

Sergeant Bob's Safety Tips

Retired Police Sergeant Bob Paterson works with The McLennan Group Insurance Inc. to develop practical safety tips for CARP members.

"Don't gamble with your safety. The stakes are too high."



Your Cottage's Security, Your Personal Safety

Personal safety and security know no seasons.

- ❑ The primary deterrent to criminal activity in cottage country is "natural surveillance". Criminals will be reluctant to force their way into your cottage if neighbours are willing to report suspicious activity or vehicles.
- ❑ A remote cottage with limited natural surveillance is more vulnerable to Break & Enters, but some basic security steps will minimize the threat:
 - A trusted "cottage sitter" is the first step to security in cottage country. Despite all other security measures you take, having a person make a biweekly visit is essential. A one minute visit will allow the cottage sitter to detect several obvious problems: damaged windows and doors, flooding or fire damage, snow and wind damage, illegal dumping, fallen trees, signs of theft (firewood, tools, garden equipment). A cottage sitter can also make your cottage look occupied by leaving winter tire tracks and picking up newspapers etc.
 - A cottage alarm system can be effective if you identify a local "key-holder", who is able to respond when alerted by the alarm company.
 - Good hardware on doors and windows is important but a well placed kick on a door or window will defeat the best locking devices. When retrofitting or planning new construction an emphasis must be placed on door and window frame strength, not just the hardware.
 - Motion detector lights are recommended.
 - A heavy locked gate near your driveway entrance may also be effective; thieves will not want to carry heavy items like firewood, appliances and machinery back down a driveway to their escape vehicle. A correctly fastened gate will also mean that a vehicle will be temporarily left in plain view near the road.
 - Police services and crime prevention committees in many rural areas have programs like Rural Watch, Neighbourhood Watch, Cottage Watch, Farm Watch and Crime Stoppers.
 - If you discover your cottage has been entered, a few important steps will minimize disruption and ease your inevitable aggravation. Do not enter the structure, call police and follow instructions to avoid

personal risk and evidence contamination. Try to protect obvious foot prints and tire tracks.

- Record valuable contents or photograph items for insurance and recovery purposes. Keep records and inventory lists in your primary residence.
- At the end of every cottage visit, take small valuables, medications and alcohol with you. Do not leave interesting recycling material at the roadside, such as electronics packaging and alcohol bottles.

Your Personal Safety

- ❑ Do not operate watercraft of any description unless you're familiar with the vessel, the waterways and safe operating procedures. All Canadian boaters operating a powered watercraft in Canada need a Pleasure Craft Operator card or they risk a fine. Five Priorities include: correct personal floatation devices (PFD) for every person, good equipment and familiarity, weather awareness, shared trip plans, and sobriety.
- ❑ The search for a lost or overdue person can be frightening, especially if the missing person is a child, elderly, ill or completely unprepared for an overnight stay in the wilderness. Plan the walk or hike, share the details and stick to the basic plan. Keep children close by! And finally, call for police and search assistance quickly, especially late in the day or in deteriorating visibility.
- ❑ Campfire and BBQ injuries can be avoided with basic care:
 - Follow BBQ instructions and vent the area between ignition attempts.
 - Chop and arrange firewood in daylight before the fun starts.
 - Keep the fire low and under control (follow local restrictions).
 - Do not add an accelerant to a struggling fire!
 - Supervise children closely and limit their access to heat and flames.
 - Extinguish completely.



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