

# COMMUNITY ALERT



Evanston Police Department  
Richard Eddington, Chief of Police  
1454 Elmwood Ave., Evanston, Illinois 60201  
<http://www.cityofevanston.org/departments/police/>

## CRIME ALERT – Confidence Crimes

The Evanston Police Department is issuing a crime alert regarding recent Ruse Entry crimes.

In the scam, a stranger comes to the door and claims to be from the gas company, the electric company, other utilities or government agencies who say they must enter your home to test or repair services such as power, gas or water. If you hesitate or refuse, they threaten to shut off those services. Once admitted to the home, their accomplices follow them in and go through the house looking for money, jewelry and other valuables. Other versions of this scam may be suspects posing as City of Evanston employees from Water or other departments, as private contractors or landscapers who claim to have damaged something on your property, all of whom demand entry to your home or who try to entice you out of your home, leaving your doors unlocked.

Do not allow these individuals into your home and do not go outside with them to examine claims of damage. If a person identifies himself / herself as an employee representing a utility company be suspicious, unless you have requested their service.

Do not open the door, even to ask for identification. Verify that they are driving a company vehicle by looking out of your windows. If you don't see one with identifying marks or logos, or if they tell you the vehicle is around the corner, call the utility's telephone number as listed in the white pages of your telephone book and verify the service call. The Evanston Water Department and other utilities will generally NOT come to your home without an appointment and most water, gas and electric meters are now located on the outside of your home so there should be no reason to admit anyone to your home. If the person threatens to cut off water, gas or electric service because you refuse them entry, tell them you are calling the police.

Targets for these crimes are often senior citizens living in single family homes or with published telephone numbers. Keep your screen and inner doors locked at all times and don't open the door. If approached, call the police to report the incident. Warn your neighbors about this crime so they can also protect themselves.

These crimes are not identical to the current practice of door-to-door salespeople who sometimes represent themselves as from "the gas company." Those individuals represent alternative natural gas suppliers who want you to change your supplier from NICOR. For additional information on that practice, see the web site of the Illinois Attorney General, who has filed suit against one of these companies for consumer fraud.

If you suspect that you are becoming the victim of a crime, call 9-1-1. Try to remember a description of the suspect and vehicle then note the direction of travel.

If you have been the victim of one of these scams, call the Evanston Police department at (847) 866-5000.

Evanston Police Emergency            911  
Evanston Police Non-emergency    847-866-5000

City of Evanston Main Telephone    847-328-2100

For additional information call:  
Community Strategies Bureau  
Evanston Police Department:  
847-866-5019

Have the Daily Crime Bulletin emailed to you directly. Sign up at <http://www.cityofevanston.org/departments/police/reports/daily/index.shtml>