

Virginia Beach Police Department

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City of Virginia Beach - A Certified Crime Prevention Community



CRIME PREVENTION CHRONICLE

Fall 2008

www.VBgov.com



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NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

What is a Neighborhood Watch?

Sometimes called a Citizen's Watch, or Block Watch, a Neighborhood Watch encourages residents in a particular area to prevent crime or reduce crime in that area, develop a positive rapport with law enforcement, and to be the "eyes and ears" for law enforcement.

How do I start a Neighborhood Watch?

Contact your neighbors to find out if there is interest. Talk to them by telephone, when you see them in your neighborhood, or door-to-door. Plan a get-together for the neighborhood to check on interest in starting a neighborhood watch. After you discuss the concerns, determine if you and your neighbors really feel there is a need for a Neighborhood Watch. Once your community has decided there is a need, contact the Crime Prevention Unit at 385-1006 and set up a meeting.

Who will be the coordinator for a Neighborhood Watch Program in my area?

The community selects the neighborhood watch coordinator. The coordinators organize "block" activities, distribute crime prevention literature to members of the group, and represent their area or section at other Neighborhood Watch activities that may be taking place in the community.

How do we get a Neighborhood Watch sign?

Once your Neighborhood Watch is established, the City of Virginia Beach provides the signs free of charge. The number of signs will be determined by the geographical layout of the neighborhood. The signs remain the property of the City.

October is Crime Prevention Month. Consider starting a Neighborhood Watch!

STEERING COMMITTEE AWARDS

The Virginia Beach Crime Prevention Steering Committee was established in 1977 to act as an advocate for community participation in crime prevention as well as to support and advise the Virginia Beach Police Department with community concerns regarding crime. Each year the Steering Committee has honored individuals, community organizations and businesses that have exemplified the values and mission of the Virginia Beach Crime Prevention Steering Committee. The award winners for 2008 are:

Private Industry - GEICO Insurance Company, Toiya Sosa

Citizen - Rendy Adams

Community Organization - Creeds Ruritan Club, Doug Williams

Volunteer - Margaret Allen

Law Enforcement Officer - Officer Michael E. Lohse, First Precinct

Virginia Beach Police Department

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE AWARD RECIPIENTS!

CAR LARCENY PREVENTION

Remember to lock your vehicles and take your keys with you.

Keep valuables out of sight. Immediately report all suspicious activity to the police.



SAFE SHOPPING



SAFETY ON THE ROAD

- Carry a well-charged cell phone.
 - Let someone know where you are going, and when you expect to return.
 - Carry your purse close to your body. If someone grabs it, let go. Your safety is more important than the property.
 - Do not leave purses unattended in shopping carts.
 - Be careful with your purse or wallet. Carry only the credit cards you will use and limit the amount of cash you carry.
 - Write down the toll free numbers for reporting your credit cards lost or stolen. Keep the numbers at home, in your purse or wallet, and at your office so you will be prepared to call immediately if you have to.
- Park your car in well lighted areas.
 - Lock the doors and take the keys with you. Do not leave valuables in your car in plain view. Remember to remove items like your GPS and accessories showing that one may be hidden in your car.
 - Make note of where you parked your car, and which entrance you are closest to.
 - If you see an accident, don't stop; instead, use your cell phone or a well-lit pay phone to call for help.
 - If you think you're being followed, don't go home. Go to a police or fire station, or an open business.
 - Do not drink and drive!

*** ALWAYS BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS ***

HOLIDAY SHOPPING WITH CHILDREN

Consider leaving small children with a babysitter, or take turns babysitting with another parent. If you do take your child, make sure they are rested and fed before you head out and limit the time out. Remove your child's coat once you are indoors so they do not become overheated and cranky. Take a book, toy or snack to keep them occupied. If possible, shop with another adult so you can take turns minding the children.

Let your child know the store will be crowded and that they will need to pay extra attention and stay close to you. If there is something they'd like to look at, assure them that you will make time for their interests too.

Teach your children to go to a store clerk or security guard if they ever get separated from you. Point out the cash registers, so they know a safe place to go. Be sure they know their first and last name. Carry a current picture of your child with you.

With older children, choose a place to meet if you get separated. They should not leave the area, and they should never go to the parking lot to try and find their car. Tell your children not to leave with an adult, no matter what they say. Adults will not come to children for help.

When in a public facility always accompany children to the restroom. Use a family washroom, or stand outside the door until your child comes out. Do not leave your children alone at video arcades or play areas.

Remember to take time to have fun while shopping, and have a very safe and happy holiday season!

False Alarm Reduction Unit



The Virginia Beach Police Department averages over 22,000 false alarm calls each year. A high false alarm rate can reduce overall effectiveness and place a greater burden on public safety. We need your help in freeing up these valuable public safety resources. When properly used, burglar, panic and robbery alarms serve as useful deterrents to crime. Burglar alarms not only help reduce your chances of being burglarized, but also can reduce the amount of property lost in a burglary. However, false alarms delay officer's response to actual criminal complaints.

The key to Virginia Beach's false alarm reduction success is alarm user knowledge of their security systems and working with their alarm monitoring company to make sure it is working correctly. An alarm registration form, false alarm reduction FAQ's, alarm ordinances, and steps to reducing false alarms can be found on the police link at vb.gov. For more information, contact the False Alarm Unit at 385-1739 or e-mail at FAU@VBgov.com.

ePRO

Have you checked out ePRO at vb.gov yet?

Electronic Police Reports Online (ePRO) is your resource for neighborhood crime reports, incident reports, and traffic accident reports.

SAFE SHOPPING ONLINE

Choosing a store:

- If you are not familiar with the business, do your research to be sure they are legitimate. Call their phone number, so you know you can reach them if you need to. Look for an actual physical address.
- Research online to find out what other shoppers have to say.
- Read their privacy policies to find out if they will share your information.
- Review their shipping methods and policies, and their return policy.
- Know what you are getting. Review the product description closely.

Computer security:

- Don't fall for a false email or pop-up.
- The company should only require personal information that is necessary for the purchase.
- The website should use secure technology. When you get to the screen where you enter your credit card number, make sure that the web address begins with *https* and check to see if a tiny padlock appears at the bottom right of the screen.
- Update your web browser.

Paying for your purchase:

- Paying by credit card is the safest and quickest way to shop online. The federal Fair Credit Billing Act gives you the right to dispute credit card charges for goods or services that you never received, never ordered or that were misrepresented to you.
- Do not use a bank card connected to your checking or savings accounts.

Keep a paper trail:

- Print and keep your receipts and order information.
- When your credit card statement arrives, check it for any unauthorized purchases.

Trust your instincts!

For more information, visit the Federal Trade Commission website at ftc.gov.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ◇ The **Virginia Beach Crime Prevention Steering Committee** meets the second Wednesday of each month at the ODU-NSU Higher Education Center. The November meeting will be at 7pm. The December meeting will be at 10am. For more information, contact MPO Jim McElligott at 385-1330.
- ◇ **Explorer Post 911** meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. Members must be 14, in the 9th grade, and no older than 21. For more information about membership, visit vbgov.com or contact MPO Kevin Rowland at 385-1338.
- ◇ **Virginia Beach C.E.R.T. (Community Emergency Response Team)** trains citizens in skills that will benefit themselves and the community in the event of a large scale emergency. Contact the program coordinator at 219-2874 or email vbcert@vbgov.com for more information on how to sign up for a class.
- ◇ Additional training on disaster preparedness is available from the **American Red Cross**. Go to their website at redcross.org for more information on how to prepare yourself and your neighborhood for hurricanes and other types of disasters.
- ◇ For **lectures** by a Crime Prevention Officer, please contact the Crime Prevention Unit at 385-1006. Some available topics are Personal Safety, Youth Safety, Senior Safety, Home Security, Identity Theft, Shoplifting and Robbery Prevention, and establishing a Neighborhood Watch.
- ◇ **Phone numbers:**
 - Emergencies or crimes in progress - 9-1-1
 - Non-emergency police/fire/rescue - 385-5000
 - City information/services/news/events - 3-1-1
 - If dialing from a cell phone, call 385-3111.
- ◇ Report **graffiti** problems at vbgov.com. Go to the police link, and the form is available on the right side of the page under "related pages". The Code Enforcement Division can remove graffiti that is on private property and visible from the public right-of-way, at no cost to the property owner.

*Newsletter compiled and edited by
members of the Crime Prevention Unit*

All or parts of this newsletter may be copied.

Questions or comments, please call 385-1006

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