



# the community beat

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Crime prevention in our successful community



## Stay One Step Ahead of Criminals Who Use Social Media Sites to Target You



► **Social Media is now** one of the most common forms of communication. Forums, weblogs, social blogs, video and picture sharing are all the different ways people are connecting with family, friends and even strangers. Social media offers so many opportunities for communication and information sharing; however, it can also present many risks as thieves are finding new and innovative ways to commit crimes using social media.

Many social networking sites ask, or even require that you provide sensitive information, such as your full name (including your middle name), date of birth, home town, relationship status, schools you attended, graduation dates, employment information and any other affiliations, interests or hobbies when you open an account. Providing all of this personal information to social networking sites, where it gets published for everyone to view, can put you at risk for identity theft. Burglars also use sites like Twitter or Facebook to become your "friend" in order to identify likely targets. Updated posts informing your friends about vacation details inform would-be-thieves that you are away from your home. Mentioning that you are away on a trip for a weekend may leave your remaining family members at home vulnerable to criminals. Yet again, posting your day-to-day routine on your profile also gives criminals a detailed schedule of your whereabouts, further making you a target. Even posting pictures on sites like Flickr or a video on YouTube that shows the inside view of your home not only shows thieves the layout of your residence, but its contents, as well.



Before you cancel all your social networking accounts, there are some things to consider that will prevent you from becoming a target for thieves:

- Learn how the different social networking sites work before you join.
- Something to consider – Are you required to put all your personal information on your profile which can be viewed by everyone? You want to keep some control over the information you post, so minimize the use of personal information on your profiles that may be accessed by others. If you do not want your information in the hands of others, do not post it.
- Remember that others can view your posts either through you or your friends – Only post information that you are comfortable with others seeing and knowing about you.



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## Dear members,

For Block Watch and Crime Free Multi-Housing Program article submissions or inquires, please contact:



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604-525-5411

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## NEW WESTMINSTER CITYPAGE ONLINE



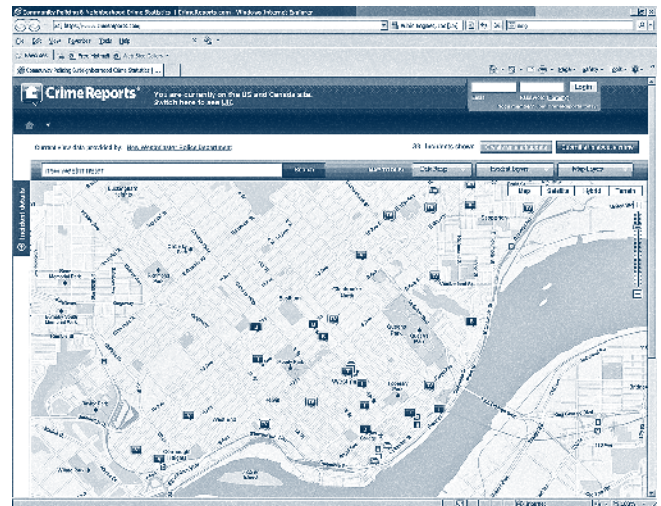
► **Want to stay up to date** with city information? Then sign up for *Citypage Online*. *Citypage Online* features the same content as the Citypage found in the New Westminster NewsLeader, but includes embedded pictures and links with rich content and more detailed information. The *Citypage Online* is designed to enhance the way you receive information from the City. Content from the City of New Westminster's Citypage can be conveniently delivered to your email inbox every Wednesday and Friday.

To subscribe to *Citypage Online* go to [www.newwestcity.ca/citypageonline](http://www.newwestcity.ca/citypageonline).

### Crime Maps

► **The New Westminster Police Department** has updated the online interactive criminal activity mapping system allowing residents and merchants to see certain types of crimes that have occurred in their neighbourhood.

The crime maps will show theft of vehicle, theft from vehicle, vehicle recoveries, thefts, bicycle thefts and breaking-and-entering.



To view the maps, visit [www.nwpolice.org](http://www.nwpolice.org) and click on *Crime Maps*.

◀ *Cont'd from page 1: Social Media*

- What type of security settings does the site have to protect your information? Learn them and check and adjust the privacy settings on a regular basis so that you are limiting who can see and post on your profile.
- Have unique screen/usernames and passwords for each of your different profiles – make sure your screen name does not reveal too much about you. Avoid including your age, name or other specific clues about where you live when choosing your name.
- Ensure you are using passwords that are difficult to figure out, and do not use the same password on multiple sites. Avoid passwords that make reference to what is on your personal profile, such as a pet's name or a family member's birth date. Change your passwords regularly and include both letters, numbers and symbols.
- Be cautious when sharing your information with third parties, even if it helps you connect with others and build your network.
- When it comes to password security verification questions, use a password for all answers, rather than the answer to the specific question(s).

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# Looks Like a Neighbour; Smells Like a Skunk?

► **Is there a skunk** in your building? Or is there a tenant who smokes marijuana? Is your property suffering the residual effects of a resident who recreationally smokes marijuana? If you answered “yes” to these questions, then read on. You are not alone!

There has been a noticeable increase in complaints about marijuana smoking in multi-unit buildings. This is a pesky and frustrating issue for property managers to deal with. Resolving the issue can sometimes be difficult. Possession of marijuana is an offence under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. However, proving possession and establishing grounds for criminal charges is labour intensive and does not always bring a quick resolution to the problem.

Some of the challenges are: identifying the individual suite responsible; documenting enough complaints to seek an eviction sanctioned by the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB); identifying the extent of the problem with the police; educating residents about breaching a neighbour’s right to quiet, peace and enjoyment of their home; and finding consensus about the suffering and residual medical effects caused by second-hand smoke. Need we say more?

Here are some strategies to assist property managers in addressing the skunks:

- Become a member property in the NWPD Crime Free Multi-Housing Program and utilize the benefits and the tools provided through the program
- Have a set of clearly written building policies that addresses smoking
- Breaches in tenancy regulations need to be addressed quickly, efficiently and properly documented
- Ensure all residents communicate their concerns in writing to use in the RTB process for addressing non-compliance
- Consider conversion to a non-smoking property
- Complete regular inspections of all suites

Communication is a cornerstone of community partnership programs such as Crime Free Multi-Housing and Block Watch. This means reporting ALL criminal, suspicious and nuisance activity to building management and police.

Skunks should not be allowed to interrupt or disturb the quiet, peace and enjoyment of anyone. Let’s work together and eliminate the offensive odour.



◀ *Cont’d from page 2: Social Media*

- Protect yourself against phishing schemes. This is where criminals prompt you to provide confidential/sensitive information, such as usernames and passwords, or even financial information on a fake log-in screen.
- Consider not posting personal pictures of yourself, your home or what you own. That picture you posted of your brand new big screen TV looks so good in your home – well, it will also look good in a thief’s home. Remember: when posting photos of the inside of your home, you are providing thieves with the layout of your home.
- When using most new cell phones, and even some cameras to upload a picture to a social networking website, the “geo-tag” information is often included. The geo-tag is the exact GPS (Global Positioning System) coordinates of where the photo was taken. So, details such as a person’s home address, work place, places they like to frequent, etc. may be obtained by thieves through these pictures.
- Only invite people to your network that you either know or have met, rather than friends of friends and strangers. You may be receiving a “friend” request from someone wanting to steal your identity.
- When you receive a “friend” request from someone you know, verify it with an email or telephone call. This way you can

- ensure it is not an imposter.
- Never ever give out your social insurance number.
- When purchasing or trading goods, meet in a public place or let someone know where you are going.
- Always keep your anti-virus software up to date and activated.



One of the most important things to remember: once your information has been posted on the Internet, you cannot take it back, delete it or erase it – and this includes pictures. Anyone can take this information and forward it to others to view or access. The most important step to social networking is educating yourself on the proper use of social media and always ensure you are protecting your privacy and security.





## Closing The Door On Crime

### The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program New Westminster

► **Back in 1994**, the New Westminster Police Department, in response to concerns from the community, started a pilot program designed specifically to combat illegal and nuisance behaviour in rental properties. The Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH) Program was developed in the United States and proved to be very effective in reducing police calls for service. It contributed to better living conditions for the residents of rental properties and their neighbours. Property owners and managers also realized the positive economic effects of the program.

The CFMH Program provides the tools and knowledge to proactively deal with situations that may occur in and around apartment communities. Training is provided for property owners and managers on the importance of thorough applicant screening, the role of police in assisting with tenancy situations, and how to spot potential problems that face today's rental market (grow-ops, drug labs, and other illegal activity). The success rate of lowering police calls for service and

New Westminster CFMH Coordinator Shelley Cole helped launch the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program in Halifax, Nova Scotia May 2012.



nuisance behaviour after implementing the CFMH Program can be as high 90 percent! Properties that fully implement the CFMH Program also experience less incidents of crime including break/enters and vehicle crime.

Seventeen years later, the success of this program lives on in New Westminster. On March 8, 2012 New Westminster Police held another successful CFMH Phase I workshop attended by 60 participants from New Westminster and the surrounding areas. Property owners benefit through: less maintenance costs; less resident turn-over; reduces loss on revenue due to suites that are damaged; and higher property values. For managers the benefits include: less time spent on crisis control; more job satisfaction; more time to spend on routine maintenance; and less time spent in arbitration or disputes with undesirable residents. These benefits encourage residents to reside longer because they feel safe in their homes. The sense of community that is built among long term residents contributes to their happiness and an overall sense of pride and ownership.

Many communities in BC have implemented the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program in their communities and the success continues to grow across Canada. In May 2012, with the assistance of Shelley Cole (Coordinator, New Westminster and BCCPA Board member), Halifax, Nova Scotia launched the program successfully and will now join the many communities across the country in benefiting from this proven program.

Everyone benefits and it is easy to get involved. For more information about the CFMH Program in New Westminster, contact [crimefree@nwpolice.org](mailto:crimefree@nwpolice.org). If you want information on the program in your area, contact Pat Patterson at the British Columbia Crime Prevention Association.

#### BLOCK CAPTAIN OR CFMH MANAGER

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_