**Message From Corporal Sunny Allen of New Castle County Police Dept:**

There is a rising crime trend in Delaware and across the country involving residential burglaries of Asian business owners. Suspects working in groups are conducting surveillance on Asian-owned businesses to pick up on patterns and schedules.

It is common for the suspects to enter the business or watch the outside from the parking lot to determine when the victim(s) is not home. Suspects will also follow victims from their businesses to identify their homes and vehicles. In most cases, the suspects may be from out of state or from a different country.

Suspects will also move from state to state conducting burglaries. Unfortunately, victims are sometimes selected, in part, due to stereotypes that business owners have items of high value in their homes.

The New Castle County Division of Police is sharing several tips to prevent these incidents from occurring: Some of them may not apply to the current trend but are still good habits for people to follow.

1. Be mindful of your surroundings when coming or going from your residence or place of work.
2. Look for anyone that may be sitting in a vehicle when leaving places and watch to see if they leave when you leave.
3. Make a note of the color, make, model of the vehicle. Write down the tag number or take a picture of the vehicle if possible and safe to do so.
4. Do not drive the same route home every day. Change the routes often.
5. Establish a friendly relationship with your neighbors. Good communication between neighbors can keep everyone vigilant for suspicious activity.
6. Make sure all of your doors and windows are locked.
7. Get an Alarm system that is monitored. Do not disregard the alarm when you get the notification unless you're certain it was an accidental activation. The faster the police can be notified and can get there, the better.
8. Get a quality video surveillance system with good night vision. Video coverage around the entire exterior of the residence and hidden (or not as noticeable) interior cameras are preferable.
9. If the cameras are motion activated, do not set the sensitivity so low that it does not pick anything up. While it is sometimes a pain to get alerted to every car that drives down the street, these videos can be extremely useful in identifying suspect vehicles and/or suspects walking down the street. A lot of systems have an option to silence the notifications without changing the sensitivity.
10. Do not keep large amounts of cash or jewelry in the residence. If either one of these is necessary, invest in an extremely durable and heavy safe that is bolted or affixed to the structure of the house somehow. Also, hide the safe in a place in the house that would not be easily found. In most cases, the suspects are going directly to the bedrooms. These locations are too common so keep the safe in a place that would not be a normal place.
11. Shatterproof film coverings on glass doors and windows can prevent easy access into a home. Suspects can eventually still get through however it takes a lot more effort and suspects have to make a lot more noise in order to do it thus drawing more attention from surrounding neighbors.
12. Get a big dog. A little dog is not going to be a good deterrent but we have not currently handled any burglaries during this type of crime trend where a big dog was present.
13. Never hesitate to call 911 to report any suspicious subjects or vehicles. Trust your gut. If something seems out of place or not right, it usually is not. Write it down if you have to but try to get a good description of the person (gender, race, clothing, direction of travel, unusual characteristics, actions) or vehicle (color, make, model, anything specific to that vehicle like tint, rims, bumper stickers, damage). Remember to get the date and time you saw the person/vehicle and the last location they were seen.