



COMMUNITY POLICING in Snohomish County

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National Night Out – August 3, 2004

Come join us as we come together and take a stand against crime!

On August 3 our neighborhoods, and those across the United States, will lock our doors, turn on outside lights, and spend the evening outside with neighbors and deputies.

For the second year, we will be celebrating not only in individual neighborhoods, but the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office will be hosting a neighborhood celebration for all. Come and join your neighbors to take a stand against crime. The sheriff's Office will be sponsoring a party at McCollum Park just off I-5 at 128th St SE on August 3 from 5pm to 8pm. Last year's event was extremely successful with 1,000 citizens having fun and learning how to prevent crime.

It will be a fun, free family event, with food, fun activities for all, displays, lots of things to see and do like:

- JP Patches!
- Aquasox Baseball Team's Mascot Webby
- The SilverTips Hockey Team's Mascot Lincoln
- Free Swimming & Cannonball Splash!
- BMX "Hot August Night" Racing

- Free hot dogs, watermelon, pop
- Speed Pitch; Dunk Tank
- North Sound 1380 Radio live on-site
- Kids, meet McGruff, Sparky, OxyGen and Rocky Raccoon.
- See the Sheriff's Office's K-9's, motorcycles, bikes, boats and more.
- See Fire trucks from Fire District 7
- Fingerprint your kids.
- Leadon America– Meth prevention
- Sheriff's Office's Volunteer Search & Rescue
- Snohomish County Emergency Management
- SNOPAC 911

For more information contact: Pat Cudinski, CPO; 425 744 6883, pat.cudinski@co.snohomish.wa.us



Crime Prevention Officer Pat Cudinski gives some prevention advice to JP Patches at last year's National Night Out.



Some Prevention Tips

- *Never give a caller personal information or confidential information such as a password or PIN number.*
- *If you suspect that a call about a credit card account might be a scam, hang up. Report the call to the bank issuing your card.*
- *Check monthly statements carefully and report any unauthorized or questionable charges.*

Credit Card Fraud & Identity Theft— Two New Spins

Credit Card “Security” Calls-

Identity thieves are now calling credit card holders and posing as fraud troubleshooters for major credit card providers.

They tell unsuspecting victims that they are investigating a potential fraudulent charge that has been made to their account, and they offer to help the card holder reverse the charge and get a credit.

All you have to do is "verify" your credit card information.

For example, the scamster calls to find out if you purchased a particular piece of hardware, and sometimes they mention a specific company. They say that there has been a lot of fraud related to this item.

When you say you haven't purchased the item, the scammer lets you know that a fraud investigation has been started, and that you'll receive credit for the purchase. Some scammers sound so legitimate they actually offer up a "case number" for your records.

The scamsters goal is to gain your trust. They then ask you to "verify" your billing address. Next, they may ask if you still have the card in your possession, and if so, if you could read back the account number and expiration date.

Of course, these scammers then use that information to do the very thing they claim someone else already did --

make fraudulent charges against your card, or steal your identity!

NEVER give your credit card details-- or other personal information -- to strangers over the phone or via email.

Mastercard and VISA do not contact cardholders directly. Banks that issue the cards may contact their cardholders.

If a bank suspects fraud, it will not ask the cardholder to verify that they possess the credit card or ask for the credit card information. They already have that information

The Asian Connection-

Another new twist is cropping up in the Seattle and Portland areas.

Credit card thieves will steal credit card information then sell that information to asian criminal elements. The victim's statement will show a listing for "atyourdoorsefstore" or "atyourdoorsefstorage" for an amount around \$0.50. The Asian crook uses this transaction to make sure he has an active account number. "Big" charges soon follow.

Be sure that you review all of your bankcard statements. If you see the above transaction on your statement, or a similar transaction that you did not make, call your credit card company ASAP and make a fraud report.



Legislation – *ID Theft* Receives Federal Attention

Identity theft is the fastest growing white-collar crime in the country. In Snohomish County, 586 cases were reported in 2003. Already in 2004, the number of reported identity theft crimes has grown more than 50 percent in Snohomish County.

According to Senator Maria Cantwell (D– WA) identity theft victims often find themselves alone in trying to obtain business records to clear their names. Often businesses take their time in providing the records if they give them out at all.

New federal legislation that came into affect in June:

- **Creates consistent national mechanism for victims to prove their identity.** The legislation allows a consumer to establish he/she is a victim of identity theft by producing a standardized notarized FTC affidavit (or other affidavit acceptable to the business), government-issued identification, and a copy of a police report.
- **Requires businesses to produce relevant records to identity theft victims within 30 days of request at no charge.** When a victim of identity theft requests documents from a business that has records related to a fraud based on an identity theft (such as applications for credit, sales receipts, and other records), the business must provide copies of these records to the victim within

30 days of the victim's request at no charge. The victim must establish their identity by providing the documentation mentioned above, to give the business confidence in the identity of the person requesting the records.

- **Allow law enforcement to act as victim's agent to investigate ID theft.** This will improve the speed and effectiveness of investigations of identity theft crimes and other criminal activity. A victim can empower law enforcement to take possession of the business records associated with the identity theft directly. This will help law enforcement, particularly local law enforcement, where businesses have been reluctant to release business records in a time frame that is helpful to investigations. This will be helpful in investigating Methamphetamine rings, many of which have been financing their activities with identity theft crimes.
- **Gives victims and law enforcement the ability to get out of state records.** This provision is critical when an investigation crosses state lines.

ID Theft Checklist

If you think your identity has been stolen, here is what to do now:

1. *Contact the fraud departments of any one of the 3 major credit bureaus to place a fraud alert on your credit file.*
2. *Close the accounts that you know or believe have been tampered with or opened fraudulently.*
3. *File a police report. Get a copy of the report to submit to your creditors and others that may require proof of the crime.*
4. *File your complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FTC maintains a database of identity theft cases for law enforcement agencies to use in their investigations.*

For more information on identity theft go to the FTC ID web site at:

<http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/>



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Car Prowls – A Tie in With ID Theft

Recently, Seattle TV news media reported on the apprehension of 2 of 3 members of a theft ring by Bellevue police that was responsible for at least 140 car thefts/prowls, mail theft and burglaries. The target for this ring was not only valuables such as CD collections, laptops and other items they could sell, but also information they could use for ID theft.

Police found a black book in the possession of one of the suspects that contained names, Social Security numbers and telephone numbers that could be used to take on other people's identities. The

thieves found this information in plain view of their victims' autos.

While police have captured one ring, others are still targeting your information as much as they are your possessions.

The lesson remains, DO NOT leave anything in your car, truck, or SUV that can be stolen. Thieves are looking for anything that they can use to sell. They are also looking for your information to purchase things with your money and reputation.

All any thief should see in your car is the steering wheel and the bare seats!