



YOUR Community, YOUR Neighbors
OUR RESPONSIBILITY
get involved today

Columbia Neighborhood Watch

June 2025

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Summer Safety!

Welcome to the Summer edition of the Columbia Neighborhood Watch Newsletter! As the weather warms and we spend more time outdoors, it's a great time to refresh our safety habits and connect with our neighbors. This newsletter is packed with important information, upcoming events, and helpful tips to keep our community safe and thriving.

With Summer comes an increase in crime.

Summer is a time of outdoor activities, and that includes renewing our commitment to community safety. Let's continue to work together to make our neighborhood a safe and welcoming place for everyone. Remember,

"See Something, Say Something!"

COLUMBIA NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

In This Issue:

CPD Liaisons Corner	2
Burglar Talks	3
CNW Organization	4
Motor Vehicle Thefts	5
Support our Blue	6
Crime Stoppers	7
Smartphone apps	8-9
Columbia Police Dept	10-12
Columbia Fire Dept	13-16
Boone County Sheriff	17-19
Prosecuting Attorney	20-21
Humor	22
Our Partners	23



Highlights from Officer McClintic

THEFT PREVENTION TIPS RELAYED FROM THE COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT'S CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION:

#1 thing to protect yourself is to lock your car doors and close your garage doors.

Groups of people (mostly juveniles) walk around at night and check car doors and enter open garage doors. If the doors are locked, they usually keep moving until they find easier targets.

Scammers often trick their victims into sending gift cards, itunes cards, or Google play cards. They claim the funds can be used to pay for missed jury duty, taxes, bail, debt collections, or towards fees to pay for computer virus protection. Scammers also contact their victims via email, text, or facebook and pretend to be a friend and ask for gift cards.

The scammers express the need for quick action. They tell their victims not to tell anyone what they are doing, and that they will be arrested if they hang up or don't cooperate.

If a friend has asked you to buy them gift cards, please talk to that friend in person or over the phone before you purchase any.

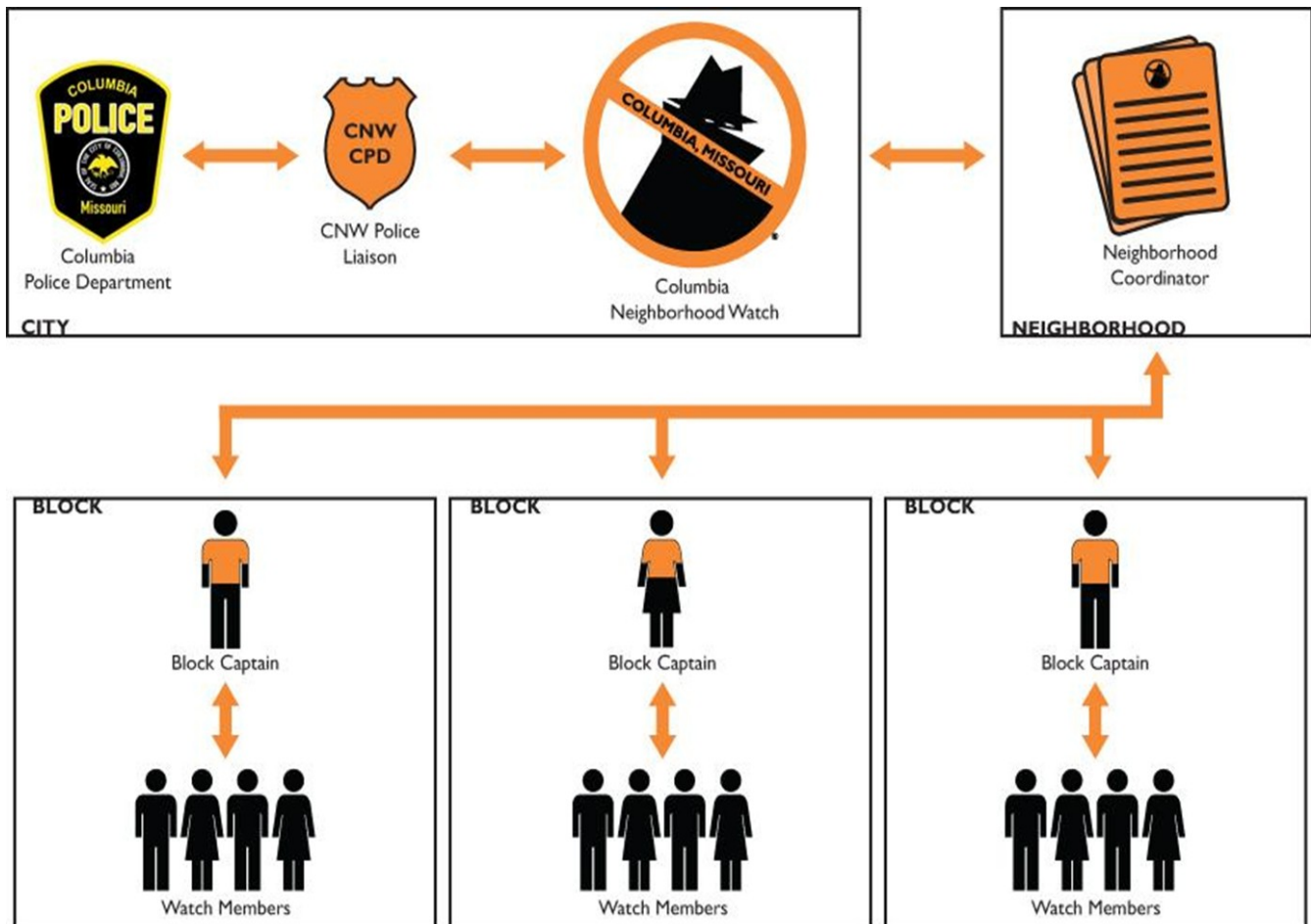
Government agencies will not ask for gift cards as payment for fines or bail.

If you think someone is trying to steal your money with one of these scams, please call 311 to have an officer contact you for more potential report details.

THINGS A BURGLAR WON'T TELL YOU:

1. Sometimes, I carry a clipboard. Sometimes, I dress like a lawn guy and carry a rake. I do my best to never, ever to look like a crook.
2. The two things I hate most are loud dogs and nosy neighbors.
3. I'll break a window to get in, even if it makes a little noise. If your neighbor hears one loud sound, he'll stop what he's doing and wait to hear it again. If he doesn't hear it again, he'll just go back to what he was doing. It's human nature.
4. I'm not complaining, but why would you pay all that money for a fancy alarm system and leave your house without setting it?
5. I love looking in your windows. I'm looking for signs that you're home, and for flat screen TVs, laptops, I-Pads, cell phones or gaming systems I'd like. I'll drive or walk through your neighborhood at night, before you close the blinds, just to pick my targets.
6. Avoid announcing your vacation on your Facebook page. It's easier than you think to look up your address.
7. Do you leave that window open just a crack during the day as a way to let in a little fresh air. To me, it's an invitation.
8. If you don't answer when I knock, I try the door. Occasionally, I hit the jackpot and walk right in.

Columbia Neighborhood Watch is organized under the auspices of the Columbia Police Department, through a Police Liaison Officer, who also serves as a member of the Board of Directors.



See how you and your neighborhood can become members of Columbia Neighborhood Watch by attending our next training session:

Where: Molly Bowden Policing Center

1204 International Drive, Columbia, MO

Start Time: 6:30pm

Columbia has seen an increase of motor vehicle thefts as well as reported thefts from motor vehicles. Columbia Police reminds everyone to lock up all of your valuables at night including your car. Try to park in well lit areas and preferably in your driveway if possible. Do not leave any items of value in plain view as this will increase the desire of those willing to cause damage to the vehicle to get inside.

CPD asks that if you have any home security footage of persons checking your car doors, please contact 311 to help them identify, investigate and prosecute these criminal acts.

Stolen firearms from motor vehicles has become and is continuing to be a major problem throughout our entire country and specifically in Columbia Missouri. Crime is usually the intended outcome from guns that are stolen.

In fact, everything you can do to make a criminal's job harder, the better off you'll be. **Studies have shown that the harder a target is, the easier it is for the criminal to walk away and look for an easier target.**

Crime Rates in Missouri

Violent Crime: In 2023, Missouri had a violent crime rate of 459 offenses per 100,000 people, which was higher than the national average. Aggravated assault made up the largest portion of violent crimes.

- **Property Crime:** The property crime rate in Missouri in 2023 was 2,095 offenses per 100,000 people, also higher than the national average. Larceny-theft was the most common property crime.
 - **St. Louis and Kansas City:** These major metropolitan areas tend to have higher crime rates compared to the rest of the state. Some communities within the St. Louis metro area have particularly high violent crime rates
-

Show your support for our Police. To raise awareness we are selling “Back the Blue” signs for your yard or window at a cost of \$20 which is considered a charitable donation to a 502(c)3 organization.



The sign will be delivered and can be purchased on our website or click below.

Control click the button below

[PURCHASE SIGN](#)



Crimestoppers is in the process of purchasing an online program to generate tips anonymously through an online format. It's called Navigate 360 P-3. This is designed to reach those younger adults and teens who prefer to work interactively, rather than make telephone calls, So be watching for the QR code that we will be using to get you to the program. Crimestoppers are working with the Boone County Coalition Against Violence and Channel 8 News to create a story with the Mothers who are the Mothers that have had sons and daughters who have been murdered, and their murders are unsolved. We're hoping that through these stories we can generate some TIPS and solve these crimes.

Remember our motto, "If You See Something, Say Something!" You'll Remain Anonymous and You can receive a reward UP TO \$2,500.00 leading to an arrest on any felony related charge. Call 573.875.TIPS!

Crime stoppers Board Officers:

John Fields, President

Matt Garrett, Vice President

Terry Robb, Secretary

Karen Taylor, Treasurer

Smart phone apps that can save your life in an emergency

(These are presented as information only. Columbia Neighborhood Watch does not endorse any of these products)

In emergencies there are smartphone apps with a distress signal tool at your disposal. You can download these apps and use now in times of dire need. Here are four:

Important: Most of these apps use your phone's GPS and location tracking, which may impact and decrease its battery life.

1. Silent Beacon: Emergency Alert System

Silent Beacon, available for iOS and Android, is described by its creators as "the emergency alert system for the digital age." It is a free app and service that uses GPS-tracking to send your location to a custom set of contacts, including 911 or emergency services, through a "distress message."

This distress message can be sent with a touch of the app's button during emergencies when the beacon is activated. Silent Beacon is simple, straightforward and for a free app, it does its job well - send a message and your location via text notification in a jiffy. You never know, that may be enough to save you from trouble one day.

2. bSafe: Personal Safety App

bSafe is another emergency alert app system for iOS and Android that will notify up to four selected contacts, called "Guardians" by the app, in an event of an emergency. bSafe's free version lets you send out a distress message by hitting its SOS button. This notifies your "Guardians" of the emergency via text message and provides them with your location. bCall's premium service costs \$20 a year with a special \$30 promo price for a two-year subscription.

3. Companion: Mobile Personal Safety

If you are looking for a free safety alert app that has real-time location tracking, try the iOS and Android app Companion.

Similar to other safety apps, 3Companion lets you pick your own contacts as your emergency alert recipients.

These "companions," as the app calls them, will then receive a text message with a link to a webpage showing a real-time map of your location.

If your arrival is delayed or you divert from your trip's path, your headphones get unplugged or if your phone's sensors detect a sudden change in your speed, the app will ask you if everything's OK. You'll have 15 seconds to confirm to the app that you're fine and if not, it will proceed to notify your "companions." The app will also give a quick way to call the police in an event of an emergency.

4. LifeLine Response - Panic Button and Safety App

While other emergency alert apps require them to be opened to send out a distress message, Lifeline Response does it a little bit differently - it is activated by holding your finger on your phone's screen. Once the app is activated and your finger is removed from the screen, it starts a series of countdown timers that culminates in a call from LifeLine Response's Verification Center. If the emergency is verified by the center either via verbal confirmation, by a silent alarm code or by non-reply, LifeLine contacts 911 dispatchers directly and provides them your GPS coordinates. Your LifeLine contacts will likewise receive the same emergency information via text and email. LifeLine Response's service is not free. Monthly subscriptions start at \$5 but it offers a free 14-day trial. The app is available for both iOS and Android.

Speaker is available

Just a reminder, if your organization or neighborhood would like a speaker, we can provide an informative talk on Neighborhood Watch from 20 minutes to as little as 5 minutes. We will answer any questions your members may have. To arrange, please contact us at: **col.neighwatch@gmail.com**

Columbia Police Camera Registration Program: Your Partnership for Safer Streets

The Columbia Police Department is contacting residents and business owners with an innovative approach to community safety – the Camera Registration Program. This voluntary initiative is designed to strengthen public safety throughout Columbia by creating a collaborative network between law enforcement and the community.

What is the Camera Registration Program?

The Camera Registration Program allows residents and businesses with security cameras to voluntarily register their devices with the Columbia Police Department. By participating, community members become valuable partners in maintaining neighborhood safety without sacrificing their privacy or autonomy.

"This program represents a modern approach to community policing," says a Columbia Police spokesperson. "We're leveraging existing technology in our neighborhoods to create a more secure environment for everyone."

Benefits for the Community

Participating in the program offers several advantages for both residents and law enforcement:

Crime Deterrence: Areas with registered cameras may experience reduced criminal activity, as potential wrongdoers know that surveillance coverage exists in these locations.

Enhanced Investigations: When crimes occur, detectives can quickly identify nearby cameras that may have captured relevant footage, significantly improving response times and investigation efficiency.

Stronger Police-Community Relations: The program fosters collaboration between residents and law enforcement, building trust and communication within neighborhoods.

How the Registration Process Works

The registration process is straightforward and respects residents' privacy. Property owners provide basic information about their camera's location to the police department. Importantly, registration does not grant police direct access to cameras or footage – it merely creates a database of camera locations.

When an incident occurs, officers may contact registered camera owners in the vicinity to request voluntary cooperation in providing footage that could assist with investigations. Camera owners maintain complete control over their equipment and can choose whether to provide footage on a case-by-case basis.

Getting Involved

Columbia residents interested in participating can easily register their cameras online. The registration process takes just a few minutes and requires basic information about the camera's location and coverage area.

Columbia Police Camera Registration Program: Your Partnership for Safer Streets

Getting Involved

Columbia residents interested in participating can easily register their cameras online. The registration process takes just a few minutes and requires basic information about the camera's location and coverage area.

To register your camera, visit: <https://www.columbiagov.com/police/automated-license-plate-readers/>

The Columbia Police Department emphasizes that the program is entirely voluntary and respects residents' privacy rights while creating opportunities for enhanced community safety. Camera owners maintain complete control over their equipment and footage while helping create a safer community.

The police department notes that every registered camera makes our community safer. We encourage all residents with security cameras to consider joining this critical public safety initiative.

Building Safer Neighborhoods Together

By working together through programs like this, Columbia continues to build stronger, safer neighborhoods where residents and law enforcement collaborate effectively to protect the community they call home. The Camera Registration Program represents just one way residents can actively enhance public safety while maintaining their privacy and autonomy.

For more information about the Camera Registration Program beyond the registration process, contact the Columbia Police Department at 573-874-7652.

Columbia Police Improving Public Safety in 2025

The Columbia Police Department made significant strides last year in its ability to protect and serve our community.

Thanks to the collective efforts of our entire department and the support of the community CPD dedicated to improving operational effectiveness and laying the foundation for a safer and more successful future for Columbia.

Starting with training and recruitment, CPD has increased recruiting across the board. In 2024, the department added 42 new full-time employees in varying positions.

With additional officers on patrol, CPD over the past year increased traffic safety enforcement by more than 200 percent. That number includes only stops for traffic safety, not investigative stops.

The new Columbia Police Training Academy provided a big boost to CPD's recruitment goals. It is the first in-house academy in the history of the nearly 200-year-old department. The academy is a partnership between CPD and Lincoln University.

In October 2024, the first 14 recruits began more than 730 hours of training over 16 weeks, surpassing Missouri's state requirements by more than 130 hours. These recruits will graduated in March, and the next class of recruits has began training.

CPD also adopted Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT) training for all officers. Developed by the Police Executive Research Forum, this program gives officers tools, skills and options to defuse a range of critical incidents safely and successfully. ICAT has been proven to reduce the use of force and injuries both to the community and to first-responding officers.

CPD has made strides in technology as well. Last fall, CPD received approval from the City Council to add Flock Safety cameras to improve safety for all of Columbia. Once installed throughout the city, these cameras will provide real-time alerts to law enforcement when they detect stolen vehicles or suspect vehicles listed in local, state or national crime databases. They also notify authorities if a vehicle connected to a missing person case, such as an AMBER or Silver alert, is identified.

To help decrease gun violence in Columbia, CPD also joined the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) through the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. This technology provides cutting-edge ballistics analysis that gives CPD detectives the ability to solve gun crimes faster and more accurately.

Welcoming New Firefighters to Our City

This summer, Columbia Fire Department is proud to welcome the newest class of recruits as they prepare to graduate from our Basic Recruit School.

Over the last several months, these individuals have trained tirelessly - learning everything from fire suppression and hazardous materials response to emergency medical care. It's demanding work, both mentally and physically, and we are proud of how far they've come.

Once they graduate and complete their EMT training, these new firefighters will be assigned to fire stations across Columbia, joining crews who respond to emergencies 24/7. We know they'll carry forward our department's mission to protect lives and property with professionalism, compassion, and integrity.

If you see a fresh face at your neighborhood station, don't hesitate to say hello or wave when you see the truck go by!

Grilling, Fireworks & Summer Safety Tips

As the temperatures rise and summer celebrations kick into gear, the Columbia Fire Department wants to share a few seasonal safety reminders to help keep you and your neighborhood safe.

Grilling Safety

Whether it's burgers on the back patio or brats at the lake, grilling is a summer favorite - but it's also a common cause of fires. Here are some key tips:

- Always grill outside and away from your home, deck railings, and overhanging branches.

- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill.

- Never leave a hot grill unattended.

- For gas grills: Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it each year.

Fireworks Safety

In Columbia, **fireworks are prohibited within city limits**. Each year, fireworks cause thousands of injuries and fires.

If you choose to attend a fireworks display, let the professionals handle the fun. We recommend checking out Fire in the Sky on July 4, 2025 at Stephens Lakes Park. The festivities will kick off at 6:30 p.m. with kids activities, food trucks and live music at the Amphitheater. Fireworks will cap off the night, with a display starting at about 9:15 p.m.

General Fire Safety

Make sure your smoke alarms are working -test them monthly and replace batteries as needed.

Don't overload electrical outlets with fans or air conditioning units.

Keep a fire extinguisher nearby if you're doing home improvement projects, especially those involving power tools or flammable materials.

Whether you're spending time in your backyard, visiting family, or just enjoying the sunshine - stay safe, stay smart, and don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

We're here for you!

Stay Safe This Summer: Flood Safety Tips for Our Community

As we enter summer, the changing season brings warmer temperatures, blooming flowers, and, of course, increased rainfall. With heavy rains comes the risk of flooding, which can pose serious dangers to our homes, roads, and personal safety. The Columbia Fire Department wants to remind everyone to stay prepared and practice caution during flood events.

Turn Around, Don't Drown

One of the most critical flood safety messages is simple: Turn Around, Don't Drown. Flooded roadways are extremely dangerous, even if they appear shallow. Just six inches of moving water can knock a person off their feet, and only a foot of water can sweep away a vehicle. Never attempt to drive through floodwaters—your life is worth more than the risk.

Know the Risks and Be Prepared

Flooding can happen quickly, and being prepared can make all the difference. Here are some key safety measures:

Stay Informed: Monitor local weather alerts, especially during heavy rain. Sign up for emergency notifications from the city and follow trusted sources like the National Weather Service.

Plan Ahead: Identify alternative routes to avoid flood-prone areas. If your home is in a floodplain, have a preparedness plan and an emergency kit ready.

Move to Higher Ground: If flooding is imminent, evacuate immediately to higher ground. Never wait until it's too late.

Avoid Contact with Floodwater: Floodwaters may be contaminated with debris, chemicals, or sewage. Keep children and pets away, and never wade through standing water.

Secure Your Home: If time allows, move valuables to higher levels, unplug electronics, and turn off utilities if instructed to do so.

Stay Safe This Summer: Flood Safety Tips for Our Community

Post-Flood Safety

Even after the rain stops, dangers may still be present. Avoid returning to flooded areas until officials confirm it is safe. Watch for structural damage, downed power lines, and weakened roadways. If your home has flooded, use caution when cleaning up—wear protective gear and be mindful of mold growth.

Flooding is a serious hazard, but with the right precautions, we can keep our community safe. By staying aware and prepared, we can protect ourselves and our neighbors.

Stay safe, Columbia!

Don't Be the Next Victim!

This was the title on a flyer recently posted on the Sheriff's Office Facebook page. The flyer went on to briefly summarize various scams that are being used to steal your money. My guess is that as I write this article, someone in Boone County is having their money stolen by one of these scams...it happens almost every day.

That brings us to the point of this article. What can you do not to become the next victim? What can you do to help your neighbor not to become a victim? The most important step you can take is to educate yourself and be aware. So, let's get educated!

Initial Contact

Scammers usually start their scam by throwing a wide net to elicit a response from potential victims. Email, text, phone calls, or internet is how these initial contacts usually take place. Once someone responds, the real scam starts. If you are contacted by someone you do not know and have not ever met in real life for any of the following, you are being scammed:

- To put money into an investment
- To repair a virus on your computer
- To protect a "hacked" account
- To pay bail or avoid arrest
- To move money or make money deposits
- To go to a crypto currency ATM (Bitcoin)
- To buy gift cards for an unusual reason
- To send money to a potential love interest you have never met in real life - commonly called a romance scam

Your Money Will Be Gone Forever

Some scams will develop more slowly over multiple contacts, and some will move quickly with one contact. However, the end goal is always the same. That goal is to steal your money. The scam process will involve the scammer lying to you about some problem or issue to build trust and always ends with you providing money or information to the scammer. You are in control here! If you do not provide the money and/or information the scam will fail.

Because of the complex nature of these scams, it is very rare for law enforcement to successfully investigate and recover victim funds in these cases. For example, scammers often use crypto currency because the transactions cannot be reversed. They will also often ask you to move the conversation to smart phone apps like Telegram and WhatsApp because they cannot be traced. Scammers will use high pressure tactics to make you doubt yourself and overcome your resistance. Believe this article not the scammer. Do not be fooled!

Remember, you are in control! If contacted by email, text, phone calls, or internet, do not provide information or money to anyone you do not know in real life. If you fall for one of these scams your money will be gone forever! It is up to you to prevent these scams by being educated and aware!

Additionally, help each other. If you hear or become aware of a neighbor, relative, or friend (especially the elderly) being involved in something that sounds like one of these scams, try to educate them and provide some guidance.

Prevention Is Up to You

Stop all contact with the scammer immediately.

Be extremely skeptical of any online contacts that involve money and someone you have not met in real life.

Use unique and long passwords on all financial accounts.

Use two-factor authentication on all financial accounts.

If you own cryptocurrency, NEVER provide private keys or wallet passwords to anyone.

Help educate your neighbors, relatives, and friends.

Call 311 to report suspicious incidents



DON'T BE THE NEXT VICTIM



If you are contacted by email, text, phone, or internet by someone *you do not know...*

To put money into an investment

To repair a virus on your computer

To protect a “hacked” account

To pay bail or avoid arrest

To move money or make money deposits

To go to a crypto currency ATM (Bitcoin)

To buy gift cards for an unusual reason

You are being scammed!!

- Scammers use crypto currency because the transactions cannot be reversed.
- They use phone apps like Telegram and WhatsApp because they cannot be traced.
 - Scammers will use high pressure tactics to make you doubt yourself.

Your money will be gone FOREVER!



- **Stop all contact with the scammer immediately.**
- Be extremely skeptical of any online contacts that involve money and someone you have not met in real life.
- Use unique and long passwords on all financial accounts.
- Use two-factor authentication on all financial accounts.
- Call 311 to report suspicious incidents.

Protecting Your Home While on Summer Vacation: A Community Effort

Summer is here, and many of us are looking forward to well-deserved vacations. While enjoying your time away, it's natural to worry about leaving your home unoccupied. By taking some proactive steps and leveraging the power of our Neighborhood Watch, you can significantly enhance your home's security and enjoy your trip with greater peace of mind.

A little preparation goes a long way, and community vigilance is our strongest asset.

Before You Depart: Securing Your Home

The most crucial step is preparing your home before you leave.

- **Secure All Entry Points:** Thoroughly check and lock all doors and windows, including less obvious spots like basement windows, side doors, and especially your garage and any sheds. Consider reinforcing vulnerable locks if needed.
- **Make Your Home Look Occupied:** A lived-in home is a less appealing target.
 - Use automatic timers for interior lights to mimic normal activity.
 - Consider setting a radio or television on a timer for the illusion of occupancy. Some smart speakers such as Amazon Alexa's "Away Mode" have features that can even simulate normal household conversation and sounds.
 - Manage mail and newspapers: Arrange for the post office to hold your mail, cancel newspaper delivery, or have a trusted neighbor collect them.
 - If you'll be gone for an extended period, arrange for lawn care. An overgrown yard can signal an empty home.
- **Don't Advertise Your Absence:** In today's digital age, it's easy to accidentally reveal your vacation plans.
- **Avoid posting vacation details** on social media before or during your trip.
- Turn down your home phone ringer or use a generic answering machine message that doesn't indicate you're out of town.
- **Involve Your Neighbors and Neighborhood Watch:** One of the most effective security measures is community strength.
- **Inform a trusted neighbor or Neighborhood Watch member** of your travel plans. Provide them with your contact information and a key for emergencies.
- Ask them to **keep an eye on your property:** collect mail/newspapers, occasionally park a car in your driveway, or put out/bring in trash bins. This mutual support is vital for a secure community.

- **Deter Potential Intruders and Report Suspicious Activity:** Be aware that a common tactic for burglars is to knock or ring the doorbell to see if anyone is home. If no one answers, they may attempt a break-in, often targeting less visible entry points. If you notice this type of suspicious behavior in our neighborhood, **report it to the police**. This information helps authorities track patterns and investigate potential crimes.
- **Consider Security Camera Systems:** Cameras are powerful deterrents and valuable tools for law enforcement. They can capture activity that helps identify criminals and solve crimes, not just on your property but potentially for your neighbors as well. Many affordable and easy-to-install smart camera options are available today.

Secure Valuables: Store valuable items out of sight. For high-value possessions, consider a safe deposit box or a hidden home safe. Taking photos or keeping a detailed record of your belongings can be helpful for insurance and investigation purposes.

While You're Away: Stay Connected

Ensure your trusted contact checks on your house periodically as arranged. Provide them with contact information for non-crime emergencies (e.g., plumber for a leak, alarm company).

Upon Your Return: Observe and Report

Before entering your home, take a moment to **observe your property**. If anything looks suspicious (e.g., broken window, damaged door, door ajar), **do not enter**. Go to a safe location nearby and call the police immediately.

Community Vigilance is Key!

Keeping our neighborhood safe is a collective effort. By taking these steps to secure your own home and by looking out for your neighbors' properties when they are away, we create a stronger, more secure community for everyone.

Remember, if you have information about a crime in Boone County, you can report it anonymously through Crimestoppers.

Crimestoppers covers all of Boone County, and your identity is never known or included in police reports. The tipline number is **573-875-TIPS (573-875-8477)**. Community participation with police and prosecutors is vital, and Crimestoppers provides a safe and anonymous way to contribute.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer vacation!

A police officer responding to a gunshot call called his police chief.

Officer - "We have an old lady here who shot her husband for walking on the floor after she just mopped it"

Chief - "Have you arrested her?"

Officer - "No, not yet. The floor's still wet"

Five year old Little Johnny was lost, so he went up to an officer and said, "I've lost my dad!"

The officer said, "What's he like?" Little Johnny replied, "Beer and women!"

Why do many fire departments keep dalmatians?

Because they assist them in looking for hydrants!

How many firemen does it take to change a light bulb? You will actually need 5 to change a light bulb.

One to change it while the others will cut a hole in the roof and hold the ladder!

Scotty, beam me to a crime free zone:

[Ctrl Click to go there](#)



OFFICE OF THE
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ATTORNEY



**CRIME
STOPPERS**
875-TIPS

