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NEWS RELEASE

METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Service, Integrity, Leadership, and Fair Treatment to All

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Metropolitan Police Seek Help Identifying Smash & Grab Suspects
Police Offer Tips to Decrease the Likelihood of Business' Becoming Victims

Since July of 2008, there have been more than a dozen “smash and grab” burglaries, where the suspects smash a glass window or door to gain entry, then quickly steal merchandise. Investigative efforts by police have revealed that there are several groups of thieves engaging in these crimes. The burglaries have occurred in different parts of St. Louis, but the thieves appear to be focused on one item in particular: flat-screen televisions. The theft of these televisions has increased in popularity as more and more businesses have added the televisions to their interiors. The thieves are entering and exiting the businesses within seconds.

Many property crimes are crimes of opportunity. If suspects view a particular location or business as requiring too much effort, they will often think twice before attempting to commit a crime. Business owners can dramatically decrease their chances of becoming a victim by having an alarm system that is functioning and activated. Surveillance cameras decrease the likelihood of a business being targeted, and in the event that a burglary does occur, the cameras can be helpful in identifying suspects. Business owners must ensure that their alarms and camera systems are functioning. In many burglaries of this kind, police discovered that the alarm systems were either broken or not turned on and that the surveillance system was either broken, not turned on, or employees did not rewind the tape, so the burglary was not recorded. Business owners can also place the televisions in areas that are difficult to access. Unfortunately, thieves are coming equipped with tools to remove televisions that are wall-mounted. The more difficult the television is to gain access to, the less likely suspects will attempt to take it.

Anyone with information is urged to contact Crimestoppers at 1-866-371-TIPS. Callers can remain anonymous.

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