

## **REPORTING A FIRE DURING HOME INVASION COULD BE DEADLY**

While searching online for information on home invasions, we came across a security company's website ([www.securityminute.com](http://www.securityminute.com)) where readers are advised not to call police during a break-in. Instead, it is suggested, you should call 911 and report a fire: police are often busier than fire and therefore fire will attend more quickly. The sound of sirens, it is alleged, will be enough to scare away the intruder(s).

Such "advice" is seriously misguided. Firefighters are not equipped to deal with criminals, nor should they be asked to do so. It is also probable that, by the time any sirens sound the alarm, the intruder will have made it inside. If he feels trapped, he could very well take you hostage. By the time the fire department realises what is going on and calls police, crucial moments will have been lost and serious injury, or even fatality, could occur. As Anne Drennan, media liaison for the Vancouver Police, a city plagued by home invasions, says, "A home invasion in progress is considered a priority one call and would be given the quickest possible response. Police need to get to the scene as quickly as possible in order to ensure the safety of the victims and to try to catch the suspects. A delay in response time could be critical. Any suggestion that calling fire rather than police to get a quicker response is completely irresponsible."

The best response to a home invasion is to prevent it in the first place. We found good, practical advice on many local police and Block Watch websites which is also available through police community relations departments. We also found an excellent article on home invasions at [www.weiserlock.com](http://www.weiserlock.com) that explains how to blend security features into your home design. The article is from a free email newsletter that Weiser Lock produces on security issues. You can sign up for the newsletter or access their archives on site.

Remember that falsely reporting a fire is a criminal violation of the 911 Act and takes firefighters away from those who really need their assistance. Be responsible and call police when you need police, fire when you need fire. It could save your life.