

Tips help student safety



Good bike lock among ways to battle theft

From Staff Reports

Compared to schools its size, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln ranks third in the nation for safest campuses, said Sgt. Mylo Bushing of the UNL Police Department.

However, crimes do occur, and students should know how to protect themselves.

The biggest problem

at UNL is theft. Students need to guard their personal property, Bushing said.

He suggests:

- recording the serial numbers of electronic equipment like stereos, televisions and lap-top computers, so they can be identified if stolen and recovered by police

- registering bikes with UNL Police. The city of Lincoln no longer registers bikes, but students can register for free with UNL Police.

- spending a little extra to get a sturdy bike lock.

"We see it all the time; somebody will spend a lot of money on a bike and buy a \$3 lock," Bushing said.

- taking the extra time to remove things from your car. Thieves go from car to car looking for things to steal and anything left in the open will attract attention. Many car stereos can either be removed or have detachable face plates. Packages should be removed or put in the trunk. Never leave an extra set of keys in the car.

"If we keep making it hard for crooks, they're going to have to shop somewhere else," he said.

- not keeping personal identification numbers for credit cards in wallets or writing them on cards and hiding extra checks.

- keeping dorm room doors locked at all times. Many students feel at ease with people on their floor but forget that a stranger only needs to take a few steps into a room to grab a wallet or purse, Bushing said.

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SGT. MYLO BUSHING
UNL police department

Students living in residence halls can feel safer knowing that there is always someone in the lobby, the doors are locked between midnight and 6:30 a.m., and Campus Security Officers monitor the halls at night, said Amber Bourek, an intern with the Residence Hall Association.

But students shouldn't let their guards down. They should also take steps to guard themselves. Bushing suggests:

- using "the buddy system" when you have to go somewhere at night. Campus Escort Services volunteers will walk up to three blocks off campus with students from 6:30 p.m. to midnight on Monday through Thursday.

- letting somebody know where you are going at night and when you plan on returning.

- using the blue lights and emergency phones on campus if you need help. UNL Police respond to every call within minutes.

Campus Recreation offers self-defense courses that students can take for one academic credit hour.

Two five-week sessions, each with 50 openings, are offered a semester. But they fill up quickly, so students need to register as soon as possible, Vicki Highstreet, assistant director for Instructional

Programming at Campus Recreation, said.

The courses teach the SHARP philosophy — Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention — providing both physical defense instruction and prevention, Highstreet said.

Although it has been rumored that rapes have occurred in parking lots across campus, Bushing said, he couldn't remember the last time a sexual assault occurred in a parking lot.

However, 60 percent of all rapes are committed by someone the attacker knows, according to the Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center.

The center recommends that students take extra precautions when they are in situations where alcohol is being consumed.

And students should always trust their feelings about someone.

The best tool students can use to protect themselves is their instincts. They should report people who seem suspicious, Bushing said.

If a student reports something that turns out to not be a crime, no harm can be done, he said. But if the student's intuitions are right, that student could help catch a criminal.

"It doesn't take that long to deliver a report," he said. "If you have a funny feeling about someone, call."

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