



COMMUNITY POLICING in Snohomish County

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Good Bye Dave!

Due to county budget cuts, the Sheriff's Office has had to lay off Crime Prevention Officer Dave Meyering. Thanks Dave for your service to Snohomish County.

Car Prowls– Steal Me Survey

In mid-October police agencies in Snohomish County conducted a survey of cars, trucks and mini-vans parked in various locations in the county to see how attractive they are to thieves who might want to steal items inside them.

The survey was sponsored by the Crime Prevention Alliance of Snohomish County, a group of crime prevention professionals in the county who have banded together to work on crime prevention issues that affects the county. The alliance includes professionals from the Sheriff's Office and all of the towns and cities in the county.

Uniformed volunteers from the county's police departments checked on vehicles parked in parking lots at park and rides, shopping centers, schools, churches, hospitals, hotels, apartments and other common places where drivers park their cars. The volunteers did not try to enter any cars, they only observed what they could easily see through the windows. Overall, the volunteers surveyed 844 vehicles.

One thing the survey volunteers looked for was whether the cars were locked or not. The survey found that 90% of cars were locked. That still left 10% vulnerable to a car thief easily opening the car to take it or its contents away. A few that were unlocked were even found with keys

in the ignitions, making it really easy for a car thief to make off with the car.

The volunteers observed the greatest number of items on the front or back seats where they could easily be seen through the windows.

The Top Five items left in vehicles:

The survey found assorted clothing in approximately 30% of the cars checked. Bags left in vehicles came a close second at 29%. 20% of vehicles had compact discs left inside. 12% of the vehicles had cell phones and 8% had other electronics. Other items seen in the vehicles that would be tempting targets included wallets and purses, money, mail, check-books, even expensive laptops. In at least two cases, volunteers found "The Club" not in use.

In many cases, volunteers observed cars with several items in them, giving potential thieves a choice of what to steal.

The simple lesson is to lock your car when you will be away from it and keep any valuables out of sight. While we found 90% of the surveyed vehicles to have locked doors, it is still easy for a thief to break your windows, or unlock your car to take whatever is in it. So, be sure also to park your car in a well lit parking area that can be easily observed by many people.

Holiday Shopping- More Safety Tips

If you have one of those "wonderful" remote car locks for your car, be careful in the mall parking lot.

- *When you leave your car, lock it the old fashioned way, with the key in the lock, don't use the remote. The bad guys use scanners to pick up your remote's frequency, and then open your car with their own remotes.*
- *Keep your keys safe. If you lose your keys, you lose your car. With your remote, the bad guys can use the panic button to easily find your car.*

Holiday Shopping- Protecting Yourself From Theft

The busy holiday shopping season has returned. When you are at the mall looking for those precious gifts, take the following precautions to protect yourself from becoming a victim:

- Don't display large sums of cash in public. Be discreet about the money or other valuables you are carrying.
- Be alert in public restrooms. If anything seems amiss or if a group of people is loitering in the area, leave quickly and find another facility.
- Stay alert in crowds to protect your valuables. A thief can use the cover of the crowd to make a quick getaway after stealing your wallet or shopping bag.
- Don't keep your keys in your purse. If your purse is stolen, the thief will have your address and keys to your home. Keep your keys in your pocket without an ID..
- Try to park as close to the entrance of the mall or store as possible. In a parking garage, park on the level that leads directly to the mall, so you can avoid elevators or stairwells. Stay alert for people standing behind parked cars or pillars. At night, park under a light whenever possible.
- Consider using the mall's valet parking service if it offers one.
- Make a note of your parking spot so that you don't have to wander around the parking lot after shopping.
- Have your keys in your hand before leaving the mall and walk purposely to your car. Make sure nobody is in the car before entering, and lock the doors immediately when you get inside.
- If you are leaving a mall alone at night, request a security escort to your car.
- Don't leave packages visible on the seats or floor of your car. Use the trunk, or hide purchases under a cover or blanket.
- If you take packages to your car trunk and want to go back to the mall, move your car. Most newer vehicles have a trunk release inside the car (in the glove box or by the driver). If the thief sees something that you have just purchased that he wants, he can easily break a window and open your trunk.





Charities- Protecting Yourself from Fraud

We are frequently bombarded with requests to give our money to charitable organizations, whether by phone, in the mail or at our doors. Before you give, consider the following:

- **Do not give cash.** Legitimate charities will take a check.
- **Do not succumb to pressure.** No legitimate organization will insist that you contribute immediately.
- **Do not give to unregistered charities.** Check with the Secretary of State (go to <http://www.secstate.wa.gov/charities/>) to see if the charity that you want to give to is registered with the state.
- **Be careful of pledges you don't remember making.** If you have doubts, check your records.
- **Be careful not to give personal information such as your social security number or mother's maiden name** to anyone soliciting over the phone.
- **Recognize false claims of tax-deductibility.** Ask for written proof of tax-exempt status.
- **Never give out your checking account number or credit card number to anyone you don't know soliciting for a charity over the phone.** Ask for an address and offer to send a check.
- **Check with the National Charities Information Bureau**

(<http://www.give.org/>) to make sure that the charity is abiding by certain ethical and financial standards.

- **If the solicitation is for a law enforcement charity, ask your local or state police if they've ever heard of the group.** If they haven't, chances are it's not real.
- **Ask how much of your donation is going to the charity.** Even if professional fund-raisers are truly soliciting for a charity, they may be keeping most of the donations as fees. It's often better to give directly to support charities and public services in your area.

Sound Alike Fraud

You're typing away in an online chat room when suddenly a rather noisy person gets online and begins telling everyone in the room about how they found this great charity that was helping to get presents for needy children and all you have to do is go to a web site and your donation can be processed online. The activity seems right for the season and the charity's name sounds familiar.

Be wary! Many scam artists use organization names that sound like legitimate, real charitable organizations. In the State of Washington, charities must register with the Secretary of State. Go to <http://www.secstate.wa.gov/charities/> to see if the charity that you want to give to is registered.

National Fraud Information Center

If you need advice about a telephone solicitation or you want to report a possible scam, call the NFIC hotline at 1-800-876-7060. You can also ask questions or report fraud using their online forms at their web site at www.fraud.org/welcome.htm.

Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division

For more information about preventing yourself from becoming a fraud victim go to the state's Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division's web page on charity fraud at

<http://www.wa.gov/ago/consumer/charity.html>



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Snohomish County Sheriff
M/S 606 - 3000 Rockefeller Ave.
Everett, WA 98201

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Rick Bart, Sheriff
Snohomish County
3000 Rockefeller Ave.
M/S 606
Fourth Floor County
Courthouse
Everett, WA 98201
(425) 388-3393
www.co.snohomish.wa.us/sheriff/



1-800-
CRIME-
13

Sheriff Office Precinct CPO's:

- North–
Bob Alton-
(425) 388-7974
bob.alton@co.snohomish.wa.us
- South/East-
Pat Cudinski-
(425) 744-6883
pat.cudinski@co.snohomish.wa.us

PACE– Holiday Party Guide



With the holiday party season upon us we want to remind everyone not to drink and drive. If you will be hosting a party here are some tips to ensure that your guests do not become involved in an alcohol related crash:

- Ask guests to appoint a designated driver before the evening begins.
- Offer a variety of non-alcoholic beverages for the designated drivers or for those who choose not to drink alcohol.
- Prepare plenty of food so guests will not drink on empty stomachs.
- Invite guests who are compatible

so that no one feels left out - lonely or unfriendly people often drink to excess.

- Avoid too many salty snacks-they tend to make people thirsty, so they drink more.
- If preparing an alcoholic punch, use non-carbonated base fruit juice - alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream faster with a carbonated base.
- Never serve alcohol to someone under the legal drinking age, and never ask children to serve alcohol to guests.