



# NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NOTIFICATION

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## **GYPSY BURGLARIES AND SCAMS**

Recently the City of Mequon and surrounding jurisdictions have seen an increase of “gypsy crimes”. Gypsies are an ethnic group from Eastern Europe, mainly Romania. They will often have dark skin and can easily be mistaken for Hispanic or Middle Eastern descents. Not all gypsies are thieves and criminals; however, the criminal groups of gypsies are a tight knit group.

Gypsy crimes are typically non- violent crimes targeting the elderly or older residents. A typical gypsy burglary crime involves a group of three to five men driving through a residential neighborhood. They are looking for older residents who can be easily distracted. In addition, elderly residents tend to keep large sums of money available inside their homes and have jewelry they have collected over the years.

The group will target a residence by sending one or two men to the front door of the residence and telling the homeowner that they are there to do some type of work. They usually present themselves as general contractors who can cut down trees, do masonry work, seal a driveway, or some other home improvement scam. They will ask the homeowner to step out of the house or to accompany them into the basement of the house.

Once the resident has been distracted then the other members of the group will enter the house and steal whatever valuables they can find. These groups are very good at finding hidden money and jewelry. These crimes occur very quickly and it may be several hours before the resident is even aware they have been the victim of a crime.

You can protect yourself and your neighbors by calling the police immediately about any suspicious or unusual persons you may observe in the area. Also do not allow anyone into your house who shows up uninvited. Call your local police department if utility workers, city employees, or similar person shows up and state that they need to enter your house. Finally, always lock your doors when you leave your house and cannot see your doors particularly when doing yard work.

**MEQUON POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**NON- EMERGENCY PHONE 262-242-3500**

**FOR AN EMERGENCY CALL 911**