



# PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**CYBER SECURITY— 1**  
TIPS TO PROTECT  
YOURSELF

**HOLIDAY 2**  
SHOPPING—  
PROTECTING  
YOURSELF FROM  
THEFT

**HOLIDAY 2**  
SHOPPING—  
SAFETY TIPS

**ID THEFT— 3**  
PROTECT YOUR  
IDENTITY DURING  
THE HOLIDAYS

**HOLIDAY PARTY 3**  
GUIDE

**PRESENTS UNDER 4**  
THE TREE—  
PROTECT THEM  
FROM BURGLARS

## CYBER SECURITY—TIPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

We are connecting with the internet via more and more devices from desktop computers, to laptops, tablets and cell phones in our hands and pockets. Cyber-criminals target vulnerable computers no matter who operates them. Here are some suggestions to protect your information on your desktop or mobile device.

### Stop:

- Others from accessing your accounts by using strong passwords, combining upper and lowercase letters with numbers and special characters, and unique passwords for your sensitive accounts like bank and credit card accounts.
- Malware and viruses by using your firewall, and virus protection. Do not accept thumb drives from strangers.
- Access to your laptop, tablet or smartphone. Use a password to access your mobile device. Don't leave your mobile device in your vehicle.
- Hackers by regularly updating your operating system, applications and virus and malware protection. This can be done by opting for automatic updates in your settings.
- Ransomware by making regular back-

ups of your computer files.

### Think:

- Before you click. Only click on links or attachments from known and trusted sources.
- Before providing your personal information.
- About what you say on social media. Don't over share your plans, whereabouts, or personal information.
- About whom you add as friends or followers on social media. Friends of friends can take your information for ID theft or burglaries.
- About where you download software or apps. Only use official sites.

### Connect:

- Via secure links. When accessing your bank or credit card account or shopping online, be sure the site is secure with "https://" or "shttp://" in your address bar.
- To bank accounts and online shopping via networks that you know. Do not connect through public Wi-Fi networks such as at coffee houses, airports, etc. or through computers that you do not own.



**Ty Trenary- Sheriff**  
**Snohomish County**  
**Sheriff's Office**

3000 Rockefeller  
M/S 606  
Everett, WA 98201  
425-388-3393  
<http://sheriff.snoco.org>

## HOLIDAY SHOPPING- SAFETY TIPS

When using your car lock remote, be careful in the mall parking lot.

- If you have a traditional key/remote, lock your car 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.

The holiday season is a prime time for packages to be delivered to our homes and for package thieves to steal them:

- Ask a trusted neighbor to pick up your package after delivery.
- Track the package's progress online. Then you know when it is delivered.
- Ask to have the package placed on the back porch or out of sight on the front porch.
- Have the package delivered to a nearby package store or where you work.

## 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.
- 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.
- 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 or valuables visible on the seats or floor of your car. Use the trunk.
- 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.
- At an Automated Teller Machine (ATM), choose one that is located inside a mall, grocery store, or well-lighted location. Withdraw only the amount of cash you need. Shield the ATM keypad from anyone who is standing near you so they cannot view your transaction or obtain your PIN. Do not throw your ATM receipt away.

## ID THEFT- PROTECT YOUR IDENTITY DURING THE HOLIDAYS

ID thieves need to steal personal information to commit ID theft. Once a theft is made it's downhill all the way for you the victim. According to the Attorney General's Office, Washington State is Number 8 in the nation for ID Theft.

Here are some ways to avoid becoming an identity theft victim:

- When you make purchases with your credit card, put the receipt in your pocket. Do not carry it in your shopping bag.
- Do not give your Social Security number, mother's maiden name or account numbers to strangers who contact you, especially by phone, Internet or mail.
- Pay attention to what time of month your bills arrive. If they don't arrive on time, call the creditor and verify your address.
- Put strong passwords on your credit card, bank and phone accounts.
- Don't carry your Social Security card. Leave it in a secure place such as a safe bolted to the floor in your house or a safety deposit box.

- Don't carry credit cards or ID cards you don't need.
- Use a locking mailbox for your mail.
- When ordering new checks, pick them up at the bank instead of having them mailed to your home.
- Use a micro cut shredder to shred charge receipts, copies of credit applications, insurance forms, physician statements, bank checks and statements, expired charge cards and credit offers you get in the mail.



## 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 blood-stream faster with a carbonated base.
- Never serve alcohol to someone under the legal drinking age, and never ask children to serve alcohol to guests.

## SHOPPING SAFELY ONLINE

- Know who you are dealing with. Confirm the seller's phone number and physical address.
- Know exactly what you are buying. Read the product description closely. Look out for words indicating product is in less than mint condition. Watch out for products with "too good to be true" prices.
- Know what it will cost. and pay with credit card. Be sure the transaction is through a secure web page with "https" in the web address.
- Check out the terms of the deal, such as refund policies and delivery dates.
- Keep a paper trail. Print and save the product description and price, the online receipt and any correspondence.
- Never email your personal information.
- Check the privacy policy.

## PRESENTS UNDER THE TREE- PROTECT THEM FROM BURGLARS

You have safely transported your gifts from the mall. Now they are in your home ready to wrap and sit under your tree. This is a time of year when burglars steal Christmas gifts from homes. You can improve the security of your gifts through the following steps:

- Always secure and lock your doors and windows, even if you are just popping out or when you are in the back garden - about one in four burglaries happen simply because the householder left windows or doors unlocked.
- Make sure your security lights are in working order and put internal lamps on timer switches to come on when dark if you are away.
- If you have a security system, use it.
- Don't hide your house keys near a door. Burglars know all of the secret hiding places
- Don't leave Christmas presents under the tree in full view of burglars who may be peering through windows - keep them in a secure place until the big day.
- Don't put your empty boxes from Christmas presents (or any new purchases) out until your recycling collection day and make sure you break up the boxes and secure them together - the boxes and wrappings provide burglars with just the information they are looking for to see what new gadgets and items await them inside.
- Note down the serial numbers of all electronic goods such as TVs, videos, computers and camera equipment and keep the list out of sight in a secure place. Also photograph valuable items such as jewelry.

## AUTO THEFT PREVENTION CHECKLIST

- √ All car doors locked
- √ All windows rolled up
- √ All personal belongings have been removed or stored in the trunk
- √ Vehicle is parked in a well-lighted area
- √ Vehicle is parked in a high-visibility location (avoid isolated areas)
- √ Anti-theft device on (Club, alarm system, kill-switch)



## OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOODS

### MAKING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER

**Homeless Outreach-**  
Sgt. Ian Huri  
Phone: (425) 508-8291  
Email: [neighborhood-watch@snoco.org](mailto:neighborhood-watch@snoco.org)

**Community Outreach-**  
Sgt. Marty Zelaya  
Phone: (425) 388-5250  
Email: [Luis.Zelaya@snoco.org](mailto:Luis.Zelaya@snoco.org)

### SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:

<http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/289/Crime-Prevention>

## NEWSLETTER INFO

**EDITOR**  
Steve Moller

If you have questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that appear in it, please contact the editor at [neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org)

## TIP LINES



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: 425-388-3845

<http://snohomishcountywa.gov/303/Anonymous-Tips>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477