



# 10-4

A weekly Q&A  
with local  
law enforcement

Submit your question to [news@owatonna.com](mailto:news@owatonna.com) or 444-2379

## **Q: My house was broken into and I was robbed of my personal belongings, but the police officer called it a burglary. What is the difference between a burglary, a robbery and a theft?**

A: Robbery, burglary, and theft are often referred to as the same event; however, from law enforcement's perspective, they are very different and call for different police responses.

A *robbery* is generally considered the most serious of these events in that it is very personal and involves force being used against a victim. There are two types of robbery, simple and aggravated. Both consist of a suspect taking personal property from a person or in the presence of another and using or threatening the use of force against any person to overcome the person's resistance or powers of resistance in the taking of the property. The robbery becomes aggravated when the suspect is armed with a dangerous weapon, alleges to be armed with a dangerous weapon or inflicts bodily harm on another. A robbery is considered an "in-progress" call and brings about an immediate police response.

A *burglary* is separated into four different degrees and is different from a robbery in that it is an illegal entry into a building or residence, and the entry is made with the intention of committing a crime.

First-degree burglary occurs when the building is a dwelling and another person who is not an accomplice is present, or when the burglar possesses a dangerous weapon, explosive or any other item believed by the victim to be a dangerous weapon, or if the burglar assaults a person within the dwelling.

Second-degree burglary occurs when the illegal entry is made into an unoccupied dwelling, banking or financial securities institution, pharmacy, or while in any building, the burglar possesses a tool to gain access money or property.

Third- and fourth-degree burglary deal with the illegal entry into a building and are differentiated with the intent to commit a felony, gross misdemeanor and misdemeanor level crime. Depending on the circumstances, a burglary will deliver an immediate police response if "in-progress" or a routine response if reported after the fact.

A *theft* occurs when a suspect intentionally and without claim of right takes, uses, transfers, conceals or retains possession of movable property/services of another without the other's consent and with intent to deprive the owner permanently of the property and/or services. As the dollar amount or value of the theft increases so does the severity of the crime. Thefts are generally reported after the fact and bring a routine police response.

**CAPTAIN ERIC RETHEMEIER**  
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