

Official Statement Regarding Recent Robberies

The Village of Pelham Police Department is investigating two armed robberies of commuters walking home from the Pelham Train Station. In light of these robberies, the department and the Village of Pelham are urging residents to take extra precautions including walking in pairs at night. Neither victim was reported injured.

The Robberies occurred on Thursday, Jan. 12 at 12:10am on First Street near Cliff Avenue and this past Tuesday, Jan. 31 at 8:20pm on the 200 block of Monterey Avenue, according to a press release distributed by the department.

According to the press release both victims, one male, one female were approached from behind by an assailant wearing a ski mask and black pants who pointed a black semi-automatic handgun as he approached. The suspect ordered the victims to lie down on the sidewalk. The suspect stole a wallet and phone from the first victim and two carry bags that contained numerous personal items as well as a wedding ring from the second victim.

The first victim described the assailant as a black male who was approximately 6' tall, 180-200 lbs. and wearing a black jacket and black pants. The second victim described the suspect as being approximately 5'10" – 6', with a slight build, weighing approximately 170 lbs and wearing a black jacket.

Pelham Police Detectives Rick Deere and John Hynes are leading the investigation of these incidents and are working with investigators from the City of New Rochelle and the Town of Mamaroneck, which have experienced similar robberies.

Village of Pelham Mayor Ed Hotchkiss said in a statement, "We share the community's concern over these crimes. Over the years, there have been sporadic outbreaks of muggings near the train station and the police routinely patrol the station area when trains arrive after dark. But they cannot cover all the possible routes that we take to our homes. Until the suspect is apprehended, we urge residents to take extra precautions. Please walk in groups if you can, and follow the safety tips that Chief Benefico has supplied to *The Pelham Weekly*. We know that these assaults are very upsetting, but our police have a very good record of stamping out these periodic bursts of crime and we are fortunate that the number of serious incidents of serious crime in our community continues to fall. If you see anything suspicious or feel that you may be in danger, please contact the police immediately at 738-2000. That's faster than 911."

Below are Safety Tips suggested by the Pelham Village Police Department.

- Avoid walking alone, particularly at night. Stay alert to those around you. If you must walk alone, walk with confidence. Walk at a good steady pace, keep your head up and do not look down at the ground. Do not show confusion or alarm.
- Don't wear headphones; they make you less aware of what is going on around you.
- If you feel that you are being followed and might be in danger, walk to the nearest home and ring the doorbell and knock on the door. Tell them to call the police immediately.
- Cell phones can misdirect 911 calls; program 738-2000 into your cell phone for fastest response.
- If someone is following you on foot, cross the street and vary your pace. If the person is in a car, cross the street and walk in the opposite direction. If possible, go into a store or other public place where there are other people. If the person follows you in, call the police.

- Avoid isolated areas, such as parks and parking lots. Shortcuts should be avoided; they may expose you to danger. Stay off dark and secluded streets and alleys.
- Avoid carrying a lot of packages--it can make you look defenseless.
- Carry a whistle or another noisemaker. The sound may scare off an attacker.
- Carry only what you need with you and carry those things close to your body. Carry your wallet in a front or inside pocket, instead of in a purse. If you carry a purse hold it close to your body.
- Avoid wearing clothes that draw attention, such as furs and jewelry. Dress so that you can move quickly in case of an attack.
- Take special care when jogging. Vary your route. Try to go with a friend and avoid isolated areas.
- Stay alert, use common sense, and trust your instincts. If you suspect something is wrong, or that a situation seems dangerous, you may be right. Don't dismiss suspicious people, cars or situations. Report any of these things to the Pelham Police Department immediately. Do not investigate anything on your own.
- Report any strangers who are loitering in the neighborhood to the police. Also report any people that ask any unusual questions about your neighbors and their whereabouts.
- Make friends with the people in your neighborhood. Set up a neighborhood watch program. Watch the homes of other neighbors. It is important to stay in contact with your neighbors.

Contact the Pelham Police Department to speak at community meetings in regards to suspicious activity in your area. Anyone with information on these robberies, should call Det. Hynes or Det. Deere at 914-738-2000.