



YOUR Community, YOUR Neighbors
OUR RESPONSIBILITY
get involved today

Columbia Neighborhood Watch

June, 2021

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If you would like to get press releases on crime and other happenings in Columbia, visit the Web Mail section of the City's Web site and follow the instructions provided at http://www.como.gov/Web_Mail/



Don't let this happen to you!
Stay vigilant and report suspicious thing to the Police by calling 311.

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If you know something, say something. Columbia Police are asking for your help. Anyone with information is asked to please contact the Columbia Police Department at 573.874.7652 or CrimeStoppers at 573.875.TIPS (8477) to remain anonymous. Or report it by calling 311.



What local police have been noticing is that a larger foreign car or a diesel truck, such as a box truck or bus, seem more likely to have the catalytic converter stolen. Most of these are being stolen when these vehicles are left in unattended commuter parking lots, or at businesses overnight.

A challenging issue is the lack of surveillance video of the crime, which leads to almost no suspects information for follow up upon.

Owners marking the converters would also help tremendously for identification when they are recovered afterward. Parking in well lit areas is also very helpful. For neighbors to be aware of their surroundings and curious is very beneficial as some of these guys are parking in parking lots for hours and watching the vehicles before they hit them.

If someone notices a person sitting in a car for a long period of time, consider safely getting the plate number and description of vehicle, or taking a picture. The same vehicle making loops around a parking lot several times is another clue that they are searching for potential targets.

Please never put yourself in any position of potential danger and please call 311 if any of these suspicious behaviors are witnessed.

Catalytic converters are an increasingly popular target for thieves looking to make a quick chunk of change. This is a problem in Columbia, especially for high clearance vehicles. Here's what you need to know courtesy of Family Handyman.

<https://www.familyhandyman.com/article/catalytic-converter-stolen/>

The Definitive Guide to Reducing Robocalls

Follow these steps to cut back on calls everybody loves to hate

by Marc Saltzman, [AARP](#), April 23, 2021

You've had it with relentless [robocalls](#), the automated messages that at best are telemarketing and at worst are pitches from criminals who want to steal your cash or your identity. Enough is enough with the deluge of unsolicited voicemails and the calls from phone numbers that look like they're from friends but are “spoofed” — or disguised — by crooks who claim to be with the IRS, your bank or the police.

You've tried blocking numbers, to no avail. You've signed up on the [National Do Not Call Registry](#). No difference. You've complained to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Nada.

Despite your frustration, you might want to step up your game since there's been a regrettable resurgence in robocalls.

Call volume came crashing down

“When the pandemic hit about a year ago, we saw the [first major drop in robocalls](#) because call centers were closed, but now robocalls are exploding,” says Alex Quilici, CEO of YouMail, which develops robocall-blocking software.

Robocall volume in the U.S. hit an estimated 5.5 billion calls — an all-time high — in October 2019, then sank to about 2.8 billion calls a month when the pandemic erupted last spring, he says. Lately these calls, many from scammers, have climbed to about 5 billion a month. “Having computers dialing a bunch of numbers is a fast, efficient and extremely cheap way to get to as many people as possible,” according to Quilici, who says scammers need only a small portion of call recipients to take their bait.

Some robocalls are legal

Amid the din, some robocalls are legitimate: the American Red Cross can ask for blood donations just as your doctor's office can remind you of an appointment.

But when it comes to bad actors, keep in mind that mobile apps can beat them back. Also, importantly, the FCC will require voice service providers by June 30 to implement call-

authentication technology on the Internet Protocol (IP) portions of their networks. As [explained here](#), the James Bond-sounding “STIR/SHAKEN” authentication enables providers to verify the Caller ID information transmitted matches the caller's real phone number. Already some carriers have implemented this anti-spoofing technology. It was mandated in [AARP-endorsed legislation](#) signed into law at the end of 2019. The measure is the TRACED Act, which stands for Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence.

A united front

What's more, USTelecom, a trade group, has established the [Industry Traceback Group](#) to battle illegal robocalls by identifying the source of the calls and “coordinating with governments and industry to help prevent those calls, and bring to justice individuals and entities responsible,” says Patrick Halley, the trade group's senior vice president of policy and advocacy. The source of an illegal robocall — even one from outside the U.S. — often can be identified in 24 hours, he says.

Illegal, [unwanted calls](#) still run into the billions, but the calls reaching consumers are fewer thanks to call-authentication, call blocking and labeling tools that designate incoming calls as spam, Halley says.

AT&T, for example, the largest U.S. carrier, says it has blocked or labeled more than 16 billion robocalls since 2016, including 6 billion last year.

Best practices for consumers

To join in the fight, consumers are urged to:

Download a call blocker. First, try a free solution to see if it does the trick. No-cost services from firms such as [YouMail](#) and [Nomorobo](#) are carrier-agnostic. (Nomorobo is free for landlines but \$1.99 a month for cellphones.) Your mobile carrier has free tools, too.

- Experiment with call-blocking tools, apps and options to strike the right balance between the calls you want — and those you don't. It may take trial and error to avoid a “false positive,” the term for a legitimate call that is stopped.
- Let a call go to voicemail if it gets through a robocall app and you don't recognize the caller. If the caller claims to be, say, from Citibank, don't call back a phone number left on voicemail. Use a number you know is legitimate, such as one on a statement or credit card.
- Hang up if it's a live person calling, as computer-based robocall systems allow. Do. Not. Engage.

Learn more from the major providers: at [AT&T's Cyber Aware](#), at [T-Mobile](#) and at [Verizon](#).

Heed the latest [advice from the FTC](#) and the [FCC](#).

Help for Consumers

Companies have an arsenal of free and for-a-fee technology to limit robocalls. Here are some offerings.

AT&T

It says its [ActiveArmor](#) protects users on a few levels. “We automatically give our wireless customers essential security features, including network-based, automatic fraud call-blocking and suspected spam risk alerts,” says Adam Panagia, director of global fraud management. Wireless customers may download the free [AT&T Call Protect app](#) to customize robocall protection and create a personal block list.

Customers may upgrade to Call Protect Plus for \$3.99 a month for features including reverse number lookup for U.S. numbers and custom controls to block additional unwanted call categories. Call Protect Plus is free on AT&T Unlimited Elite and Extra plans, and also includes AT&T Mobile Security, another suite of tools that includes device security and data breach alerts.

T-Mobile

Customers have access to a free, powerful solution, says Kathleen Foster, director of core network engineering and services. [ScamShield](#) is advanced scam-blocking protection with integrated tools, such as Scam ID warnings, Scam Block and Caller ID. It also supports Sprint customers since the firms merged.

For an extra charge, Scam Shield Premium adds more control over your calls, including sending entire categories of calls directly to voicemail (such as telemarketers or fundraisers), a reverse number lookup for unknown callers, and the option to create “Always Block” lists that live on the network, not just your contact list, so your preferences remain even if you get a new device. Scam Shield Premium costs \$4 per line per month, but are automatically included in Magenta MAX plans.

Verizon

[Call Filter](#) lets wireless customers block many robocalls at no cost, says Todd Oberstein, executive director of consumer mobile products. An incoming call may be flagged as “Potential Spam” or stopped from reaching you altogether.

“We have also created lines across our network, called ‘honeypots,’ to identify and observe illegal robocall campaigns, and work with USTelecom’s Industry Traceback Group and other carriers to trace them back to the source and notify law enforcement,” says Oberstein. “We have expanded these numbers in every U.S. state, which has helped punish those who would seek to profit from fraudulent or illegal robocall scams.”

Call Filter Plus (\$2.99 monthly for one line; \$7.99 for three or more) also includes Caller ID, spam look-up, a personal block list and spam risk meter, he says.

Report it

Citizen Property Inventory System

Register your property at reportit.leadsonline.com

Safe. Secure. Free.

**Knowing what you own - the difference between recovering
and not recovering stolen property.**

General Public

Keep a secure, online record of valuable property,
accessible, from anywhere.

Help law enforcement recover stolen property

ReportIt is not a law enforcement function and does not automatically search for property that may have been lost or stolen. Please report any criminal activity to law enforcement immediately

Sign up for Smart911

Why use Smart911?

Smart911 can help protect you, your loved ones and other members of your household. By creating a Safety Profile with Smart911 during a calm moment, you can take the time to ensure that the information is correct and accurate and exactly what you would like to be communicated to emergency response teams in an emergency.

Ensure first responders have information about you and your family. These services are free and your information is kept private and secure.

Is my information kept private?

Your privacy is important. Your information is made available ONLY to 911 call takers and responders ONLY in the event you call 911

This allows you local emergency officials to better plan for and respond to disasters. You are encouraged to share your information with both 911 and Emergency Management so you can be protected during ALL emergencies.

How to sign up

Sign up for Smart911 and RAVE Emergency Alerts by visiting www.showmeboone.com/OEM

- 1 Once on the Emergency Management Homepage, click the blue Smart911 and Rave Alerts logo.
- 2 Click REGISTER HERE
- 3 This will take you to the Smart911 sign up page. Click SIGN UP TODAY.
- 4 Enter your information and click CREATE ACCOUNT.
- 5 Enter your address, click CONTINUE to confirm.
- 6 Confirm phone number
- 7 Complete Safety Profile and ensure all information is correct.
- 8 Under Preferences, opt in to receive RAVE Emergency alerts.

- 9 Check the box to receive notification from Boone County Office of Emergency Management.
- 10 Check box for each notification type you would like to receive. Also check the box for the method(s) you would like to receive the notification, such as text, voice, or email.
- 11 Check the box to share Safety Profile with Emergency Management.

Be sure to save all of you information!

Contact Info:

Boone County Office of Emergency Management
2145 County Dr
Columbia, MO 65202

(573) 554-7900
em@boonecountymo.org

Web: www.showmeboone.com/OEM

AmazonSmile app

Want to help make a difference while you shop in the Amazon app, at no extra cost to you? Simply follow the instructions below to select "Columbia Neighborhood Watch" as your charity and activate AmazonSmile in the app. They'll donate a portion of your eligible mobile app purchases to us.

How it works:

1. Open the Amazon app on your phone
2. Select the main menu (=) & tap on "AmazonSmile" within Programs & Features
3. Select "Columbia Neighborhood Watch" as your charity
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to activate AmazonSmile in the mobile app

New in the Amazon app

Your app purchases can generate donations for us, at no extra cost to you!

amazon
smile



New City of Columbia MyCOMO app

The City of Columbia has launched its new MyCOMO app.

MyCOMO allows users to easily access information about upcoming events, report issues like potholes, chat with customer service representatives during business hours and much more. Users can also be notified of specific events such as changes in trash collection.

"In the first few months of its release the MyCOMO app has been downloaded over 20,000 times, a significant increase over the former City app," said Community Relations Manager Stephanie Brown. "I'm excited about the possibilities of this app, as it has added more communication channels and access right from a handheld device to view and pay utility bills, schedule trash collection for large items, view live City broadcasts, check the real-time bus schedules, view the electric and water outage map and many other options for full civic engagement. "

Download the MyCOMO mobile app from the Google Play or Apple Store. For more information or to download the app, visit como.gov/CMS/

JOKE:

A State Trooper pulled an 87 year old woman over for speeding. As he looked at her driver's license, he was surprised to notice that attached to it was a conceal weapon permit. Taken aback, he couldn't help but ask if she had a gun in her possession. She replied in her crackly voice that she indeed did have a 45 automatic in her glove compartment. The trooper then asked if she had any other weapons to which she replied that she also had a 9mm Glock in her center console. The shocked trooper asked if that was all and the little old lady held up her purse and replied, "Well, I do keep a 38 special in my purse." Finally the astonished trooper asked, "What are you afraid of..? and the little old lady smiled and replied, "Not a Freaking thing."