



INFORMATION FOR

VICTIMS *of* BREAK & ENTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH

PHONE:
905.546.4904
(24 hours)

Hamilton Police Service
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155 King William Street
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Hamilton Police Service

www.hamiltonpolice.on.ca

DEALING WITH BREAKING AND ENTERING

Breaking and Entering (B&E) is classified as the most serious property crime in Canada today. But victims of B&E can suffer more than the loss of their property.

They may experience strong feelings such as anger, fear and a sense of personal violation. As a victim of a B&E, you may have feelings that are difficult for you to deal with and you may feel confused and frustrated by the police and court system. You may also want to know how to protect your home in the future. This brochure will answer some of your questions. It will reassure you that what you are feeling is completely normal and tell you some of the ways you can help yourself and your family cope with this difficult time. It will also tell you where you can get help or more information.

WHAT YOU MAY EXPECT

Shock and Disbelief

You may actually feel shock and disbelief that something like this has happened to you, that your home has been broken into and your belongings disturbed or stolen.

Sense of Violation

Part of the shock of a B&E is the sense of violation you may feel. This sense of violation and the loss is both financial and emotional. Your privacy and sense of personal security and trust have been taken away from you as well as your possessions.

Anger and Frustration

Anger at the intruders is a very common feeling. You may feel frustrated because you are not able to express this anger directly at those who committed the crime. You may also feel frustrated and angry with the police and the court system, especially, if police have not been able to return your property or find the people who did this to you.

Fear

After a B&E, you may feel that your home is not a safe place anymore. You may feel uncomfortable being alone at the home or worry when you are not

there. Many people fear that their home will be broken into again. This may happen, and asking your local police about crime prevention can help lessen the chances of another B&E happening. Some people fear that they are being singled out but most of the time the thieves want your possessions and did not break into your home because of who you are.

Suspicion

Many victims of a B&E find themselves full of suspicion about strangers in their neighbourhoods. Police encourage citizens to phone the police about suspicious persons or activities.

Stress

After a B&E, you may experience a lot of stress and you may develop physical symptoms, such as difficulty sleeping or eating. Anxiety and fear can add to the stress.

Guilt

Victims often feel as if there might have been something they could have done to help prevent the B&E. You are in no way to blame when someone else breaks the law...it is not the victim's fault.



THINGS YOU CAN DO THAT MAY HELP

- Keep your schedule as normal as possible.
- Talk to someone you trust.
- Try to get enough rest.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals. Drink plenty of water.
- Avoid over-using alcohol, drugs, caffeine, nicotine and sugary foods.
- Exercise....even a short walk is helpful.
- Practice deep breathing....inhale slowly to a count of three, hold your breath to a count of three, and exhale to a count of three. Repeat this until you notice you are breathing more easily.
- Do not make any big life decisions or changes right now.
- Pace yourself and learn to say no.
- Avoid isolation....maintain contact with supportive people.
- Ask for help if things seem overwhelming.
- Let yourself release the feelings you have.... cry if you feel sad.
- Don't try to fight dreams or flashbacks. They are normal and will become less intense and painful over time.
- Do nice things for yourself. Make a list of ten activities that comfort you.... for instance, listening to a particular piece of music or taking a hot bath. Keep the list close by and do one activity each day.
- If you are having difficulty sleeping, know that this will pass in time. In the meantime, do what comforts you....read a book, draw, watch television, play an instrument, write, do some work around the house.
- Be aware that traumatic events often bring back memories of other traumatic or sad events. Seek support as needed.
- Give yourself time to heal.

HELPING CHILDREN

Children may react to trauma in ways that are different from adults. Children who have been involved in a traumatic event such as the aftermath of a Break and Enter need the attention and close physical contact of their parents or guardians.

Tips for helping Children

- *Tell your children that they are safe, reassure them.*
- *Hug your child. Children are comforted by hugs.*
- *Allow them to set their own pace and give them time to process the event.*
- *Try to keep routines as normal as possible.*
- *Encourage them to play and draw. Play together.*
- *Listen and talk to your child.*
- *Children tend to express their feelings through their behaviours.*
- *Give your child permission to feel what they feel. Don't rush in too quickly to cheer them up.*
- *Talk about your own reactions with them in an age-appropriate way.*
- *Practice relaxation techniques with them.*
- *Let them know that you are there for them to talk about whatever they want to discuss.*
- *Talk to their teachers and other adults who are involved in their care.*



COURT

After a B&E, you will have contact with the police and you may have to go to court. The police will ask questions as part of their investigation. If they find the person who they think is responsible for the crime you may have to go to court as a witness. This can be a confusing and frightening experience. The Victim Services Branch of the Hamilton Police Service is available to provide you with information, practical help and emotional support. You may be able to get your property returned or get some form of restitution from the offender.



MAKE YOUR HOME MORE SECURE

After a B&E, you may want to know how to prevent this from happening again. Making your home more secure can also help you deal with your feelings of anger, frustration and fear. Adding extra outdoor lighting, getting dead bolt locks on doors, and ensuring that sliding doors and windows cannot be forced or lifted out of their frames are ways that can make your home more secure.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOME SECURITY CONTACT:

The Hamilton Police Service "Safeguard Hamilton" at (905) 546-4929 to arrange a complimentary home security audit.

VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH

Established in 1992, Victim Services is a Branch of the Hamilton Police Service. It is the only 24-hour crisis intervention service for victims of crime and trauma serving the residents of the City of Hamilton.

We respond to the immediate needs of people who have been victimized by crime and/or trauma such as homicides, suicides, sudden death, assaults, sexual assaults, traffic and fire fatalities, robberies and harassment.

If you have been a victim of a B&E and need someone to talk to, please call our 24hr line at (905) 546-4904. We are here to assist you with emotional support, information and community resources.

