

## Distraction Burglary Alert

The Collier County Sheriff's Office is cautioning residents to be aware that distraction burglars are again at work in our community.

These criminals generally target residents by deceiving and distracting the victim. They typically pose as tree trimmers, appliance repair workers or contractors pointing to a problem with a roof. They may even use moviesque techniques like asking a homeowner to help them look for their dog 'Fifi'. While the homeowner is distracted, accomplices enter the residence and steal items from within. These crews are sophisticated; working with 2 to 3 members and using communication devices to coordinate the crime in progress.

A recent burglary occurred Golden Gate on Monday (07-29-19) in which a man and woman posing as tree trimmers tricked their way into a residence on 39th Street Southwest.

The man is described as Hispanic, 45-50 years old and about 5 feet 4 inches tall and 180 pounds with short and wavy salt-and-pepper hair. The woman is described as Hispanic, around 40 years old and about 160 pounds. They were driving a white four-door vehicle with a hatchback similar to a Prius but larger.

CCSO urges all residents to take certain precautions if there is a stranger at the door.

- \* Be suspicious of anyone who arrives unannounced.
- \* Never allow a stranger to come into your house.
- \* Do not allow a stranger to convince you to exit the residence or to keep you in a certain area for an unreasonable amount of time. This will allow their partner to enter from another area and steal from inside.
- \* Don't be rushed into emergency repairs. Discuss the problem with a relative, trusted friend or a reputable business by getting a second estimate and confirming the problem. Scammers typically use emotion to compel you to make a rushed decision.
- \* Do not provide unreasonable deposits for work before work is started and do not finalize payment for the service until all work is complete and correct.
- \* Ask for identification and call the company. When calling, have the employee wait outside of your residence and use a number from an authentic directory and not a number given to you by the worker.
- \* Always notify CCSO if persons are going from door to door trying to sell you a service or a product, even if they appear to be legitimate. Let Deputies confirm their occupational license or the validity of their company. Remember, if it's too good to be true, it probably is.
- \* Anyone with information or experiencing an incident is asked to call the Collier County Sheriff's Office at 239-252-9300, or if you wish to remain anonymous call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-780-TIPS (8477). Don't put off calling. Deputies need to know right away what is happening on your street.