



COMMUNITY POLICING in Snohomish County

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Sheriff's Office- *Crime Prevention Coordinators*

The Sheriff's Office has created two Crime Prevention Coordinator positions that will be manned by the Administrative Sergeants at each precinct.

Before this, crime prevention functions were conducted by the Precinct Commanders who encouraged and talked to Block Watches.

The Crime Prevention Coordinators will concentrate on encouraging new Block Watches and coordinating with existing Block Watches.

The current Crime Prevention Coordinators are:

South Precinct-

Sgt. Darrell O'Neill
Phone- (425) 388-5250
Email- darrell.oneill@snoco.org

North Precinct-

Sgt Jeff Stemme
Phone- (425) 388-7934
Email- jeffrey.stemme@snoco.org

South Precinct Block Watch Organization Meeting- Sgt. O'Neill, Crime Prevention Coordinator for South Precinct, will hold a Block Watch Organization Meeting at the South Precinct on April 24 at 7pm. If you are interested in starting a Block Watch in your neighborhood attend this meeting for a briefing about

Block Watches and to answer your questions.

The South Precinct is located in Mill Creek at:

15928 Mill Creek Blvd.
Mill Creek, WA 98012

Block Watch Resources- Organizing a Block Watch is easy, but, sometimes it seems like a difficult task when you get started.

The Sheriff's Office web site has information about Block Watches and crime prevention at:

http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/Sheriff/Services/Crime_Prevention/Newsletter_by_Subject.htm





Some Simple Ways to Prevent a Car Prowl/Theft

- *Take your keys with you.*
- *If detachable, take your stereo face-plate with you.*
- *Take your GPS with you, remove the mount and hide it.*
- *Close your windows.*
- *DO NOT leave any property in your car!*
- *Park in a well lit, populated area or in an attended lot.*
- *Lock your car!*

Car Prowls- GPS Units Another Target

Santa was good to you at Christmas by giving you a brand new GPS for your car. Now you can find any place in Puget Sound (or anyplace else in the US) without getting lost.

Your GPS is another attraction for theft in your car along with your cell phone, laptop, iPod, wallet, purse, Blackberry, satellite radio, and just about anything else that you might leave in view through the windows.

GPS units are popular with opportunistic car prowlers. They are easy to steal. If they see the GPS mounted on the windshield they can break a window, reach in and take it. If the driver hides the GPS and doesn't remove the mount, it is worth it to the car prowler to break the window. If the car prowler sees the ring from the suction cup of the mount, it is worth it to break the window.

Being electronic and relatively new, GPS's are easy to sell on the street or on the internet. They have been hot items for retailers so their popularity makes them accessible for thieves as well as retail customers.

Another factor in favor of the car prowler is that most GPS owners do not register their units with the manufacturer or even write down the serial number of the unit. So, if police catch a thief with a bunch of GPS's they cannot prove they were stolen or return them to their rightful owners. According to detectives at the South Precinct, they frequently encounter victims of GPS theft who have not recorded the

serials number of their stolen GPS.

Also, currently, GPS's do not have a way to track them down if they are stolen.

Some areas of the country report skyrocketing thefts of GPS's. Locally, GPS's are just another electronic goody that attracts the attention of a car prowler.

To keep your GPS out of a car prowler's hands:

- When you leave your car, take the GPS with you (along with your iPod, cell phone, laptop, etc.). Some people even recommend against hiding it in your glove compartment or trunk.
- Remove the mount from your car.
- Remove the ring from the suction cup. You can use a microfiber cloth to wipe it away.
- Fill out the registration card (you probably can also register it online).
- Save the serial number in a safe place.

For more information on GPS theft go to:

NPR news article-

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=18712268>



Organized Retail Crime- Shoplifting Hurts All of Us

Organized retail crime has become a major problem for U.S. retailers who have suffered \$30 billion per year in losses.

And what is stolen may be surprising. It is not all high end TV's, stereo's or drugs. Most often, thieves will steal common consumer items, without serial numbers, such as ink cartridges, automatic tooth brushes, or clothes from drug stores, office supply stores, department stores, hardware stores, etc.

We often see this crime as shoplifting. But the thieves who conduct shoplifting are only the tip of the iceberg in the organizations that move stolen items from retailers. Many traditional shoplifters steal for their personal use. These new organizations steal in large quantities, work in groups, and may target several retailers in one day in any given area. And these organizations increasingly use the internet to sell the stolen items.

The "shoplifters", sometimes called "boosters" are often individuals who have drug habits to support. They frequently work in teams of 3 to 5 who have been trained in how to steal. One individual might work as a "lookout" and one or more might create a distraction with the store staff while the rest steal inventory. Individuals may wear baggy clothing, carry large purses or backpacks and move quickly from one part of the store to the other.

The boosters sell their stolen inventory to a "marketer" often for \$.20 on the dollar.

Marketers sell the inventory to small mom and pop stores in another part of the country, at flea markets, garage sales and online auction sites such as ebay for \$.30 to \$.40 on the dollar. Often, the marketer will repackage the inventory.

The draw to buying the stolen items of course is the deep discounts compared to paying full price.

Nationally, retail organizations are working together to exchange information about individuals involved in organized retail crime among major retailers and law enforcement organizations such as the FBI.

Stores often use surveillance to try to prevent shoplifting, but it can be difficult for staff to keep track of what is going on in every part of the store.

Sheriff's Office detectives say that you as a customer can help by discretely notifying store staff about suspicious individuals if you see them while doing your normal shopping.

For more information about shoplifting go to:

<http://crimeprevention.rutgers.edu/crime/shoplifting/techniques.htm>

Shoplifters- What to Look For

How people dress, act and what they carry is much more important than their age, sex, or skin color. Be very suspicious of customers who:

Dress-

- *Have heavy clothes in summer*
- *Have no coat in winter*
- *Are wearing very worn clothing*
- *Are not wearing shoes*

Act-

- *Come in groups of two or more*
- *Take quick glances around them*
- *Are nervous, flushed or dry lipped*

Move-

- *Leave an area of the store very quickly*
- *Keep a hand in one coat pocket at all times*

Carry-

- *A large purse*
- *Wrinkled or dirty shopping bags, backpacks*



Fraud Alert- IRS Email and Telephone Scams

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) wants you to be aware of several email and telephone scams currently going around that use the IRS name as a lure.

Be on the lookout for scams involving proposed advance payment checks. Also, a scam using the economic stimulus package rebates as bait has cropped up. The goal of the scams is to trick you into revealing your personal and financial information, such as your Social Security, bank account or credit card numbers.

Some of the scams include:

- **Rebate Phone Call.** You receive a phone call from someone identifying himself as an IRS employee. You are told that you are eligible for a sizable rebate for filing your taxes early. The caller tells you that he needs your bank account information for the direct deposit of the rebate. If you refuse to give the information, you are told that you cannot refuse the rebate. This is a scam! The IRS does not force taxpayers to use direct deposit. If you want to use direct deposit you need to complete the appropriate section of your tax return when you file. The IRS does not gather information by telephone.

- **Paper Check Phone Call.** A caller claiming to be an IRS employee tells you that they are calling because the IRS sent a check to you. The caller states that because the check has not been cashed, the IRS wants to verify your bank account number. The IRS will not contact you regarding undeposited IRS checks. It will not ask you for your bank account number.
- **Refund/Audit Email.** You receive an email, claiming to be from the IRS, telling you that you are eligible for a tax refund in a specific amount. You are instructed to click on a link to a claim form. The form asks for personal information. The IRS does not send unsolicited emails to taxpayers. The only official IRS website is www.irs.gov. A variation of this scam is an email advising you that you are being audited, requesting that you click on a link to provide personal information.

Report suspicious email or telephone calls from people claiming to be from the IRS to phishing@irs.gov. For more information about reporting scams claiming to be from the IRS go to <http://www.irs.gov/privacy/article/0,,id=179820,00.html>.

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1-800-
CRIME-13

Tip Lines:

- Phone:
425-388-3845
- Sheriff's Website:
www.co.snohomish.wa.us/SheriffRpts/AnonymousTips/default.htm

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