



Community Crime Prevention Newsletter

Plymouth, MN

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Terrorism in America

April 19, 1995. The Alfred P. Murray Federal building in Oklahoma City was bombed by Timothy McVeigh killing 168 and injuring over 800. September 11, 2001. Terrorists flew planes into the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon, killing more than 3,000 people. October 2001. Anthrax sent in the mail kills several people around the country. Right after the attacks in 2001, we understood our vulnerability to terrorist attack. However, it has been several years since the United States has been the victim of a large-scale terrorist attack and we, as a nation, have started to forget that we are still vulnerable. But we are. Around the world, terrorist activity occurs on a routine basis. The US is not immune. It is not a matter of *if* another terrorist attack will occur, but *when* and *where*. Don't panic or become paranoid, but it is important to remain vigilant.

Terrorism is the use of force or violence against persons or property in violation of the criminal laws of the United States for the purposes of fear, intimidation, coercion, or ransom. Terrorism has political or social objectives. Terrorists commit criminal acts in order to attempt to force changes in society or make governments alter policies in ways that will further the terrorists' cause. There are two types of terrorism: domestic and international. Domestic groups are based entirely in the US and target the government or its citizens at home. International terrorism is foreign-based and targets the US government and its citizens both at home and around the world. Most people are concerned about international terrorism because of 9-11. However, terrorists can be *anyone*. In fact, in the United States, 90% of terrorism is domestic. That means the majority of terrorist attacks on the American public are committed by fellow Americans.

As with any criminal activity, law enforcement needs *your* help to fight terrorism. Police cannot be everywhere, so we need the public to be our eyes and ears. Be alert for suspicious activity, including:

Surveillance. People monitoring activity at a facility that could be a terrorist target (taking photos or video, taking notes, drawing diagrams, using binoculars, etc.) People may seem "out of place."

Gathering intelligence. People attempting to gather information about a facility that could be a terrorist target by mail, fax, phone, or in person.

"Tooling Up." Buying or stealing explosives, weapons, ammunition, uniforms, vehicles, false ids, or anything that might help commit the attack.

Training and rehearsing the attack. Terrorists will do a "dry run" of the attack. They may place bags, brief cases, or other objects in a crowded place and leave them unattended to see if anyone will alert security. They may test other security measures, map traffic patterns, or time traffic signals.

Stopping one of the above preparation steps can prevent an attack. Be aware of suspicious activity. Be alert at home, work, school, the mall - everywhere! Report suspicious activity right away by calling 9-1-1!

Be Prepared for Emergencies

Take the time *now* to make an emergency plan for your family.

- ✓ Discuss different types of disasters – floods, tornadoes, blizzards, terrorism.
- ✓ Develop a plan for each situation and build an emergency/disaster supply kit.
- ✓ Create an emergency communication plan with family and friends. Discuss how you will communicate if cell phones or land lines are down.
- ✓ Be aware of suspicious activity and report it immediately to local police.

For more information on how to prepare for emergencies, go to www.hsem.state.mn.us or www.ready.gov.

Epecially for Businesses

Bad checks are common, but you don't have to write off worthless checks as a cost of doing business. There is a way to recover your money through the Worthless Check Diversion Program. The main goals of the program are:

- Restitution for victims
- Holding those issuing bad checks accountable
- Educating merchants about how to reduce the number of worthless checks they receive

The program is *free* to Plymouth merchants. No contract is required to participate and no check is too small to send through. For more information about the Check Diversion program, contact the Retailers Protection Association (RPA) at 1-800-880-5420.

Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH) Corner: Upcoming CFMH trainings

The Plymouth Police Department is pleased to announce that we will once again co-host two upcoming Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH) Phase 1 training with Maple Grove Police. The first training is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 18, 2009** from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Plymouth Police Department. Call 763-509-5147 to request a registration. The second training is scheduled for **Saturday, May 16, 2009** from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Maple Grove Police Department. Call 763-494-6134 to request a registration form. The cost to attend either day of the training is \$25, which includes breakfast, lunch, snacks, and a training manual.

Working together, we can make a difference!

Fraud Stop: Common Scams

With a downturn in the economy, criminals are preying on those most at risk. Scammers offer victims, who may be in tough financial situations, the false hope of easy money or a way to save their homes. Or criminals prey on victim's concerns about paying their bills or the welfare of their families. Watch out for these common scams!

Grandparent Scam: The Scam: You get a call. The caller says, "Grandma/pa, it's me." You reply, "Is that you, (insert name)", the caller says "yes" and tells you they are in trouble (usually in Canada) and need money right now. Typically, they ask for a money order to be sent from Walmart. You wire the money, but it goes to a criminal, not your relative. The Stop: Always ask the caller to identify themselves and always verify a story before you send money. This is a very popular scam right now!

Secret/Mystery Shopper Scam: The Scam: Buy items at your favorite store and evaluate the customer service. You are told you not only get to keep your purchases, but you get paid as well. Victims are sent a check to deposit along with instructions. Victims are told to keep a couple hundred dollars and return the rest of the money (usually over \$1,000) via electronic transfer. Victims are later notified that the original check was counterfeit. *This scam has happened in Plymouth.* The Stop: Never agree to deposit a check and return any overpayment. This applies to online auction sites as well, where overpayment scams are common.

Publisher's Clearinghouse Winner Scam: The Scam: You are notified you are the Million Dollar Winner, but to claim your prize, you must send money (usually a several thousand dollars). The prize patrol never shows up. *This scam has happened in Plymouth.* The Stop: Remember: you can't win a lottery you didn't enter. If you did enter, you will never be asked to send money to claim a legitimate prize.

Mortgage Scams: The Scam: A company offers a way to save your home from foreclosure: all you have to do is sign over the title of the home and you can live there until you can buy it back. However, once the title is signed over, the company sells the home. Variation: a company offers to refinance your home. After signing complicated legal documents, you find that you unwittingly signed over the title to your home. The Stop: Don't be pressured to signing any legal documents without consulting an attorney. (Source: www.scambusters.org)

Unpaid Fuel Bill Scam: The Scam: You get a call from your "utility company", saying your bill was not paid and service is going to be stopped unless you provide a credit card number immediately. The Stop: Never give out your financial information to any unsolicited call, no matter how urgent it seems. Call the company to confirm your bill has been paid. Written warnings are before service is disconnected. (Source: www.scambusters.org)

Featured Crime Prevention Program: Premise Security Survey

Have you ever wondered how safe your home is? There are many simple ways to increase the safety of your home. Find out what they are! The Plymouth Police Department offers **free** premise security surveys. The survey takes less than an hour and a complimentary written report will be issued, detailing the results of the survey. To schedule an appointment, call 763-509-5147.

Emergency: **9-1-1** Non-emergency: **763-525-6210** Crime Tip Line: **763-509-5177**

If you have any comments about this newsletter, please contact Officer Angela Haseman at the Plymouth Police Department, 3400 Plymouth Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55447, 763-509-5147 or at ahaseman@ci.plymouth.mn.us. Thank you!