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Burglars are using Wi-Fi jamming devices in ‘alarming’ new trend, N.J. cops say

Updated: Jun. 13, 2024, 9:05 p.m. | Published: Jun. 13, 2024, 3:06 p.m.

5–6 minutes

A Morris County police department is warning residents about a new [burglary technique](#) that involves jamming Wi-Fi signals so residents can't call for help or access security cameras while burglars are in the house.

The technique was used unsuccessfully during a burglary attempt in Florham Park earlier this week, police said.

Authorities believe the suspect is part of a South American theft ring that has been using Wi-Fi jammers, according to a social media post from [Florham Park Police Department](#) Chief Joseph Orlando.

“While Wi-Fi jamming devices are not new to the criminal underworld, it is the first we have seen or heard of such devices being utilized in Morris County,” Orlando said. “This is an alarming technological advance in the criminality being employed by these groups.”

On Monday around 11:30 a.m., a resident on Lincoln Avenue in Florham Park was in his basement when he heard a loud noise

from the ground floor, police said. He accessed his home surveillance cameras and saw a man trying to enter his home.

Soon after, the resident's camera system and cell phone lost all service, indicating the suspect was using a Wi-Fi jamming device, making all Wi-Fi accessible devices unusable, police said.

The suspect fled once he realized the resident was home, police said.

The resident was still unable to use his cell phone to call for help, due to the jamming device, and ran into the street for assistance, police said. A pedestrian called 911.

Florham Park police arrived less than a minute later and searched for the suspect, authorities said. The Madison Police Department and the Morris County Sheriff's Office also helped with the search, but did not find the man.

Police said they suspect the man was part of a theft ring from South America that uses Wi-Fi jamming devices, but they did not detail if there were other links between Monday's attempted burglary and previous cases involving the theft ring.

"These criminals are of South American descent, typically travel in groups of three, park getaway vehicles on adjacent streets, and utilize various pre-operational surveillance techniques to track the patterns and behaviors of their intended targets to minimize the likelihood of a resident being home when they commit the act of burglary," police said.

Group members also use surveillance cameras — disguised as landscaping plants to blend in with a home's outdoor landscaping — to monitor movements to and from the home before attempting

the burglary, police said.

The burglary ring's surveillance cameras can be camouflaged in various ways, police said.

"They come in MANY forms including false utility boxes, planters, tree stumps, rocks and boulders, and even those funny owls with moving heads that are supposed to keep critters away," police said. "Basically, you know what is in your yard or front landscape area to kind of know what doesn't belong to you."

Members of the South American theft groups have attempted burglaries around the nation, including in [Baltimore](#), [Los Angeles](#), [Indiana](#) and [Florida](#). In April, the [FBI warned](#) of international organized theft groups in Indiana.

The groups typically target homes in affluent neighborhoods when the residents are out of town, and often take high-end jewelry, accessories and cash, the FBI said. Members of the groups travel to the United States to commit the burglaries, officials said.

"While we continue to investigate this incident the only mitigation strategies we can offer, at this time, to combat a Wi-Fi jamming device is to have your surveillance camera systems hardwired in your home and to have a landline telephone," Florham Park police said. "Furthermore, regularly inspect your landscaping for any potential disguised surveillance devices and contact the Police Department immediately if locating the same."

Officials are also asking Florham Park residents in the vicinity of Lincoln Avenue, Cathedral Avenue and Rockwood Road to check their surveillance systems for signs of potential suspects or vehicles on Monday between 11 a.m. and 12 p.m.

The suspect in Monday's alleged attempted burglary was a man wearing tan or beige pants, with a dark shirt and face mask, police said. Anyone with information or video footage is asked to contact Detective Sergeant Pietropinto at 973-410-5424.

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