

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VIPD to St. Croix Residents: Be on the Lookout for 'Sledgehammer Bandits'

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ST. CROIX — Burglars on St. Croix are breaking into people's businesses and homes using a sledgehammer, the V.I. Police Department said Friday, and Commander Naomi Joseph, chief detective of the Criminal Investigations Bureau on St. Croix has identified the assailants as two black males.

"They're traveling to businesses after hours, any time after 11pm and they're using sledge hammers and bursting through 8-inch walls, 6-inch walls," she said in an online video released on Friday.

The burglars are suspected of breaking through concrete walls, glasses and panels to gain entry into establishments like gas stations and laundromats.

She said the incidents have cost businesses hundreds and perhaps thousands of dollars to repair the damage while the bandits only walk away with stealing "chump change" of no more than \$15.

"At the end of the day it's going to cost me and you more money because the business has to repair that hole and they are going to pass that damage on to me and you in this high economy," CDR Joseph cautioned.

She has asked community members to "listen out" for any loud suspicious noises late at night and to make a report to the police.

"I need your help. I'm recruiting your assistance at this point in time," she said. "If you're hearing this loud banging in the middle of the night, please call," she pleaded.

To make a report, residents are asked to call 911 or 340-778-2211 ext 602 or the tip line at 340-778-4950.