



The City of Lafayette Police Department HOA Crime Report

January 2018

This report is prepared by the Chief of Police for use by the various Homeowners Associations, Business and Neighborhood Groups within the City of Lafayette. The purpose of the report is to inform residents about criminal activity in the City of Lafayette.

Scams, Scams, Everywhere...

It seems that each and every month we have a story that comes in about a resident who falls prey to some type of scam. No one likes to be duped or fooled, especially when it involves the loss of our savings - which impacts our own future. When any of us hear about these incidents, it's easy to say "it could never happen to me" - but if the scams were not successful, the crooks would not do them.

Most of us have worked somewhere when the message came across the FAX machine documenting the African Prince who needs our help to safeguard his cash. He offers to pay a large sum to help him by allowing access to our bank accounts. When it comes off the FAX machine, we all laugh at the scenario. However, if it did not work, the crooks would not take the time and effort to send it. It does work. Today, with computers and cell phones - it's even easier for the crook to get the tempting message to us. Unfortunately, when we get a message with a tempting offer or imminent threat - we all need to assume it's a scam and treat it that way.

A successful swindler has to be a great salesman even more than a great actor.

- David Suchet

The **MOST** Important Thing to Remember

While it's interesting to know all the scams, the **MOST** important thing we can all remember is the government does not accept gift cards, wire transfers, and money cards for payment of a debt. If the means to get the issue resolved (whatever it is), involves the purchase of iTunes cards - it's a scam. If we all remember this, we significantly reduce the probability that we fall victim and lose our money.

The government will never ask you to buy gift cards, iTunes cards, or send a money transfer to pay a bill, a debt, or to stop some type of action against you.

Here in Lafayette, we've had residents pay their PG&E bill with gift cards, to later find out it was not really PG&E calling. We've had residents whose family members were reportedly in trouble in a foreign county send thousands of dollars in gift cards to get them out of jail. Only to find out later that no one was ever in jail at all. It's just terrible and the probability of getting your money back is very low.

Where the Money Goes Once You Send It

Our detectives recently worked on one of these cases. A resident received a call identifying that their grandson had been jailed for a crime. The caller identified themselves as an attorney and identified the only way their grandchild could get out of jail was for them to send \$20,000 immediately. The resident was directed to buy iTunes, Best Buy and other gift cards - converting the cash to a means that could be transferred easily. The resident was told to give the codes from the cards to the person they thought was an

GRAND OPENING

In November of 2016, the city was notified the lease for the police department would not be renewed by the building owner. A short time later the city located a structure that would be perfect. Since that time, architects, contractors, and the city engineering staff have been toiling away to create an ideal workplace for our officers. On Sunday, February 11th we'll be opening the new building for members of the community to come and see our new digs. Please join us from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for an Open House at the new police administrative building located at 3471 Mount Diablo Boulevard. The ribbon cutting will be at 9:30 a.m. We'll have a variety of first response vehicles and responders at the building for you to meet and talk to.

Sunday,
February 11
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Ribbon Cutting
at 9:30 a.m.



You're Invited!

attorney. The resident immediately went out to buy gift cards and because they had to buy so many, they had to go to numerous retailers. Later that afternoon, they provided the codes from the cards to the "attorney" who promised to work on the release of their grandchild. The grandparents then discovered the grandchild had never been jailed at all.

Once reported, our detectives researched the cards and the codes. The retailers involved in these transfers are always helpful, because they don't want their services abused by these types of crooks. Detectives soon learned the debit cards were used minutes after the money had been transferred. Funds from the cards were used at stores in Houston, Dallas, and New York City within minutes of the call. Crooks at those locations used the cards to purchase merchandise that will later be sold on the street, on internet classified sites and returned for cash at retailers. These groups are organized and distributed throughout the nation.



One of the best resources for understanding the latest scams is the Federal Trade Commission's website at www.consumer.ftc.gov. It lists all the latest scams and resources for consumers to avoid being scammed.

But How Did They Find Me?

The majority of the scammers know something about the people they call. A name, an address, a relationship, something that gives their story credibility - making the story believable. This type of information is often obtained by taking mail from a home or searching the internet. Social media sites allow people to share information that was once restricted to family members. The name of a grandparent, the age of a grandchild, can all be used by scammers to gain confidence and credibility. Unfortunately, there is so much of our personal information available that it's impossible to remove it all.

Police Department Tip Line:
94549TIP@GMAIL.COM

What's the Latest?

One of the recent changes that we've seen is the use of local telephone numbers when the call is made. A resident reported they received a telephone call from someone who identified themselves as a member of the Lafayette Police Department. Apparently there was a warrant for their arrest and LPD Officer "Murphy" was calling to give them the opportunity to bail on the case, for \$500. The bail could be paid in gift cards. Our resident went to the store and got the gift cards and then thought about the call. The resident called the police department and asked about the situation - learning that it was all a scam. The caller ID used by the crooks when they called was our dispatch telephone number.



How Did They Do This?

It's not hard to associate a name with an address using some of the search tools on the internet. Using the address, a crook can now find the name of the local police agency and even the names of the officers who work there. With a little more effort, they can find the telephone number of the local police department. From anywhere in the nation, crooks are able to make a non-toll telephone call. Using a computer program or an internet site, you can disguise your phone number or even replicate another phone number.

So What Types of Scams Are Out There?

From the days of Charles Ponzi (Ponzi Scheme), there have always been people who are willing to cheat others in order to enrich themselves. They have no conscience, it's all about getting money from the victim - the "mark".

- **Secretary of State Email** - We had some reports of residents receiving an email from the Secretary of State. Apparently there was a large sum of cash in an overseas account that needed to be claimed. All the Secretary needs is for you to send money to pay for the transfer fee and millions could be yours. The email directs the recipient to send the fee through gift cards.
- **Social Security Administration** - Apparently there's been a computer problem at the Social Security Administration and they are calling to confirm some of our resident's social security numbers. The caller sounds legitimate and asks the resident to provide their social security number over the phone for verification purposes. It's all a scam.



- **You've Got Jury Duty** - Some of our residents have been receiving calls from members of the US Marshalls Service identifying that they missed their jury summons. Unfortunately, there has been an arrest warrant issued and the police are on the way. The only way to avoid being arrested is to pay a \$500 fee to have the warrant recalled. The caller identifies the bail can be paid by purchasing gift cards and calling with the card numbers.
- **Secret Shopper** - Several of our residents have received unbelievable offers through the internet. Imagine being able to make money doing the thing that you enjoy, shopping! The company needs shoppers in this area and you were selected. The company mails you a check, you deposit the check in your account and start shopping. Just buy gift cards at four businesses and send the codes to the main office. You keep the rest of the money from the check for yourself. Unfortunately, the check is no good and you've spent your own money in buying the gift cards, which you sent to a scammer.
- **It's the Best Rental for the Money!** - A few of our residents are consistently looking for the best deal on rent. As they looked through the internet classified ads, some have found deals that are just too good to be true. Just send your name and credit information, along with \$1,500 in cash and it can all be yours. Unfortunately, the home is really not owned by the crooks, they just borrow the address of the home for their posting. Not only have they taken your money, but your identity is then used to open credit accounts across the nation.



So What Can Be Done?

The key to not being a victim of a scam is to always be suspicious. Never assume that someone on the telephone is telling the truth about who they are or who they represent. If an offer is too good to be true, it is. If you get a call from someone and they want information from you, start by verifying who they are. Ask them for their telephone number and where they work. Hang up, research the phone number they gave to make sure it is true and then call them back. It's even better to use the main number for the business, using the phone tree to connect you to the person you're looking for.

We Have Your Child...

Probably one of the most cruel scams that have occurred within our area is a scam that suggests a member of the family has been kidnapped. We've seen this type of scam in the area several times over the last year. The crooks identify the name of a loved one and either capture their telephone number or block their ability to receive calls. With the ability to contact the loved one denied, the crooks then call and say they have kidnapped them. An actor plays the role of the victim, giving a plea for help. No time to make decisions, go to the bank and get money. The money is then converted into gift or money cards. Once the crooks have the money, they agree to release the loved one, who they never had in the first place. Typically in this scam the crooks do not let the family member hang up their phone during the entire transaction - the trip to the bank, etc. It's imperative that you contact us and not make any payments.



WE'RE HERE TO HELP. If you need to talk to someone about a deal that is too good to be true, please give us a call at the office or through our dispatch center. Let us help you in making sure things are on the up and up. Having a third party help is a good thing.

Residential Burglary

During the month of January, we had no residential burglaries reported in the city. **What a great way to start the New Year!** The key for all of us is to not become complacent, but to remain vigilant. The burglars have not given up their trade, they are just doing it somewhere else right now. Let's continue to make our community inhospitable to residential burglars. Please report suspicious subjects and their vehicles to us. PLEASE remember to lock your windows and doors when you leave the house.



A locked window and door is the best defense to keep the crooks out!

Armed Robbery

During the month of January, we experienced one armed robbery at one of our downtown businesses. While not a common occurrence, it does happen once in a while. Our close proximity to the highway makes this a risk to the members of our business community and their employees.

DR # 18-132 - 1/3/18 - 3400 Block of Mt. Diablo Boulevard -

At 6:51 p.m. LPD Officers were dispatched to an armed robbery at a local fast-food restaurant. Upon arrival, officers found a suspect had ordered food and upon his arrival at the drive-thru window, displayed a handgun and demanded cash from the register. The suspect received the cash and fled the scene in a dark colored sedan. LPD Investigators were able to obtain photos of the suspect vehicle from the business video surveillance system. Investigators found the vehicle and the description of the suspect matched the description of a suspect who had done similar robberies in several East Bay Cities. The vehicle was affixed with paper dealer license plates at the time of the crime. As investigators developed a suspect, they were advised by El Cerrito Police that they had made an arrest in a similar robbery in their community. A San Pablo Officer who had handled a similar robbery the day prior



heard reports of a robbery at a fast food restaurant in El Cerrito. The San Pablo Officer positioned his vehicle along an expected escape route and the suspect drove right by him. The suspect was taken into custody on the Saturday following our robbery. LPD Investigators responded to El Cerrito PD and interviewed the suspect that night. The suspect admitted his involvement in the robbery and a series of similar robberies in Contra Costa County. **The suspect remains in custody and has been charged with multiple counts of robbery by the District Attorney.**

Prevention. In this case, the clerk did exactly as they had been taught by the owner of the business. Remain calm, do what the suspect directs, and give the suspect whatever they demand. Once the suspect has left, notify the police and be the best witness that you can. Local businesses should establish policies related to the amount of cash maintained in registers at night, reducing the probability of a robbery occurring. Similar to our requests of our residents, businesses should make sure their surveillance camera systems record images of suspects and vehicles that are near the business. The images captured from the businesses in this investigation were critical in solving the crime.

Vehicle Theft

During the month of January, we experienced one auto theft within the city. Typically, the vehicles stolen from our community are used for short-term transportation by suspects who often abandon them the same day as they are stolen.

DR # 18-72 - 1/2/18 - South Peardale Drive - The resident goes out of town for the holidays, leaving their vehicle in the driveway of the home. When they return home, they find their vehicle missing and report the theft to LPD. LPD Officers enter the vehicle as a stolen vehicle into the state stolen vehicle database. The vehicle is captured on a neighborhood camera leaving the neighborhood, followed by another vehicle. Several days later, the vehicle is spotted by a Nevada State Trooper in Carson City. A pursuit of the vehicle is begun and the vehicle flees headed toward Lake Tahoe. After evading capture, the vehicle enters South Lake Tahoe (SLT) a short time later and the pursuit is resumed by SLT Units. During the pursuit, the suspect crashed the vehicle and was taken into custody. **The suspect has been charged in South Lake Tahoe and remains in custody.**



The stolen vehicle leaves the neighborhood followed by the car the crooks arrived in.

Prevention. The majority of the vehicles that are stolen within the city are older model vehicles that have weakened ignition systems. For residents who have older model vehicles the installation of a steering wheel locking device is the best security feature that can be used. Keys should never be left inside a vehicle as it makes it too easy for a suspect to steal your car. Just like your home, lock the windows, lock your doors, and make sure the keys are taken into the home.

CONTACT US
By Phone **Emergency: 911** By E-Mail: 94549Tip@gmail.com
Dispatch: (925) 284-5010
Office: (925) 283-3680

Vehicle Burglary

During the month of January, we experienced one auto burglary in the city. Typically, we suffer between five and six auto burglaries a month during this time of year.

DR # 18-114 - 1/3/18 - 900 Block of Moraga Road - Vehicle owner arrives for an appointment at a downtown service provider.

When the owner returns an hour later, they find the window to the vehicle broken and a bag missing from the rear seat of the car. The bag contained musical instrument supplies with a value of approximately \$100. **No physical evidence was recovered from the crime.**



Prevention. In this case, there was \$100 worth of property taken from the vehicle, while the suspect caused more than \$500 in damage. Any bag or package left inside a vehicle is something that could entice an auto burglar to break into a car. Laptops, tablets, and cell phones could all be in those bags, which could tempt a suspect to break the window. Auto burglary is a completely preventable crime, the property just needs to be taken out of the car. The Crime Prevention Commission will be beginning a campaign to encourage residents, visitors and guests to remove property from their vehicles when left unattended.

Commercial Burglary

During the month of January, there were two commercial burglaries reported in the city. Commercial burglaries are crimes where a crook enters a business to commit grand or petit theft, or any other felony. In our city, the typical commercial burglary occurs when a suspect breaks into a business late at night.

DR # 18-773 - 1/18/18 - 3700 Block of Mt. Diablo Boulevard - A business is closed with its security system activated. The business is equipped with a video surveillance system covering the interior and exterior of the building. Two male subjects arrive at the business and are captured on the video system. The two males check all of the exterior doors and windows. After checking the possible entrances (finding them locked), the suspects break an exterior window, removing a laptop from a desk near the window. The suspects fled the area with the property. **The suspects have not yet been identified, LPD Investigators are still actively working the case.**



DR # 18-1325 - 1/29/18 - 3300 Block of Mt. Diablo Boulevard - A renter returns to their storage locker and discovers that property has been removed. The storage area is equipped with video surveillance of the locker areas and the surrounding areas. **Physical evidence is recovered from the scene and investigators are actively investigating the incident.**

Grand Theft from Vehicle

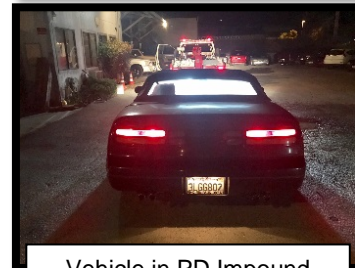
During the month of January, there were two of these crimes reported in the city. This crime typically occurs when someone leaves an item of great value in an unlocked vehicle.

DR # 18-399 - 1/10/18 - 700 Block of St. Mary's Road - A resident parked their vehicle while they went into an office in the early morning hours. An unknown suspect enters the unlocked vehicle and removes over \$10,000 in property. This crime occurred in a ten minute time span. **LPD Investigators have been unable to identify the suspect vehicle.**

DR # 18-815 - 1/18/18 - 3400 Block of School Street - A resident parks their vehicle and leaves their laptop and wallet inside their unlocked vehicle. When the resident returns to their vehicle several minutes later, they find their wallet and computer missing. The credit cards from the wallet were used a short time later at a local retail business. LPD Investigators were able to recover video recordings of the suspect and their vehicle from the retailers. Investigators then viewed vehicles leaving the city during the time frame of the crime, finding the suspect vehicle. LPD Investigators then determined the license plate of the suspect vehicle and located the vehicle at night the next day. The suspect vehicle was impounded and searched by LPD CSI personnel after a warrant was obtained. The suspect was identified from materials located in the car. **A suspect was arrested several days later. The suspect remains in custody.**



Suspect leaving Lafayette



Vehicle in PD Impound

Prevention. This month we have seen several crimes where residents have left their property in unlocked cars while they "just run in" for a moment. Crooks are always watching for an opportunity to get an "easy" score. Property that you care about should never be left in an unlocked vehicle - it's just too easy. If property must be left in a vehicle, place it in the trunk or hatch of the vehicle and lock the car before your leave. It's very rare that we ever recover a stolen laptop or tablet. If you have a table or laptop, take a moment and take a photo of the serial number from the property with your cell phone. Having the serial number of the property significantly improves your chances of getting your property returned.



Suspect using stolen credit card

Grand Theft

During the month of January, we experienced two grand thefts from within the community. Fortunately, one of the locations had extensive security camera systems that captured the criminals and the crime in progress.

DR # 18-62 - 1/1/18 - 4000 Block of Mt Diablo Boulevard - In the

early morning hours of 1/1/18, two suspects forced entry into the holding yard of a local business. Fortunately, the business is equipped with a surveillance camera system. The system captured images of the suspects as they walked through the property and collected their loot. The security camera system also provided the date and time the suspects were on the property. This was the second theft from the property that was recently done in the middle of the night. The manager of the business searched for the stolen property on the internet and located similar property on an internet classified ad site. LPD Investigators then researched the seller and obtained an arrest warrant for him. During their investigation, investigators located a large amount of the property from the thefts. Because the business had a previous theft as well, the suspect's vehicle was located near the business during the time period of both thefts. **LPD Investigators are still attempting to locate the second suspect in the theft to arrest them.**



Prevention. In this case, the business had installed security cameras after the initial break-in. Cameras were installed at the exact location used by the suspects to enter the property during a previous crime. The manager of the business took his own time to continue to research property that was taken from the business on-line. By taking an active role in the investigation, the manager was able to aid investigators in solving the case. Having people who are actively involved in helping solve their cases is very much appreciated by our investigators. Because of the work done by the business manager, this crook will be spending a long time behind bars.

INTERESTED IN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS ?
Join a local CERT Class. CERTs are residents who have taken training on how to aid us all in disaster. For more information, see their website
www.lamorindacert.org

DR # 18-531 - 1/12/18 - Monson Lane - A home is staged for sale by a local realtor. The realtor leaves the home secured and returns several days later to find the dishwasher in the driveway of the home. The realtor enters the home and find the commercial stove and hood have been removed and stolen. **Investigators are actively pursuing leads in the case.**



Prevention. This is a fairly common crime amongst homes that have been listed for sale. The thieves search the internet for virtual tours of the property. Without visiting the home, the suspects can walk through the home and take inventory of the appliances that be stolen. A range and hood combination like this may sell for more than \$8,000 on an internet classified ad site. Large appliances should have their serial numbers recorded. When a home is listed on a virtual tour service, it should be alarmed - making it possible for investigators to narrow the time of occurrence.

Possession of Stolen Property

This crime occurs when an individual is found to be in the possession of property that has been taken during a theft.

DR # 18-974 - 1/22/18 - 3600 Block of Mt. Diablo Boulevard - An LPD Motor Officer is performing traffic enforcement on Mt. Diablo Boulevard. A vehicle without license plates passes his position and he effects a traffic stop on the vehicle. Upon contact with the driver, the driver is uncooperative and provides the officer with a false name. The driver is detained and an investigation of the incident identifies the driver is in possession of property that had just been taken during a series of auto burglaries at the Orinda BART Station. The driver is transported to the LPD Station where he is interviewed by BART Investigators. The property is returned to the victims. **The case will be filed by BART Investigators.**



LOCK your home when you leave.

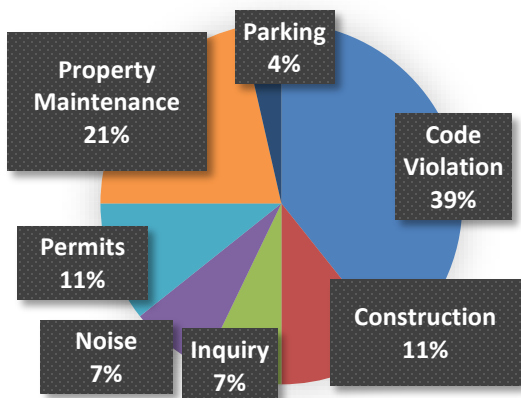
Petty Thefts

During the month, there were six thefts reported to the police that involved property being taken. These cases involve property taken from unlocked cars, buildings, and homes.

DR #	Date	Location
18-43	1/2/18	3900 Block of S. Peardale
18-800109	1/3/18	Almaden Court
18-408	1/10/18	1200 Block of Sunset Loop
18-800048	1/12/18	3500 Block of Moraga Blvd
18-1206	1/26/18	3300 Block of Beechwood
18-1420	1/31/18	1800 Block of Reliez valley Road

Code Enforcement Report

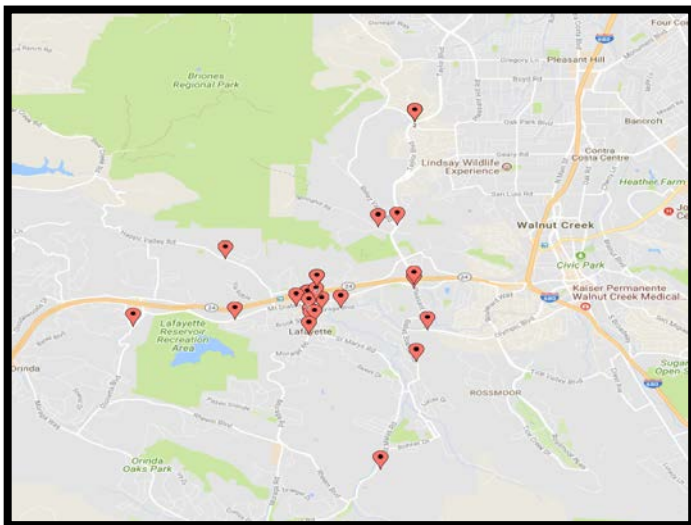
During the month of January, the Code Enforcement Unit received 27 complaints from residents regarding quality of life issues within the community. Of the complaints, they broken down into the following categories:



Nineteen (19) of the complaints were investigated and closed before the end of the month. The remaining open cases will continue to be investigated by the members of our Code Enforcement Unit. Code Enforcement complaints can be submitted through the police departments' tip line at 94549tip@gmail.com.

Traffic Accidents

During the month of January, there were twenty-six auto accidents reported to the police department. Tracking accidents allows our officers to concentrate their enforcement in areas of the city where collisions occur - reducing our accident rate.



BART PD Report

There are several police agencies that have specific jurisdictions within the City of Lafayette. One of those agencies is the BART Police Department, which has jurisdiction over their station and parking lots within the city. During the month of January, the following crimes were reported at our Lafayette BART Station

Crime	Qty
Auto Burglary	4
Petty Theft	1



The four auto burglaries from the station this month were all thefts of catalytic converters from vehicles parked in the lot. LPD Officers will be increasing their patrols of the BART parking lots to help prevent these crimes.

Citizen's Police Academy!

The next iteration of the Crime Prevention Commissions Citizen's Police Academy begins **Tuesday February 13th at 7 p.m.** Over the six weeks of the class, a couple dozen of our residents will get the experience of "Life on the Beat" in Lafayette. The course includes tours of the jail, the dispatch center, the coroner's office and a trip to our firing range. It's well worth the effort and open to those between 18 and 95. If you have not yet submitted an application, there is still time. Contact Crime Prevention Commissioner **Denise Brown (cpccdenise@gmail.com)** for an application and more information. Applications that describe the program are available on the police department's website.



Good Neighbor Program

We have expanded our Vacation Home Check Program. If you tell us when you are going to be gone from your home, we will do our best to have a member of our team check your home every day and send you a text or an e-mail to let you know we were there and that everything looks fine. We still want you to have that other good neighbor check on your house as well, but having an officer check your home is a good idea. If you are leaving for a trip, please just give us a call at the office to let us know when you are going to be gone and who will be watching the house while you are away. Even if you are already on vacation and forgot to call before you left, we'd love to check on the house to make sure everything is in order. It's a free service we provide to our residents.



TRAFFIC COMPLAINTS ?

We really want to hear from you if you have a traffic issue within your neighborhood. It's impossible for us to try to fix a problem that we don't know about. If you have a traffic concern (speeding in your neighborhood, an unsafe traffic condition, etc.) you need to let us know. You can submit your traffic complaints to the Traffic Unit at

94549Traffic@gmail.com