Burglary book for patrol officers

It starts with the initial attendance (Response)

**Gathering evidence** as expediently and accurately as possible is essential to the success of any burglary investigation. The most significant contributing factor is the first attending officer. Initial deployment to a burglary incident is often undertaken by frontline officers engaged in response policing. These officers are usually the least experienced in terms of crime investigation and are most likely to be diverted to other tasks before they have had time to undertake a proper investigation at the scene.

Likewise the Forensic Officer, who may attend soon after the first responder has left or, the worse case scenario is that they attend prior to or in the absence of the first responder.

Conducting a burglary investigation is a team effort, one to be undertaken by all team members together, not separate to each other. Where possible the first responder should wait for the Forensic Officer to attend the scene and together conduct a thorough examination and jointly reach sound decisions on what is or is not worthy of further forensic examination.

These minimum standards of investigation are required for all those who attend the scene of a burglary, regardless of which business unit they work for. Source: Martin Inspector at Western Australia Police

**Prevention** starts with active patrol efforts. Officers utilizing their time and being proactive versus reactive. Being alert, proactive, and taking the initiative to patrol your beat (assigned area) can do wonders for prevention in addition to apprehending the suspect(s). Get out of your patrol car and walk. Go the extra mile.. even for that simple repeat alarm call in the middle of the night.

Sharing information both internally and externally is huge. Depending upon the size of your agency and department policy, a simple email describing a suspect could be the key to another officers case. An officer working day shift on the Westside of town may have key information for the officer working nights on the Southside of town. A quick/brief email can help solve a case. Solving cases often requires a team effort. Sharing information is key. Source: David Bird Police Officer II at Town of Cary

I think **focus on the "right things" is important**. You can write tickets for the sake of writing tickets or you can use stops in burglary-prone areas as a legitimate means to interdict criminal activity.

I've seen too many officers view burglary response as "taking reports" rather than "investigating." They view solving the case as somebody else's problem; their responsibility is simply to fill in the blanks on a report form. Consequently, we're not doing everything necessary to ensure successful closure of the case. Source: Wes Harris Park Manager at Louisiana State Parks/Author/Instructor/Historian

Many police agencies in my area place an emphasis in having the **majority of their officers write speeding tickets** on the highways where local municipalities have created Fines Are Doubled Safety Zones. IMO, these officers could be better utilized in community and business patrols versus spending their entire shift writing tickets in a wolf pack.

Most area departments have a traffic unit so traffic offenders are not being ignored. So, writing tickets for the sake of writing tickets is an issue I understand. If these same agencies devoted the same amount of time they do to writing tickets for the sake of creating revenue as to proactive policing would the burglary and overall crime rate decrease? Source: Sherman GravesCorporate Security Advisor, Courier, Armorer, Emergency Response Team member at Anheuser-Busch

 I agree that **investigating the crime scene is important**, however, as a road patrol officer I think our skills are better utilized in **HOW we respond to the scene** as opposed to investigating evidence at the scene.

In my agency when we respond to an alarm 99% of the time the bad guy has already been in and out of the business and is getting away. As road patrol our odds of solving the case are best if we can catch the suspect fleeing the area. In my opinion the most effective response would be to have officers responding to burglaries from all directions and to be vigilant of the vehicles on the road. Since most burglaries happen at night when there is less traffic on the roadways, my department has found that once an officer or two is on scene, assisting officers are best utilized investigating vehicles on the road.

Detectives and crime scene techs do a great job solving cases once surveillance and evidence can be collected, however, from a road patrol stand point I believe the most effective way to solve a burglary is it catch the bad guy on the road as opposed to relying on evidence at the scene. Source: Mike Bess Police Officer at City of Midland

As a retired burglary detective, I agree the clearance rate is way too low. In our medium size city, most burglaries occur during the day when people are working. You have your knock and talk burglars. If no one answers the front door, they go to the side or back of the house and make entry. Depending on the size of your beat, it's hard to maybe hit a few of the streets between calls. So how do we stop or slow the bad guys.

1. Neighborhood watch, we need the neighbors that will keep an eye out and call when they see suspicious behavior.

2. Educate your residents to mark or engrave their property, so if it does end up in some guys back seat or garage or pawn shop, we can locate the owner. I always encouraged them to use their DL numbers. Keep a log book of serial numbers/model numbers and photograph everything, especially jewelry.

3. Install an alarm system! It's always the first thing people get after they have been hit. Next, buy a safe and lock up your firearms/cameras/jewelry/ important documents, etc. If the alarm goes off, 99% of the crooks run, they don't want to be seen.

4. Install a surveillance system- you can get them for under $400 at the big box stores.
These are all deterrents. The residents need to do their part in helping us prevent and solve the crime, with good video and good property descriptions. The difference an alarm makes is huge. Is the crook going to be inside for 5 min or 5 hours, tearing up the place looking for valuables.

5. As far as officers, they need to get latent prints. I would know just from looking at the officer's name on the front of the report, if it was going to read," I dusted for latent prints with negative results". Make them itemize what they printed and give them extra training if they can't seem to find a print, unless they trip over it. I know the county over from us, swabs for DNA( inside door handles are great for this) and has had great results.(they have their own crime lab and money).

6. Consider using a blood hound. I am always amazed at what a good dog can do. Most burglars are local and they sometimes live within a block or two from their victim. That's how they know when and whom do break into, because they know the victim's habits and moves. You get something inside the suspect touched and let the dog search. If he takes you to a house, great time for a knock and talk or search warrant/parole/probation search. & .

7. Our CSI folks take the time to write up an nice letter for the officer's package when they get good prints and get a hit on them.

8. Detectives need to provide the beat officers with good information regarding the areas being hit/type of property being taken/suspect descriptions and vehicle information. We used an electronic pin map system to track our break ins. Source: David Sevesind Manager of Security Western Medical University