



Community Crime Prevention Newsletter

Plymouth, MN

Volume 2009 Number 3

School Safety

Fall is here and kids are back in school. Although school is a safe and fun place for kids to get an education, it is important to talk to your children *of all ages* and remind them of simple safety precautions.

-  **Walking to and from school.** Parents should know children's routes to and from school. Look both ways before crossing the street. Never accept a ride from someone you don't know.
-  **Biking to school.** Always wear a bike helmet. Make sure your helmet fits and is worn correctly for the best protection. Follow all traffic laws. Lock up your bike when you get to school to help prevent theft.
-  **Driving to school.** Watch out for kids walking and riding their bikes. Stop for school buses with their stop arms extended. Slow down in school zones. Don't talk on your cell phone (it is illegal for teens) and never text when driving (it is illegal for everyone!)
-  **At school: theft.** Keep valuables locked in a locker or leave them at home. Ipods, cell phones, and graphing calculators are commonly stolen items.
-  **At school: bullying.** Report bullying of any kind immediately to a trusted adult!
-  **Other safety tips.** Don't do drugs, smoke, or drink. They are all illegal and can affect grades, sports team status, or cause other problems.
-  **Parents:** Keep talking to your kids, set rules, and know your children's friends and their parents.

By taking a few safety precautions, we can help our kids stay safe as they go back to school!

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

School Bus Stop Arms

When a school bus is stopped on the side of the road, *with its stop arm out and flashing red lights on*, drivers must stop at least 20 feet away from the bus. Drivers must remain stopped until the arm is retracted and the lights are turned off.

Did you know? Passing a bus with its stop arm out and flashing red lights on is a gross misdemeanor if children are outside the bus.

Did you know? It is illegal to pass a school bus on the right-hand side when the school bus is displaying the pre-warning flashing amber lights!

Pedestrian Crosswalks

Drivers must stop for pedestrians who are crossing the road *in a marked crosswalk or at an intersection with no marked crosswalk*. You must remain stopped until the pedestrian has passed your lane. Drivers cannot pass cars that have stopped for pedestrians.

Did you know? Pedestrians cannot start to cross if a vehicle is so close it is hard to stop.

Featured Crime Prevention Program: *Along for the Ride*

Tune into Plymouth Channel 16 Thursdays at noon, Fridays at 6 p.m. or Sundays at 6 p.m., to see the Police Department's ½ hour informational television show, *Along for the Ride*. The show can also be seen on Community Cable Channel 20, Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m. Shows cover topics related to safety, crime prevention, officer highlights, traffic tips, viewer questions, and much more! If you would like to ask a question to be answered on the show, or you would like to suggest a topic for the show, please call 763-509-5139. *Along for the Ride* is also on the City of Plymouth website www.ci.plymouth.mn.us under "On Demand Video".

Crime Free Multi-Housing Corner: Screening Reminders

Good screening can help keep your property safe by preventing problems before they start. Behavior is not a protected class and past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior.

- ☞ Be consistent and treat all applicants the same.
- ☞ Post selection criteria and explain criteria to all applicants.
- ☞ Have applicants fill out the application on-site. Make sure you can read their writing.
- ☞ Get full legal names (first, middle, and last). Make sure applicants aren't providing nicknames (ex: Jim for James). Compare what is written on the application with their id.
- ☞ Do thorough background checks on all applicants. Don't just do a BCA check. Do a 7-15 county clerk of the court check and out-of-state checks when needed. Even if someone says they just moved into the country, do a background check. Treat everyone the same!

By taking the time to do good screening, you can help save time, money, and ensure a better tenant base.

TRAFFIC TIP Buckle up!

Drivers and all passengers must wear a seatbelt. Seatbelts are the #1 safety device in a car and proper use could save your life in a crash.

Especially for Business Robbery Prevention

Armed robbery is one of the most dangerous crimes faced by businesses. All businesses should take steps to reduce the chance of being the victim of a robbery, including training employees in robbery prevention and response. Knowing what to do before, during, and after a robbery is essential in keeping employees safe.

Prevention

- ☞ Have opening and closing procedures.
 - ✓ Have 2 employees open and close.
 - ✓ Check the exterior before opening. Don't go in if you suspect a problem.
 - ✓ Lock doors at close. Never let anyone in after hours.
- ☞ Use good customer service. Greet everyone!
- ☞ Be alert for suspicious activity. Call 9-1-1 immediately if you see something suspicious.
- ☞ Keep cash at a minimum. Make regular bank drops and use safes. Post signage.

During

- ☞ Stay calm and cooperate.

After

- ☞ Lock the door to prevent the robber coming back.
- ☞ Call 9-1-1 immediately.

If you would like to schedule robbery training for your business, contact 763-509-5147.

Fraud Stop: Overpayment Scams

With the economic downturn, scammers are taking every advantage they can. One common group of scams is overpayment scams. This scam takes many forms, but the most basic form is during sales transactions. **The scam:** You have an item for sale. Someone offers to buy the item, but gives you a check for more than the asking price and requests you send them the difference. You do so and later find out the check was a fake. You are then out both your property and the money you "gave back" to the buyer. **The solution:** *Never accept more money and agree to refund the difference.* Another version of this scam targets those who are looking for work. **The scam:** A company offers to employ you to process payments for their company. They send you checks and allow you keep a set amount from each check and forward the rest of the money (from your own account) on to another company. You later find out these checks are fake. You are out the money you forwarded. **The solution:** *Legitimate companies don't need people to process payments for them. Never take this type of job.*

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Domestic violence is not uncommon. In Minnesota, more than 63,000 women are abused each year. Domestic arguments can turn violent very quickly. If you are involved in a domestic or you hear something that sounds like a domestic, please call **9-1-1 immediately!** Your call could save someone's life. If you are the victim of domestic abuse, or you know someone who is the victim of domestic abuse, please seek help. Informational brochures about domestic violence are available from the Plymouth Police Department or Home Free. Home Free is a local battered women's shelter that can provide assistance in domestic matters. To talk to someone at Home Free, call 763-545-7080 or go to www.homefreeprograms.org for more information.

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!