



YOUR Community, YOUR Neighbors
OUR RESPONSIBILITY
get involved today

Columbia Neighborhood Watch

March , 2018

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..Tax fraud season is already here

This time of year also opens the door to identity theft and tax fraud. It's been a major problem for quite a while now.

In 2015, the IRS blocked 1.4 million fraudulent tax returns that would've amounted to \$8.7 billion in stolen tax returns.

Identity theft and tax fraud were so rampant last year that the IRS launched an awareness campaign to "better inform you about the need to protect your personal, tax, and financial data online and at home."

According to the IRS, "People continue to fall prey to clever cybercriminals." These criminals trick you into giving them your Social Security numbers, financial account information and passwords.

Cybercriminals use several methods to steal your information. We'll list three ways that cybercriminals steal your identity. But, don't worry, keep reading for three tips to protect yourself this tax season.

Criminals steal your information by:

- 1. Phone extortion**
- 2. Phishing**
- 3. False filings**

Protect yourself from criminals

Here are three ways you can protect yourself, your ID, and your finances this tax season.

- 1. Verify, then trust**
- 2. ID and credit monitoring**
- 3. Don't share your identity with anyone**

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Highlights from Officer McClintic

I would like to introduce myself to the Columbia Neighborhood Watch community. My name is Jason McClintic and I have served with the Columbia Police Department for over 18 years. During that time, I have worked in all nine of the geographical beats in this community to include most recently with the Downtown Unit in the specific area of The District in downtown Columbia.

I have just recently been selected to work with the Office of Neighborhood Services to assist in identifying chronic nuisance properties, calming nuisance peace disturbance issues, addressing abandoned property concerns, certifying developments into the Crime Free Multi Housing Property program and acting as the Columbia Police liaison to the Columbia Neighborhood Watch programs.

I enjoy practicing the community policing philosophies of communication, partnership and cooperation to help solve problems. I believe that proactively interacting with the stakeholders of each neighborhood through programs like Neighborhood Watch helps provide a reduction in crime, a better quality of life, and a greater sense of security, responsibility, and personal control. These programs also foster community pride and promotes stronger relationships with local law enforcement to jointly identify problems before they can evolve into more dangerous situations.

Spring Crime Prevention Tips..

With Spring comes an increase in crime.

- Always keep your home's doors and windows locked when you leave your home, even if you leave for a short period.
 - "Secure all lawn and gardening equipment in a locked shed or garage.
 - "Take the time to secure your bicycles.
 - "Keep your garage door closed and locked anytime you are not using them.
 - "Install motion-activated lights in your front and back yards.
 - DO NOT allow solicitors into your home.
 - "Be aware of home improvements scams. Some solicitors or contractors who offer to repair at a discounted fee may request cash up front.
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Fund Raising Campaign

CoMoGives Fund Raising Results

A special thank you to those of you that made a donation to us during our fund raising event. Board member Herb Watchinski chaired this effort. His goal was to get \$2000 in donations, but the results were disappointing. We receiving just over \$700. A miss conception was uncovered that the City of Columbia runs and funds the needs of our operation. This is not correct. We are a totally separate nonprofit that was formed when the Police Departments' Crime Prevention unit was eliminated in 2009. At the present we do receive a small grant from the City, but with the City's budget concerns, this grant is in question. Our all volunteer Board is looking for ways to improve our support and gather funding to accomplish our mission.

- Your Watch Board Thanked councilman Trapp with the following letter.

To: Councilman Trapp

The Board of Columbia Neighborhood Watch wishes to thank Michael Trapp for his ongoing support of our organization and its mission. We also want to make it known to the citizens of Columbia that Mr. Trapp's support has made a significant difference in our ability to carry out our mission of bringing neighbors together with the goal of reducing crime.

When Trial Offers Get Tricky

When companies provide a free chance to enjoy their products or services, the offer can be tempting. But the Federal Trade Commission is urging consumers to watch out for common tricks and traps associated with these "free" trials. Often, these types of offers come with strings attached, and what was supposed to be free ends up costing you real money.

Before you agree to a free trial, the FTC encourages you know the whole story:

- Search for company feedback online, and see what other customers are saying.
- Find the terms and conditions for the offer, and read them thoroughly before you sign up. This includes the cancellation and return policies.
- Be sure you know where the offer is coming from. Pop-up promotions on one site may be offered by a different company altogether.
- Watch out for prechecked boxes when you enroll, and opt out of any additional offers or services that you don't want.
- Mark your calendar for the date the offer ends, and take the necessary steps to prevent any unwanted additional charges.
- Keep an eye on your financial statements to be sure unwanted fees or unexpected charges don't show up.

If you've been wrongly charged for a free trial offer, report it to the FTC. You may also contact your local consumer protection agency or file a complaint with the Better Business Bureau. Not only will these steps help you get your money back, they could also protect you fellow consumers from tricky trial offers.

CPD Mobile APP

- Gives citizens direct access to police services at the tap of a button.
- You will have access to the latest CPD news, notifications and crime reporting options.
- You will also connect with the CPD on social media
- Features include: Press Releases, Crime Reporting, Notifications, Events, Most Wanted Missing Persons, Videos and Helpful Links.
- The app is FREE to download from the Apple Store or the Google Play Store.

Training Dates:

March - 21st in Cafe at Smithton Middle School 3600 West Worley Street

May - 9 in Cafe at Beulah Ralph Elementary School 5801 S. Highway KK

August - 7th at Boone Electric 1413 Rangeline Street

(Registration at 6:45, Training starts at 7 pm)
