



# CURTIN Neighbourhood Watch Group

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2009

**Area Coordinator:**

John Robbins  
11 Jennings Street  
CURTIN ACT  
Phone: 6281 4715

**Editor:** Janet Ilchef  
*ilchef@orac.net.au*



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## Winter hazards in your own front yard

At this time of year many things are changing in Canberra suburbs and Curtin is no exception. We would do well to think of strategies to minimize the chances of something unforeseen happening as the days become colder and shorter. Here are a few that come to mind:

- Servicing the heater and closing the curtains at night – obvious things like this mean improved comfort in your home and reduced energy bills. They also help to reduce carbon emissions not to mention improve security in your home;
- Driveway/entry way lighting – motion-activated lights are much cheaper than medical bills for you or your visitors (even the uninvited variety who can be deterred by unexpected lights);
- Overgrown vegetation – summer growth may have caused your hedge or shrubs to grow out over public footpaths. Even in your own yard these provide cover for anyone whose intentions are less than honourable. Be sure you can reverse a car out your driveway with clear visibility up and down the street;
- Icy footpaths – sub-zero nights can leave patches of ice on footpaths and driveways. These are not always easy to see, but very dangerous. Beware of watering on cold evenings. Automatic sprinklers may need to be re-set if you are still using sprinklers (grey-water of course);
- Icy car windows – If your car is left outside these nights DO NOT drive until the windows are fully clear of ice. It is extremely dangerous to you and other drivers, more so for unsuspecting cyclists, pedestrians and small children;
- Automotive batteries most often fail on these colder and wetter days. It's not because they hate you, they are under more strain than usual. Get your battery checked at the first sign of trouble;
- Take a moment to look at your front yard from a visitor's perspective. Look for uneven pavers or other tripping hazards and repair them before you are injured or someone else is injured as they approach your front door in failing light; and
- Unfinished garden work or renovations should be made safe or fenced off for the safety of passing pedestrians.

You and your neighbours are more likely to be returning from work after dark and can be caught out by the potential hazards like these in our own front yards. **Be winter wise!**

*Source: Many thanks to Graham Byrne of Hughes for these tips*

### Secure your property

This is the time of year when we spend more time indoors and less time relaxing in our gardens and yards. Reports have been received of theft of smaller or more portable items from premises. So make sure that your garden items and other easily removable belongings are put away. They may not be vastly expensive, but it is a nuisance both to have them stolen and to replace them. It can also be an uncomfortable feeling to know that a person or persons unknown may have been investigating your property.

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PH: 6290 0599

FAX: 6290 1589

[karen.rush@karenrush.com.au](mailto:karen.rush@karenrush.com.au)



## **Crime Statistics:**

Crime statistics are deleted from the Website at the request of the AFP - they are available on hard copies distributed to all residents of the suburb.

If you observe people acting suspiciously by hanging around entrances to underground car parks contact police immediately on 131-444 or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or via the website [www.act.crimestoppers.com.au](http://www.act.crimestoppers.com.au).

Source [http://www.afp.gov.au/act/on\\_the\\_beat.html](http://www.afp.gov.au/act/on_the_beat.html)

## **Stay safe, stay alive this winter**

Canberra householders are being encouraged to **stay safe, stay alive this winter** with the official launch of a new campaign designed to reduce the number of house fires across the ACT in the cold months ahead.

In winter last year (June, July and August 2008), the ACT Fire Brigade attended 53 residential home fires across Canberra, many of which could have been prevented.

The ACT Fire Brigade in partnership with NRMA Insurance is raising awareness of the common dangers to causing a fire inside Canberra homes through a three week high profile advertising campaign.

The campaign on local radio and television and in *The Chronicle* highlights some basic measures all Canberrans should take to reduce the risk of fire inside their home this winter.

The ACT Fire Brigade and NRMA Insurance urge all Canberra households to stay safe, stay alive this winter by following these important winter home fire safety tips.

- Regularly check your smoke alarms are working
- Always leave at least one metre between heaters and clothes drying racks
- Clean the lint filter every time before using a clothes dryer
- Never overload powerboards and power points and never place appliances or furniture on top of power cords
- Check electric blankets for damaged or frayed cords and never leave them on when no one is home.

For more information and advice go to the ACT Fire Brigade website [www.firebrigade.act.gov.au](http://www.firebrigade.act.gov.au)

Source and further information:

[http://www.esa.act.gov.au/ESAWebsite/content\\_actf\\_b/winter\\_home\\_fire\\_safety/winter\\_home\\_fire\\_safety.html](http://www.esa.act.gov.au/ESAWebsite/content_actf_b/winter_home_fire_safety/winter_home_fire_safety.html)

## **Vehicle damage - theft in underground car parks**

**26 May 2009**

Our vehicles are an invaluable convenience for transporting us between home and work, home and study or between places of weekend leisure. Often we take for granted the security of these vehicles in underground or 'secure' car parks. These car parks are only secure as long as the people who use and access them are vigilant and abide by some simple advice.

When entering or exiting these car parks ensure doors close behind you and that no unauthorised persons have entered or exited the area at the same time.

Don't give potential thieves any opportunity. Secure your vehicle each and every time you leave it unattended, regardless of how 'quickly' you will be returning to it. Becoming a victim of property theft can take only seconds to occur.

When leaving your car unattended, secure all doors and windows and where possible, take valuables with you or move them out of sight. In particular if you own a GPS remove it and its mount from sight. The lure of loose change in the console can be enough to encourage an offender to target your car and ultimately your property. Loss of valuables can potentially be accompanied by entry damage to windows or doors not to mention the disruption caused in repairing it.

**Please assist our police by reporting all suspicious activity to: CRIME STOPPERS use: 1800 333 000.**

**For police attendance use: 131 444.  
But, for all life-threatening emergencies use: "0 0 0"**