

Armed robbery, assault reported in Sunderland

By CATHERINE BAUM
Staff Writer



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SUNDERLAND - Police are investigating whether an armed robbery and an assault early today in Sunderland are connected.

Police Chief Jeffrey Gilbert said the assault, at a River Road apartment complex, and the robbery, at an Amherst Road convenience store, came between 2 and 3:15 a.m. today.

The perpetrator in both incidents threatened his victim with a knife. No injuries were reported in either incident, Gilbert said.

In the first case, a woman was assaulted from behind as she walked from the apartment complex gym to her residence in Sugarloaf Estates on River Road after 2 a.m., Gilbert said. The assailant allegedly told the victim that if she screamed he would "slit" her, Gilbert said.

The victim got away from the assailant, screamed and ran, he said. The victim reported she didn't see a knife, nor did she get a good look at her assailant, Gilbert said.

"She ran - which was a good, good thing to do," Gilbert said.

In the second case, an armed robbery was reported between 3 and 3:15 a.m. at the 7-Eleven on Amherst Road.

The perpetrator, wearing a hooded sweatshirt and off-white poncho, walked in the store with a knife and told the cashier to give him the money in the register, Gilbert said.

The cashier gave the perpetrator \$30 and called police after the man left, Gilbert said. It is unclear what kind of knife was shown.

No vehicle was seen in either case and there are no suspects, Gilbert said. Sunderland and state police are investigating both incidents. Deerfield police assisted in both cases Wednesday morning.

Police are also investigating to see if the two incidents are connected to a recent armed robbery in Greenfield, Gilbert said.

Gilbert said the victim of the assault at Sugarloaf Estates was wearing headphones on her walk home from the gym and did not hear the man approaching. The chief advised pedestrians to walk with a partner late at night.

"You should really pay attention to your surroundings ... not just by looking, but also by listening," Gilbert said. "It's always better to be in numbers than by yourself."

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Support Available

The staff of Community Crisis Response Team would like to offer support to the young woman that was assaulted at Sugarloaf Estates this morning. We are very pleased to hear that you escaped and were not injured but can imagine that it could have been traumatic. Free and confidential support is available to you, or anyone after a crime related traumatic incident, in Franklin & Hampshire Counties & the N Quabbin Region. We meet with individuals or groups to talk about common reactions to traumatic events as well as tips for self care after such an event. We also offer materials from our lending library on various topics of trauma and recovery, assist with trauma recovery plans, provide complementary therapy workshops and give nurturing gifts. For more information, view our website at www.communitycrisis.info or call us at 413.773.5090. We are here to help.

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