



BERKELEY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Douglas N. Hambleton, Chief of Police



*** Community Reminder ***

Personal Electronics in Demand by robbery suspects

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Berkeley, California (Wednesday, March 14, 2007) – City of Berkeley Police want to remind the community to safeguard their valuables. Like many East Bay cities, the Berkeley community has seen robberies of personal electronics being reported at a high rate.

It appears that high-end consumer electronics are in demand by thieves in Berkeley and surrounding cities. The sight of small white ear-buds equals “gold” for would-be thieves. At the end of the “rainbow” is a \$300 iPod. Concealing or using non-white colored ear buds is recommended. Berkeley has had approximately 16 iPod robberies in the first two months of this year. Robbery in general is up this year. In the year **2006** there were **47** reported robberies during the months of January and February. This year, there were **70** reported robberies for the same time period. This marks a **49%** increase in these crimes. On a more positive note, City of Berkeley Robbery Detectives have arrested suspects and increased their case closures by **12%**. Overall property crimes are down about **9%**.

Property Crimes Detective Tracie Lui states that many of the of recovered electronics ultimately end up going to the city auction because iPods, laptops, PDA’s and other high dollar value items are not marked with an owner’s information. Detective Lui also notes that theft victims rarely have serial numbers available for police reports. She recommends that serial numbers be saved and owners should permanently etch or paint identification (such as California Identification numbers) on their property. Detective Lui stresses the importance of registering your new electronics with the manufacturer, which is another avenue to obtain serial numbers.

Crime Prevention Tips:

Always stay alert when wearing headphones, keep the volume at a level where you can hear persons approaching you.

Use old style headphones that appear to be from low cost/value older equipment.

Use well lit streets and sidewalks where many persons are around or business are open.

Occasionally look behind you and pay attention to others around you.

Do not carry large sums of money or unused credit cards and identification.

Do not resist a robber - do as asked and follow the instructions given.

If you feel someone is following or watching you - go into a populated location and ask for help - call the police.

A loud signaling device such as a whistle may be used to direct attention to yourself if you feel threatened.

Do not leave your purse or backpack unattended. Purses and backpacks hung on chairs or left in shopping carts are easy targets.

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