 crimes reported, an average of five each, indicating these areas were particularly vulnerable to offending. There may be a number of explanations for the statistics in these streets, but clearly the failure to secure valuable property will rate highly as a causal factor.

Stolen motor vehicles

Theft of motor vehicles including motor bikes, were the most commonly stolen item in this area across the reporting period. There were 13 reported incidents of motor vehicle stealing, eight vehicles and four motor bikes (two stolen from one reported incident), and two attempted thefts of motor vehicles. It was concerning to see that over a third of vehicles stolen (38 percent) were unlocked and two had the keys in the ignition.

Examination of the data also highlighted the fact that there were three incidents of number plates being stolen from vehicles (two vehicles parked on the street and one in a driveway). This is a phenomenon that could warrant further inquiry in the future as it would seem unlikely that stealing of number plates is a merely a nuisance crime.

In Summary

Neighbourhood Watch accesses police crime reports and shares the details with their community, often via public newsletters, social media, or both. This information is designed to help people protect themselves, because knowing the facts about crimes helps everyone make decisions about how to protect their property, particularly from theft.

Analysing the data over longer periods of time reinforces just how easy it is for property owners to reduce their personal risk of becoming a victim of crime.