

## Rash of Break-Ins Keep Troopers, Police on Alert

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The number of car and home break-ins is on the rise in the borough. Sergeant Eric Olsen is the post supervisor for the Alaska State Troopers office in Kodiak and said there have been more reports of break-ins and suspicious activity coming to the trooper's office in recent months.

While crime spikes can often come in waves, Olsen said he feels this recent increase is most likely attributed to the growing drug problem facing the Kodiak community.

"We're getting reports of folks who are actually casing neighborhoods in broad daylight — actually walking up to homes and looking inside, and or vehicles. So with the increased drug use people lose their inhibition and they have a higher need to satisfy their cravings. And as such they're getting more bold in the thefts, and also in the dollar value amount of items being stolen. So it is concerning to us. We don't want any type of home invasion or some home owner catching someone inside their house. Obviously we don't want any type of homicide. We do realize that there is a problem and we're trying to put extra patrols out in areas as well as contacting folks and following up on any reports we have received."

He said if the break-ins are drug related, then burglars are most likely looking for items they can sell in order to buy more narcotics. Both troopers and city police officers have noticed a rise in drug usage around town, specifically with heroine and methamphetamine.

As far as the break-ins go, Olsen said folks seem to be targeting areas with little surveillance, and times when fewer people are around.

"And so we're suggesting that folks make sure that they don't provide that target and they take precautions such as locking up their vehicle, or their home or their storage sheds or any other piece of property that they value. And just keep a watch on it."

Olsen also recommended getting involved with neighborhood watch groups, and reporting any suspicious activity to state troopers, crime stoppers or the Kodiak Police Department. Specific areas that have been hit include Spruce Cape and Gull Drive.

While the city hasn't had as many reported break-ins, Police Chief Ronda Wallace echoed Olsen's advice on locking cars and homes regularly.

"A lot of cars we find that do get broken into haven't been locked. So my best suggestion of course is to secure your property. That's just your best bet in trying to ward off people taking advantage of you — is securing the things that you have."

Wallace said few break-in cases actually involve broken windows or glass.

Even though majority of the break-ins are happening outside city limits, Wallace said the police department is keeping a close eye on things and encourages folks to keep reporting stuff that might be occurring anywhere in Kodiak.