



Community Crime Prevention Newsletter

Plymouth, MN

Volume 2011 Number 4

Winter Safety

Winters in Minnesota can be fun, but snow, ice, and cold temperatures also create many different types of hazards. Stay safe this winter by taking some simple steps to help reduce cold-weather hazards.

- ❄ Help prevent auto theft. Never 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.
- ❄ Reduce the chance of burglary. Secure doors, windows, and garages. Make your home look occupied when you are on vacation, especially if you will be gone for extended periods of time.
- ❄ Take extra precautions when driving. Driving conditions can change quickly in the winter months.
 - Before driving, clear snow and ice from your vehicle and make sure the windows are clear.
 - Allow extra time for travel. Slow down. In bad weather, decide if your trip is even worth taking.
 - Leave extra space between you and other cars. Never pass a snowplow. Slow down when approaching intersections.
 - Have a snow survival kit in your car. Stay with your car if you are stranded.
- ❄ Always check ice to make sure it is safe. (See box, right) Teach children never to play on ice without checking with an adult first.
- ❄ Dress properly for outdoor activities. Wear materials that help you stay dry. Layering is best. Know signs of hypothermia and frost bite.
- ❄ Be aware of carbon monoxide dangers. Don't run generators, grills, or other devices inside. Never leave a vehicle running in an attached garage, even if the door is open. Install a carbon monoxide detector and leave immediately if it goes off.
- ❄ Prevent fires in the home. Don't leave cooking or candles unattended. Make sure to keep portable heaters away from flammable materials. Have a fire extinguisher and know how to use it. Remember to change smoke detector batteries regularly.

Ice Thickness Guidelines

- 2" or less - STAY OFF
- 4" - Ice fishing / walking
- 5" - Snowmobile or ATV
- 8" - 12" - Car or small pickup
- 12" - 15" - Medium truck

The above are merely guidelines for new, clear, solid ice. *Many other factors can cause ice to be unsafe.* (www.dnr.state.mn.us)

By taking some simple precautions, you can enjoy Minnesota's winter wonderland safely!

Top 5 Ways to Stay Safe this Holiday

1. Lock all doors and windows, both at home and at work. Don't forget to make sure overhead garage doors are closed and any access doors are secured.
2. Remove valuables from your vehicle. If you are unable to do so, place valuables in your trunk prior to reaching your destination. Theft from auto continues to be a common crime. Don't make it easy for criminals.
3. Pay attention while driving. Many crashes in Plymouth are due to distracted driving. Don't be distracted by text messages, phone calls, the radio, kids, or anything else.
4. Wear your seatbelt! Traffic crashes are a leading cause of death, especially for younger age groups. The seatbelt is the single most effective safety device in your vehicle.
5. Stay alert to your surroundings. If you see, hear, or smell something suspicious, call 911 immediately!

Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH) Corner: CPTED

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) deals with how the design of the environment can affect crime in an area. In Phase two of the CFMH program, there are seven minimum standards that can help reduce crime and increase residents' sense of safety in a multi-family housing community:

- Visible address numbers on all buildings and individual units
- Adequate security lighting
- Landscaping for visual sight lines
- Single cylinder deadbolt locks for individual unit doors
- High security strike plates (with a minimum of four 3 inch screws) for units with wooden door frames
- 180+degree eye viewers for individual unit doors
- Anti-lift/slide devices on sliding glass doors and windows.

To schedule a Phase Two inspection for your multi-family housing community, contact the CFMH officer at 763-509-5147 or ahaseman@plymouthmn.gov.

Especially for Business: Be prepared

All businesses should have plans in place in case of an emergency to ensure business continuity. Plans should include contingencies for different types of disasters—flooding, tornadoes, blizzards, terrorism, pandemics, and more. Take the time *now* to review your emergency plans and make needed updates. Make sure employees are trained on what to do in emergency situations as well. For more information on how to prepare for emergencies, go to www.hsem.state.mn.us or www.ready.gov.

Headlights must be on from dusk to dawn and during inclement weather. Lights on for safety!

Fraud Stop: Common Scams Right Now

Criminals are always working on ways to scam good, law-abiding citizens. These scams are not new, but they have happened in Plymouth this year:

“Grandparent” Scam: If you get a call from someone claiming to be a grandchild saying they are in trouble and need money right now, chances are it is a scam. Always verify a story before you send money, especially if they ask you not to tell their parents!

Mystery Shopper Scam: Be wary of companies hiring mystery shoppers. If you are sent a check to deposit, told to make purchases, keep some money, and return the rest of the money via electronic transfer, chances are it is a scam. Never agree to deposit a check and return any overpayment.

Lottery Winner Scam: If you are notified you won a lottery you didn't enter or asked to pay for a prize, it is a scam. You can't win if you never entered and you will never be asked to pay for a legitimate prize.

In addition to classic scams, new scams are always appearing. With the increase of mobile phone usage, criminals are targeting these devices. **Mobile malware** and **malicious mobile “apps”** are the two most common scams right now, followed closely by **fake Facebook contests**. Help reduce the chance of falling victim to scams: keep security software and privacy settings updated, be cautious about downloading apps, screen savers, and other software from unknown sites, and stay vigilant entering online promotions and contests.

Featured Safety Program: iWATCH

iWATCH is a terrorism prevention program. Terrorism can happen any time, any place. As with all criminal activity, police need *your* help. We need residents to be our eyes and ears. iWATCH is like a Neighborhood Watch for the whole city. Each of us is an expert in our daily lives. If you see, hear, or smell something suspicious, report it to the police department. *Unsure whether you should report something? Report it!* Let law enforcement decide what to do with the information.



Reporting is easy! For suspicious activity that is in progress, call **911** immediately. If the suspicious activity is no longer occurring, call **763-509-5160** and make a report to a desk officer or go to www.plymouthmn.gov/iwatch and make a report online.

Emergency: **9-1-1** Non-emergency: **763-525-6210** CrimeStoppers: **800-222-TIPS**
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@plymouthmn.gov. Thank you!