

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Police Issue Alert To Community Following Spate Of Robberies In St. Thomas

Crime / **Published On January 09, 2017 11:06 PM /**

Staff **January 09, 2017**



ST. THOMAS -- The Virgin Islands Police Department today issued an alert to the community, urging residents to be aware of their surroundings following a spate of robberies on this island -- all of which occurred on January 7.

That's according to a press release issued today by V.I.P.D. Media Specialist Sakeeda Freeman, making known the incidents that occurred on Saturday.

On Saturday, January 7 at about 11:49 a.m., a citizen called the 911 emergency call center and reported that as she was walking towards her vehicle, she was robbed of her handbag. The victim stated that a black male walked up behind of her and began to tug

on her bag. She further explained that she fell to the ground after a struggle ensued, which led to the suspect picking up the victim's bag and fleeing in an unknown direction. The victim reported that she sustained minor scratches during the robbery but declined medical treatment.

On Saturday, January 7 at roughly 11:52 a.m., officers traveled to the area of Lockhart Gardens in regards to a robbery report. Upon arrival to the scene, contact was made with the victim who stated that as she left the Drug Farm Pharmacy and headed towards the parking lot west of the Guardian Insurance Office, she felt a tug on her bag. The victim continued by stating that as she clenched on to her bag, a struggle ensued that led to the suspect throwing her onto the ground. The male suspect then burst the strap of her bag and fled the area heading west towards Tenth Street, according to the victim. She concluded by stating that she immediately called the 911 emergency call center to report the incident.

Further investigation revealed that the victim sustained multiple abrasions as a result of the incident.

Also on Saturday, January 7 at approximately 7:48 p.m., detectives responded to an attempted robbery in the area of the bus stop located on Veterans Drive, in the vicinity of Cemetery # 3.

Upon arrival, contact was made with the victim, who stated that while at the bus stop waiting for a safari, she felt a pull on the right side of her backpack. She then turned around and observed three black young males that appeared to be teenagers behind of her with stockings covering their faces.

The victim continued by stating that two out of the three males told her to give them everything she had, as they tried to pull her behind the bus stop. She then fired a kick at one of the males while one of the other males struck her to the left side of her head with a gun.

The victim said that she then grabbed hold of the male that struck her with the gun and one of the other males fired a shot towards the air. She then began screaming, causing the three males to take off running eastward in the cemetery towards the funeral home. The victim sustained injuries to the left forearm and tenderness to the left side of her head, and was treated by the emergency medical technicians who were present on the scene.

The V.I.P.D. shared the following tips on how to avoid becoming a victim of a robbery and what to do if your purse or wallet is stolen. The force says the first and most important rule is to be fully aware of your surroundings.

Other tips include:

- Appear confident and look like you know where you're going.
- Dress down. Don't flaunt jewelry or designer labels that let a thief know you're likely to have money or valuables close at hand.
- Listen to your instincts. If something feels strange, go inside a store, cross the street or seek help.

- Always keep purses closed and carry them close to the front of your body, or held tightly under your arm.
- If your purse is slung over your head, consider wearing it under your coat (this makes it harder for a thief to yank on the strap).

You can also protect yourself in advance. In the event your purse or wallet is stolen, the impact will be less severe if you:

- Don't carry all your cash in one place.
- Carry only a small amount of cash.
- Don't keep your social security number in your wallet--it puts you at risk of identity theft.
- Carry only what's necessary, and nothing more.
- Keep house keys in your pocket, rather than your purse. If a thief steals your purse and house keys, they have your address and access to your home.

What to do if Your Purse or Wallet is stolen

It doesn't matter how careful or cautious you are at times, you can't stop a robber, according to the V.I.P.D. The first thing to remember is that your purse or wallet is not worth getting hurt over or losing your life. If someone tries to take your belongings, resist the urge to fight back. While some thieves will back down at the sign of confrontation, others are willing to fight and may be carrying a weapon.

Your safety is what's most important, and while your purse/wallet can be replaced, your life cannot. Here's what to do immediately after your purse or wallet is stolen:

- Don't panic, try to think clearly.
- Dial 911 right away.
- Make a list of everything in your purse or wallet, including credit cards, checks, ID cards, cash and other items.
- Call your credit card companies and report your cards as stolen.
- Call your bank and tell them your bank cards/checks have been stolen.
- If your driver's license was stolen, contact your local Driver's License Bureau to get a new one.
- If your social security card was stolen, contact your local Social Security office to get a new one (the number won't be changed unless fraudulent activity is found).
- Monitor your bills for unusual activity, and report anything strange to the police.

These cases are currently under active investigation by the Criminal Investigation Bureau, according to police. Anyone with information regarding these incidents are asked to contact the Investigation Bureau at 340-7742211 ext. 5579 and 5557. They can also contact 911, Crime Stoppers V.I., the Chief's office at 340-715-5548 or the Commissioner's office at 340-715-5506.