

SCAM REPORT

MILTON TOWNSHIP S.A.L.T. COUNCIL MEETING JUNE 9, 2025

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Ruse Burglaries

A ruse burglary involves a criminal using a deceptive tactic to gain entry to a home and commit theft. The offender poses as a utility worker, public works employee, contractor, or other service provider to distract the homeowner while an accomplice enters the residence and steals cash, jewelry, and valuables. The homeowner is lured outside or to a different part of the house such as the basement while the theft takes place. These crimes increase during the spring and summer months when the weather is warm and usually occur during the day.

Older homeowners are excellent targets because criminals know they do not report crimes to authorities if they are the victims. Criminals also know that older individuals make poor witnesses during legal proceedings. Due to impaired vision or memory, they have difficulty recalling what transpired when a crime was committed. Any homeowner, however, is a potential victim.

Ploys used by criminals to enter a home or lure a homeowner outside

- the water pressure needs to be tested because of a broken pipe
- the fuses or circuit breakers need to be checked due to an electrical outage in the area
- they claim to be utility company or public works employees doing “annual inspections”
- the chimney, fence, or gutters need repairs
- the fence is on a neighbor’s property and must be moved
- the tree branches on the property are resting on utility wires and need to be trimmed
- the driveway needs repairs or resurfacing.
- they love the neighborhood and are inquiring about homes for sale in the area.

How to protect yourself

- Keep all doors locked, even when you are in the yard.
- Do not talk to anyone at your door whom you do not know.
- If you decide to speak to someone at your door, be sure the door is kept closed and locked.
- Keep all items of value in your house locked up and out of sight; do not store them in bureau drawers. Use a wall safe if possible
- Check the credentials of anyone at your door claiming to be a utility worker or public works employee. These individuals should be driving “official” vehicles that are appropriately marked.
- Educate family members, friends, and neighbors about ruse burglaries.
- If you choose to go outside to look at a “problem,” be sure to lock your door.
- Do not allow workers to do repairs on your property until their references have been checked.
- Place a sticker on your door stating that peddlers and solicitors are not welcome.
- If someone persists on entering your house against your wishes, shut the door and lock it. Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Keep an eye on your elderly neighbors; look for strange cars and unfamiliar visitors.
- Report unusual activity in your neighborhood to your local police department. Try to provide vehicle information, license plate numbers, and descriptions of suspicious individuals.
- If you are a victim of a ruse burglary, report it to the Illinois Attorney General Senior Citizens Consumer Fraud Helpline (1-800-243-5377 or seniorhelpline@ilag.gov) and your local police department.

[Sources: various]