



Community Crime Prevention Newsletter

Plymouth, MN

Volume 2009 Number 4

Winter Driving Safety

Snow, ice, and increasing darkness all combine to make winter driving more hazardous. Stay safe while driving this winter by following some simple steps to help reduce the dangers of winter driving.

- * Before driving, clear snow and ice from your car. Not only is driving with a frost- or snow-covered windshield dangerous, but it is also *illegal to drive with an obstructed windshield*. In addition, take time to clear snow off the roof of your car. Snow left on your roof can fly off, affecting drivers behind you and possibly cause a crash.
 - * Allow extra time for travel. Reduce speeds in snow, ice, or sleet. It may not be safe *or legal* to travel at the posted speed limit in some conditions!
 - * Evaluate road conditions. In bad weather, decide if your trip is really worth taking. If you need to be out in bad weather, constantly re-evaluate the road conditions. Road conditions can quickly go from “ok” to very unsafe in a short time.
 - * Don’t overestimate the ability of your car to stop on snow- or ice-covered roads. Leave extra space between you and the car in front of you and slow down sooner than normal when approaching intersections. Remember, four-wheeled drive vehicles have great starting traction, but will not stop any faster on ice!
 - * **Never** pass a snowplow. Plows have limited ability to see and it is their job to clear roads to make them safe for everyone to use. For your safety, *stay back at least 100 feet from plows*.
 - * Don’t leave your car running with the keys in it, even for a few minutes. Many cars are stolen when the owners leave their cars running.
 - * Never leave children in the car! Children left in a running car are at risk if a thief decides to try to steal your car. In addition, extreme temperatures are very dangerous for children.
 - * If you celebrate the holiday season with alcohol, don’t get behind the wheel of a car. Buzzed driving is drunk driving, so have a plan before the party. Designate a sober driver and get home safely.
- Follow these tips every time you leave the house this winter and drive safely!

Snow Survival Kit

Keep a snow survival kit in your car in case you get stranded. **Always stay with your car. Your chances of survival decrease if you leave your vehicle.**

A Snow Survival Kit should include:

- ☞ a metal cup
- ☞ matches and candles
- ☞ a flashlight with spare batteries
- ☞ snacks
- ☞ a first aid kit
- ☞ a red bandana and whistle
- ☞ a pencil, paper, and charged cell phone.

Keep the items in a large coffee can, for easy storage and the coffee can is able to be used for melting snow for drinking water, if needed.

Also keep extra clothing, hats, boots, mittens, blankets or a sleeping bag, jumper cables, a basic tool box, a bag of sand or other grit for traction, tow cables or chains, and flares or reflectors in your car.

- 🔔 **Extra, extra, extra!** Car break-ins are still very common. *Do not leave valuables in plain view in your car!* Commonly stolen items: GPS units, cell phones, purses, wallets, bags, laptops, and electronics. If you need to leave valuables in your car, lock them in the trunk before leave home!

Street Parking Restrictions: Snow Emergencies

No vehicle may be parked on any street when snowfall exceeds 2 ½ inches until the street has been plowed curb-to-curb. In addition, there is no parking on any street between the hours of 2-5 am, year-round.

Crime Free Multi-Housing Corner: Noise Complaints

Noise complaints are one of the most common issues in multi-family housing. Sharing common walls means some noise will affect neighbors. Residents are allowed to live a normal life. Normal walking, babies crying, daytime vacuuming, running water, etc. are all acceptable noises. Still, there **are** limits to noise. Plymouth does have a noise ordinance in effect 24 hours a day, but the limits are very strict between the hours of 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM. Between those hours, *any loud noise that extends beyond the 4 walls of a resident's apartment can be a violation of the noise ordinance.* If residents feel a violation is occurring, no matter what time of day, call 9-1-1 immediately. An officer will come out and verify if there is a violation. Usually a verbal warning will stop the noise. If not, citations can be issued. Repeated violations can result in eviction. However, not all noise complaints are violations of law. Some are tenant disputes. In these cases, residents are encouraged to participate in mediation. For more information about mediation, call 763-561-0033.

Especially for Business

Reducing Internal Employee Theft

Internal theft is a common problem for employers. To reduce theft, consider the following practices:

1. **Review your hiring practices.** Check the credentials of potential employees and consider background checks for all applicants.
2. **Analyze your business procedures and policies.** Each business function should have a check-and-balance control. Keep the operational and accounting functions separate. Don't allow the person responsible for receiving or disbursing goods, services, or money to do the accounting.
3. **Evaluate your personal practices.** Keep clear lines of authority and responsibility. Don't overlook losses or practice favoritism.
4. **Establish a loss prevention program.** Monitor the program at regular intervals to deter employees looking to defeat it. Check security procedures by injecting errors into the system.
5. **Keep an eye out for "high-risk" employees.** By establishing clear policies and reducing opportunity, you can help reduce internal theft.

Holiday Shopping Safety. Don't let criminals ruin your holidays!

1. **Keep your purse with you.**
2. **Store purchases in the trunk .**
3. **Keep receipts separate.**
4. **Stay alert for suspicious activity!**

Fraud Stop: Charitable Giving Scams

As the end of the year and holidays approach, more people are giving to charitable organizations. However, it is still important to be wary of fraud. Charitable giving scams target those wanting to help, especially when a tragedy or disaster occurs. Scams are sent to victims via email requests, letters, or phone calls. Scammers often use legitimate-sounding names and ask for donations. However, the donation does not end up going to the victim or agency it was intended for, or if it does, the percentage is extremely small. **Avoid being a victim!**

1. Never respond to unsolicited emails/phone calls from charities asking for money. Contact charities directly.
2. Research the organization prior to contributing. Know where your donation is going and how it will be used. Ask for information about the charity in writing. Remember, not all donations are tax deductible.

Featured Safety Programs: Give the Gift of Safety!

Self Defense for Females: The class is hands-on and taught by Plymouth Police Officers. Geared for females aged 13 and up. Next class: March 24, 2009. Call 763-509-5200 to register. Price: \$14 for residents.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors: Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors are required for all homes. They can be ordered through the Plymouth Fire Department. Price: \$32 CO detectors.

Weather Alert Radios or Hand-Crank Portable AM/FM radios. Help keep loved ones safe during inclement weather or when the power is out. Price: \$19.95 and up.

CPR Training: CPR training is recommended for at least one person in every household. The Minneapolis Red Cross offers CPR and other safety classes. (www.redcrossctc.org or 612-871-7676) Price: about \$50

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!