

12/4/24

I understand that many people in our town are feeling uncertain about recent events. Also being a Richmond resident, I understand firsthand the toll these recent events have taken on all of us. Unfortunately, as a police chief, I've seen a slow and steady rise in crime post covid. This rise has appeared to intensify in the last year and has become especially worse in recent months. This increase has prompted me to start releasing information via press releases to both the Richmond and Hinesburg Police Department Facebook pages.

In past years, a rise in crime in our small community usually led to a person or group of people connected in some way. When they were caught, they seemed to move on either through the justice system or to a different area. What appears to be different about recent events is the people we've arrested usually have little or no connection to each other. In some instances, we've arrested the same person more than once, and people ask "Why are they still out in the community?" When we charge them with a crime, we have no control over what happens after that and often they are only cited into court, this is not under our control. We devote considerable time and effort into finding evidence, locating suspects, finding property and, of course, trying to prevent crimes from happening in the first place. We are not alone, the towns surrounding us have seen a similar surge in crime, including our northern Chittenden County communities.

Our department is currently taking steps to help, including, but not limited to, increased patrols and staggering out hours on select days in an effort to provide some coverage to our overnights. The majority of crimes that have occurred have been those of opportunity, such as open garage doors or unlocked car doors with keys either in the ignition or the console.

Our residents should take the following precautions:

1. Lock your house doors, windows, and any other dwellings on your property.
2. Keep car doors locked and windows closed. The majority of thefts were individuals looking for open car doors in order to steal anything they can find.
3. Do not leave the keys to your vehicle inside them. The vehicles that were taken were not "hot-wired".
4. Do not leave anything of value in the vehicle that can be seen from outside the vehicle.
5. Do not leave a firearm in the vehicle.
6. Install a camera. It's best to install a camera that stores directly to a cloud. Game cameras are often stolen along with the property they are watching. We have had success investigating cases with footage from the Ring and Nest camera systems.

7. Write down serial numbers, especially on tools, firearms, and electronics.
8. Make sure you remember your license plate number and make sure you have your front and back license plate on your vehicle. Car thieves have been stealing front license plates and putting them on the back of similar vehicles that they are stealing, so if police run the license plate, it will come back clear. If you realize you are missing a license plate, or have the wrong plate on your vehicle, report it to the police immediately.
9. If you see something suspicious and you feel it's an emergency, call 911. You can also call us for a non-emergency at (802) 482-3397.

Chief Cambridge