

CITY OF SPRING VALLEY VILLAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

MAJOR ACTIVITY

OFFENSES – FEBRUARY 2009	NUMBER
Burglary of a Residence	1
Burglary of a Business or Building	0
Burglary of a Motor Vehicle	2
Theft / Other	5
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	0
Juvenile Offenses	5
Assault	1
Aggravated Robbery	0
TOTAL	14
Total Calls for Service	1153

The Spring Valley Village Police Department has received several reports in the last few weeks from senior citizens who have been targeted as victims of what is known as the “Grandparents Scam”.

In this scheme, the victim will receive a phone call from someone claiming to be the victim’s grandchild. The caller may begin the conversation with a greeting such as, “Hi, Grandma. Do you know who this is?” The victim will reply with the true name of her grandchild, and the caller will then claim that he is in some kind of trouble. He may claim to have been involved in an auto accident (often claiming to be in Canada), need money for overdue rent, or be in some minor brush with the law. He may also add a statement such as, “Can you please help me? But don’t tell Mom. She’d kill me if she found out.”

The caller will then ask for an amount of money from hundreds to thousands of dollars. He will request that the victim wire transfer the money, often times giving instructions on how to do so through services offered at grocery stores or similar facilities. A criminal receiving money in this way is very difficult, if not impossible, to identify and locate. If you are ever asked to wire transfer money or provide your bank account information or social security number to someone, it is almost always certain that this request is being made for inappropriate reasons in pursuit of a scam or swindle. Never provide this information to anyone over the telephone unless you are absolutely certain to whom you are speaking and for what purposes the information is needed.

As mentioned in the example of the conversation above, if a potential victim is asked, "Do you know who this is?" the victim should answer, "No, I don't. Who is this?" If the caller says, "It's your grandson", reply, "Really? Which one?"

Anyone who receives such a call should verify the grandchild's whereabouts with other family members before agreeing to send money. Tell the caller to call you back in thirty minutes and then check with your family to confirm the scenario.

If you learn that the call is indeed a scam, call the Spring Valley Village Police Department immediately so that we may take the appropriate action.

For those of you who are reading this and are not grandparents, please help distribute this information to your "grand" friends and neighbors who may not have a computer or e-mail service in place to receive this warning.

Thank you.

Gary Finkelman
Chief of Police

CITY OF SPRING VALLEY VILLAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

MAJOR ACTIVITY

OFFENSES – MARCH 2009	NUMBER
Burglary of a Residence	0
Burglary of a Business or Building	0
Burglary of a Motor Vehicle	13
Theft / Other	4
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	0
Juvenile Offenses	0
Assault	2
Aggravated Robbery	2
TOTAL	21
Total Calls for Service	1103

As each of you have likely noted from the above statistics, Spring Valley experienced two incidents of Aggravated Robbery during the month of March. Such offenses are rare occurrences in our city, so I wanted to address some of the details of these two crimes, both of which occurred at the same business location at 8420 Katy Freeway.

On March 11th at approximately 10:00 p.m., a man and woman arrived at the Subway Restaurant to pick up a family member who worked at the location. While waiting in the parking lot in their vehicle, the two victims were confronted by two armed subjects who demanded their vehicle, cash, and cell phones. The suspects then fled in the victim's 1998 Dodge Durango SUV.

On March 17th at approximately 7:10 p.m., two armed subjects robbed the Subway cashier of the cash in the cash register and then robbed a customer, taking his keys and then stealing his 2001 Honda Civic from the parking lot.

As the subjects fled the scene in the stolen vehicle, they pulled onto the Katy Freeway frontage road right in front of the Spring Valley Village police officers that were responding to the robbery call. Our police units pursued the fleeing suspects until they abandoned the stolen vehicle in an apartment complex on Ojeman near Hammerly. The two suspects fled on foot and disappeared into the apartment complex.

As a result of a very intense and detailed investigation led by Spring Valley Village Police Detective Sergeant Loyd Evans, a number of suspects have been identified, charged, and arrested in connection with these two related robberies in Spring Valley Village. In addition, these suspects are believed to be responsible for as many as fifteen

other similar robberies and car-jackings committed in the Houston / Spring Branch area during a two-week crime spree.

Due to the fact that this investigation is still very active, I cannot discuss too many further details at this time. However, I can tell you that an 18-year-old Hispanic male has been arrested and charged with the commission of both aggravated robberies at the Subway in Spring Valley Village. The investigation indicates that another 20-year-old Hispanic male accompanied this subject on the first robbery. This second suspect has also been arrested and charged in the first robbery.

The investigation further indicates that a different 18-year-old suspect accompanied the first 18-year-old on the second robbery. This suspect has also been identified and charged in connection with the second robbery.

All three handguns used by these three subjects have been recovered.

In addition, a 17-year-old Hispanic male from Laredo was arrested while driving the stolen Dodge Durango on Interstate 10 near Seguin. This subject has been charged with Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle.

Another 20-year-old Hispanic male subject, believed to be an associate of these other subjects, has also been arrested and charged with Forgery of a Government Document.

All of these subjects are being held in the Harris County Jail.

We believe that these arrests will prevent any further criminal activity by this group of subjects. Therefore, this information should not result in discouraging anyone from continuing to frequent the retail businesses within our city. Our continued aggressive police patrol of both the commercial and residential areas of the city will serve as a deterrent to such criminal activity. As always, we encourage each of you to immediately contact the police department if you observe any suspicious activity.

Your police department appreciates your continued support.

Gary Finkelman
Chief of Police

CITY OF SPRING VALLEY VILLAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

MAJOR ACTIVITY

OFFENSES – APRIL 2009	NUMBER
Burglary of a Residence	1
Burglary of a Business or Building	1
Burglary of a Motor Vehicle	1
Theft / Other	1
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	0
Juvenile Offenses	1
Assault	0
Aggravated Robbery	0
TOTAL	5
Total Calls for Service	1084

CITY OF SPRING VALLEY VILLAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

MAJOR ACTIVITY

OFFENSES – MAY 2009	NUMBER
Burglary of a Residence	0
Burglary of a Business or Building	0
Burglary of a Motor Vehicle	1
Theft / Other	3
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	0
Juvenile Offenses	1
Assault	0
Aggravated Robbery	0
TOTAL	5
Total Calls for Service	1222

“The Dog Days of Summer”

Over the recent weeks, your police department has received an increased number of complaints from citizens regarding violations of the city’s Animal Control ordinance. Specifically, a number of you have complained of dogs running loose through your yards. Some of these reports indicate that the dogs are with their owners but are not on a leash, and those owners may not be keeping their dogs within their control.

In part, the ordinance says, “It shall be unlawful for any dog, cat, or other animal possessed, kept, or harbored to run at large.” An animal is considered to be “running at large” when the animal is allowed to exit or leave the owner’s property and is not restrained, is allowed to roam upon the streets, or is “not restrained”.

The ordinance defines “restraint” as follows:

An animal shall be deemed restrained when it is:

- a) confined on the premises of the owner within a building, walled, or fenced enclosure;
- b) fastened or picketed by a lead or chain, not more than twenty feet (20’) in length, so as to keep the animal on the owner’s premises;
- c) under the control of a person by a leash;
- d) on or within a vehicle being driven or parked
- e) at heel beside a competent person and obedient to that person’s command Minors shall not be considered competent persons for this purpose.

I would ask that those of you who are pet owners (as am I) please familiarize yourself with these regulations and make every neighborly effort to abide by the terms of your ordinance.

For more information on Spring Valley Village's Animal Control Ordinance, you may go to the following Internet address and then click on "Chapter 2 Animal Control".
<http://www.municode.com/resources/gateway.asp?pid=13553&sid=43>

Thank you for your cooperation.

Gary Finkelman
Chief of Police

**CITY OF SPRING VALLEY VILLAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT
MAJOR ACTIVITY**

OFFENSES – JULY 2009	NUMBER
Burglary of a Residence	0
Burglary of a Business or Building	3
Burglary of a Motor Vehicle	5
Theft / Other	3
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	1
Juvenile Offenses	1
Assault	0
Aggravated Robbery	0
TOTAL	13
Total Calls for Service	1046

As you will note, the statistics for July represent a slight increase over our normally “nearly crime-free” monthly reports. I wanted to take just a minute to comment on several of these major incidents.

The three burglaries of businesses all occurred during the late-night hours of July 27th or early-morning hours of July 28th. All incidents occurred at businesses located in the West Memorial Park office complex located in the 8500 block of the Katy Freeway. Each crime scene was processed for evidence, and several items have been submitted for DNA analysis.

All five of the motor vehicle burglaries as well as the theft of the motor vehicle all occurred in the retail parking lots of the businesses located in the 8400 block of the Katy Freeway. I am not at liberty to discuss these cases any further due to an active and ongoing investigation that has already produced some positive results. “Stay tuned” for an update in the coming days.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact your police department to report anything suspicious or out of the ordinary.

Thank you all for your cooperation.

Gary Finkelman
Chief of Police

CITY OF SPRING VALLEY VILLAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

MAJOR ACTIVITY

OFFENSES – AUGUST 2009	NUMBER
Burglary of a Residence	1
Burglary of a Business or Building	1
Burglary of a Motor Vehicle	0
Theft / Other	4
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	0
Juvenile Offenses	2
Assault	0
Aggravated Robbery	0
TOTAL	8
Total Calls for Service	1286

As this month's report indicates, and as many of you have already learned through emails from others, a burglary of a habitation occurred in the city last month. A second burglary occurred earlier this week on Labor Day.

Your police department has been diligently investigating these two burglaries, and we continue to identify witnesses and develop information that we hope will lead to the solution of these crimes and to the prevention of any such additional criminal activity.

I am aware that many of you actively seek and share information on community issues including occasional crimes that are committed in the neighborhood. I support and encourage this type of information sharing. However, great care must be taken to avoid publicizing inappropriate content. In the process of networking with our citizens, the police department must also respect the privacy of the victims of such a crime. In addition, the publicizing of too much information, such as specifics concerning how the crime was committed or what items were taken, can easily compromise the criminal investigation and hamper our efforts.

Please do not misinterpret my comments. I want you all to continue to communicate and share information. At the same time, please keep in mind that there may be reasons why law enforcement delays the release of information for valid investigative causes.

I would also encourage each of you to check the "Police Report" section of The Memorial Examiner newspaper that is delivered to your home each week. There you will find weekly updates on any major criminal activity that has occurred in Spring Valley

Village and the surrounding areas. Information on this August residential burglary was published in last week's edition.

This first burglary occurred on Saturday, August 29th, in the mid-afternoon at a residence in the 8700 block of Lanell. Valuables were taken from the garage as well as the home. No forced entry was found.

The second burglary occurred on Monday, September 7th, also in the mid-afternoon, at a residence in the 1300 block of Mickey Way. Again, valuables were taken from the home, and no forced entry was found.

In both cases, neighbors observed suspicious activity and a suspicious vehicle at the residence. However, the police department was not notified. Information obtained from these witnesses indicates that the same persons in the same vehicle may have committed these two burglaries. The suspects may be a Hispanic couple, a male and female. In one case, two to three young children were seen with them at the burglary scene. Their vehicle is described as an older-model custom van, maroon or copper in color, possibly with an elevated roof, multi-colored striping, and dark tinted windows.

I am asking each of you to watch for this vehicle and CALL THE POLICE DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY if you think you see this vehicle or any other suspicious vehicle or activity. Such activity might even include an unknown person knocking on your door while you are at home requesting financial assistance. I would also ask each of you to make sure you lock your entry doors and garage doors when you leave your home. If your home is equipped with a security system, activate that alarm when you leave.

In reference to the above listed Burglary of a Building, this incident involved the burglary of a church in the 1200 block of Wirt Road in Hilshire Village. An unknown person or persons entered the church and stole a sound mixer board. A few days later, officers from the Memorial Villages Police Department arrested a man as he burglarized a church in their area. Investigators from their agency and ours learned that this suspect had been pawning a large quantity of sound equipment and other valuables at pawnshops throughout Harris County. This information led to the recovery of the property stolen in the Hilshire Village church burglary. That property has been returned to the church, and the suspect has been charged with burglary and is being held in the Harris County Jail on a \$15,000 bond.

I would also like to update you on three business burglaries that were listed in last month's activity report. As you may recall, these burglaries occurred at businesses in the West Memorial Park office complex located in the 8500 block of the Katy Freeway. The Spring Valley Village Police Department has filed charges in connection with these three burglaries. Officers and investigators recovered property stolen in these and other business burglaries after responding to a disturbance call at an apartment complex in Humble. A 28-year-old man was arrested and charged with Felony Theft and Burglary of a Building. A 29-year-old man was arrested and charged with Felony Theft. A third

suspect is still under investigation. Investigators believe these three suspects are responsible for the three burglaries in Spring Valley Village as well as others that occurred at businesses in Houston along the Katy Freeway.

Thank you all for your concern and interest. Please continue to assist your police department by calling us with suspicious activity.

Gary Finkelman
Chief of Police

CITY OF SPRING VALLEY VILLAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

MAJOR ACTIVITY

OFFENSES – SEPTEMBER 2009	NUMBER
Burglary of a Residence	1
Burglary of a Business or Building	0
Burglary of a Motor Vehicle	0
Theft / Other	1
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	0
Juvenile Offenses	0
Assault	0
Aggravated Robbery	1
TOTAL	3
Total Calls for Service	1218

The above major incidents have each been addressed in previous e-mails or bulletins distributed earlier this month. As you will recall, the above listed burglary as well as two that occurred in August have been cleared with last week's arrest of three suspects who were identified and located as a result of Spring Valley Village PD's investigation into these crimes. With assistance from the Houston Police Department, the suspects were placed under surveillance and were arrested as they left the scene of a burglary they committed at a home in Spring Branch. All these suspects are currently charged with Burglary of a Habitation and are being held in the Harris County Jail.

The felony theft involved an incident that occurred at The Home Depot. An officer observed a suspicious male walking away from and across the parking lot of the store pulling a two-wheel dolly loaded with boxes of power tools. As the officer approached the suspect, the suspect abandoned the tools and fled on foot. As the officer pursued the suspect, the suspect ran into the back door of a nearby restaurant, ran through the kitchen and through the dining area, exiting the restaurant through the front doors. The suspect was captured attempting to hide in the bed of a customer's parked pickup truck. The suspect was arrested and charged with Felony Theft and Evading Arrest after it was confirmed that the tools, valued at over \$1750.00, had been stolen from The Home Depot. The suspect has pleaded guilty to the theft charge and has been sentenced to six months in state jail.

The robbery involved a bicyclist in Hilshire Village who was approached after dark by two men in a vehicle who demanded the victim's wallet. The victim had no wallet or money, so the suspects fled.

I would also like to update you on a series of motor vehicle burglaries that had been reported back in June and July having occurred in parking lots of the commercial district in the 8400 block of the Katy Freeway. As a result of an investigation initiated by Spring Valley Village PD Detective Sergeant Loyd Evans, investigators from the Houston Police Department, the Harris County Sheriff's Office, the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, the Katy Police Department, the Metro Police Department, the Sugar Land Police Department, and the Harris County Precinct Five Constable's Office combined to form a multi-agency Burglary of Motor Vehicle Task Force.

With information developed by Sergeant Evans' investigation, detectives identified several suspects believed involved in a series of motor vehicle burglaries being committed in business parking lots along freeways in west Harris County and in Fort Bend County. On July 30th, after days of surveillance, four suspects were arrested after committing a burglary in Fort Bend County. Over the course of the investigation, four additional suspects were arrested in connection with motor vehicle and building burglaries. The suspects range in age from 15 to 21 years old.

Based on information developed through this investigation, it is believed that over the past 18 months these suspects committed well over 1000 burglaries throughout Harris and Fort Bend counties, stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of cash and property.

Since these arrests, there have been no motor vehicle burglaries reported in Spring Valley Village during August and September.

As always, your police department encourages you to contact us if you observe any suspicious activity. Thank you for your continued support.

Gary Finkelman
Chief of Police

CITY OF SPRING VALLEY VILLAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

MAJOR ACTIVITY

OFFENSES – OCTOBER 2009	NUMBER
Burglary of a Residence	1
Burglary of a Business or Building	0
Burglary of a Motor Vehicle	1
Theft / Other	5
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	0
Juvenile Offenses	0
Assault	0
Aggravated Robbery	0
TOTAL	7
Total Calls for Service	1257

As you will note above, we did experience one residential burglary in the city during October at a residence in the 8900 block of Bace. On October 15th, shortly after noon, an unknown person or persons forced entry into the home through a back door, then stole several items of value. The homeowner's burglar alarm is believed to have caused the suspect to leave without taking additional items. During a canvas of the neighborhood shortly after this burglary, officers learned that a neighbor who also lives on Bace had observed a male subject described as looking "nervous" come to her door and knock several times, but the homeowner did not answer the door or indicate that she was home. The subject even tried the doorknob as if he was attempting to gain entry. However, the homeowner did not notify the police of this suspicious activity at the time.

As for the five thefts listed above, three were various incidents from commercial locations along the Katy Freeway and the other two involved the theft of construction materials from two homes under construction.

Although it did not occur in October, many of you are aware of an incident that occurred earlier this week in the 8300 block of Leafy Lane. On Tuesday, November 3rd, a resident had just arrived home shortly before 4:30 p.m. and was in front of his home when two persons in a truck drove by, stopped, and asked for directions. As the resident was providing the directions and with the subjects now outside of their truck, the subjects began to struggle with the victim in an apparent attempt to steal the victim's wallet. As the victim fought back, a neighbor shouted at the suspects as she contacted the police department and made note of the license plate on the vehicle. The suspects then fled.

With the information provided by the witness and from further information developed from evidence recovered at the scene, Spring Valley Village Police investigators identified the two suspects involved in this incident. Working through the night, police obtained felony warrants for the arrest of these two suspects. After additional hours of investigation and surveillance, both warrants were served on the suspects before the end of the day.

A 24-year-old suspect has posted bond and is scheduled to appear in court next month. His 28-year-old alleged accomplice remains in custody in the Harris County Jail in lieu of a \$20,000 bond.

Special thanks to this Spring Valley Village resident for notifying the police department immediately upon observing this incident.

Gary Finkelman
Chief of Police

CITY OF SPRING VALLEY VILLAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

MAJOR ACTIVITY

OFFENSES–NOVEMBER 2009	NUMBER
Burglary of a Residence	1
Burglary of a Business or Building	1
Burglary of a Motor Vehicle	1
Theft / Other	4
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	0
Juvenile Offenses	2
Assault	1
Aggravated Robbery	0
TOTAL	10
Total Calls for Service	1252

During these days leading up to Christmas, we should all exercise caution and be aware of our surroundings as we walk to and from our vehicles in shopping center parking lots as well as during our drives to and from these locations. Here are some “Shoppers’ Safety Tips” to keep in mind.

- Never leave packages, bags, cell phones, purses or other valuable items inside of your car where they can be seen from the outside.
- Never fight over parking spaces. It is not worth pushing the wrong person to become violent. Your car could also be vandalized as a result.
- Always park in a well-lighted area and with other people around if possible. Look for landmarks and remember where you parked so you don't roam the parking lot looking for your car after shopping.
- When shopping, always try to walk with someone else. Robbers seldom confront multiple victims. Carry your purse on the opposite side of traffic when walking through a parking lot. Plan to obtain cash during the day and avoid using an ATM at night.
- Stay alert and be aware of the people around you.
- As you approach your car, have your keys in your hand so you can enter your vehicle and close and lock the door quickly behind you.
- When loading packages or children into your car, keep an eye on purses, other bags and packages. Put your purse in the car first, then unload your bags.

- Never buy items such as computers, jewelry, stereos or anything from a "guy in the parking lot." These items are often stolen, sub-standard or fake.
- Keep your purse zipped or buttoned up. Make sure that your wallet pocket is closed. Don't hang your purse on a fitting room hook. Place it on the bench where you can see it.
- Never store a purse in the child's seat of a shopping cart. Place it in the cart and keep it closed to protect your wallet.
- If you observe anyone you believe is following you home, drive to a public, well-lighted area such as your local police station.
- Program the police department's 10-digit phone number into your cell phone, and never hesitate to call your police department to report suspicious activity.

Happy Holidays !!

Gary Finkelman

Chief of Police

CITY OF SPRING VALLEY VILLAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

MAJOR ACTIVITY

OFFENSES – DECEMBER 2009	NUMBER
Burglary of a Residence	0
Burglary of a Business or Building	0
Burglary of a Motor Vehicle	5
Theft / Other	6
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	0
Juvenile Offenses	2
Assault	0
Robbery	1
TOTAL	14
Total Calls for Service	1111

UPDATE TO LAST WEEK'S NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME ALERT

As you will recall, late last week I distributed an alert to each of you advising of the robbery of a resident who was walking in the 1300 block of Voss when he was assaulted by two males.

Through a combination of aggressive investigation and “good old-fashioned police work”, a suspect has been arrested and charged with Robbery in connection with this crime. He is currently in the Harris County Jail being held on a \$10,000 bond.

Although an arrest has been made in this case, I would encourage everyone to continue to be observant and to immediately report any suspicious activity to the police department.

Happy New Year !!

Gary Finkelman
Chief of Police