



INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS OF BREAK & ENTER

HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE
VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH
www.hamiltonpolice.on.ca

RESPONDING TO A BREAK & ENTER

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.





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 responsible.

Fear

After a B&E, you may feel that your home is not a safe place anymore. You may feel uncomfortable being alone in your home or worry when you are not there. Many people fear that their home will be broken into again. Asking 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.



WHAT YOU MAY EXPECT (CON'T)

Suspicion / Hypervigilance

Many victims of a B&E find themselves suspicious about strangers in their neighbourhoods, or hypervigilant about their surroundings. 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.
- ▶ Spend time with supportive friends and loved ones.
- ▶ Try to get enough rest.
- ▶ Try to eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water.
- ▶ Avoid over-using alcohol, drugs and caffeine.
- ▶ Exercise....even a short walk is helpful.
- ▶ Practice deep breathing....including taking a longer exhale than inhale.
- ▶ Do not make any big life decisions or changes right now.
- ▶ Don't try to fight dreams or flashbacks. They are normal and usually become less intense and painful over time.
- ▶ 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 or write.
- ▶ Engage in activities you enjoy.



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

- ▶ Reassure them that they are in a safe place.
- ▶ 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 encourage your child to talk.
- ▶ Children tend to express their feelings through their actions.
- ▶ Give your child permission to feel what they feel. Tell them it is OK to be afraid.
- ▶ Talk about your own reactions with them in an age-appropriate way. Let them know you were afraid too.
- ▶ Practice relaxation techniques with them.
- ▶ Explain, talk and listen frequently.
- ▶ Talk to their teachers and other adults who are involved in their care.
- ▶ Tell your child about your plans each day.



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. The Victim Services Branch of the Hamilton Police Service is available to provide you with information, practical help and emotional support.



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. The Hamilton Police Service ***“Safeguard Hamilton”*** Program offers complimentary home security audits. Please call **(905)546-4924** to request an appointment.

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.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Hamilton Police Service incident number:
Officer name:
Officer phone number:
Additional information:



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH
905.546.4904 (24/7/365)

Hamilton Police Service
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