COMMUNITY POLICING in Snohomish County

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CERT– *Learning How to Deal With Disaster*

Since September 11, 2001, awareness of terrorist acts in our country has increased. Federal agencies have issued warnings and advisories which seem not to have much relevance to our day to day lives. While we are told to be wary, we are also told not to panic, to continue with our lives as usual. So, what can we do as individuals to protect ourselves and our families?

One practical action that we can take is to take a CERT (Community Emergency Response Teams) course.

The Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) sponsors training for citizens in dealing with disasters. DEM assumes that "first responders" (the fire fighters, police and emergency medical services) will not be able to handle the heavy demand of a major disaster such as an earthquake or major terrorist attack. Citizens may have to wait as long as 72 hours to receive help. With this realization, DEM in conjunction with the fire departments/districts in our county have been training citizens on what to do in their communities in case of a disaster.

This training tries to take advantage of the natural tendencies of people to help others when major disasters strike like earthquakes, flooding, major fires, etc. Often, if untrained, good Samaritans can become victims themselves. In the Mexico City earthquake of 1985, 100 of the 800 dead were people helping other people. This training can help you from becoming a victim while you help others.

Conducted by local fire departments, classes of between 8 to 40 people, are held once per week for a period of 7 to 8 weeks. Subjects include how to personally prepare for disaster, how to put out a fire, disaster medicine, basic search and rescue, disaster psychology, team organization, and now protection from terrorism. Over 800 citizens have received CERT training in the county- the most in the state.

Even without a terrorism threat, this is worthwhile training given our area's potential for a major earthquake.

For more information call Chris Colmore, Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management, at 425-423-7635, *ccolmore@snodem.org* or visit their web site at *http://www.snodem.org/Cert/index.html*.

Internet Guidelines– *For Parents*

- *Keep the computer in a "public" place.*

- *Look over your child's shoulder from time to time and look at what they are doing on the computer.*

- *Consider a "no internet when no adult is home" rule.*

- *Purchase blocking software such as Net Nanny or Cyber Patrol.*

- *Monitor the duration and times your child uses the computer.*

- *Check your child's email, cookies and history files.*

- *Randomly examine your child's diskettes and the computer's hard drive.*

- *Remember, the internet is not a baby sitter!*

- *Remind your child not to give out personal information on the internet and check your bankcard statements for transactions that you do not know about.*

Internet Safety– *How to Protect Your Family*

The internet has opened a wealth of information at our fingertips on all kinds of subjects. We can look at any newspaper in the world; we can find information from governments- federal, state, local, international and special interest groups can communicate information in support of their goals. Your children can look up information for their schoolwork and they can communicate with their friends through email and chat rooms.

There are downsides, however, to the internet:

- **Harassment-** Your child could encounter people who post or send harassing, belittling, or demeaning emails or comments in chat rooms.

- **Exposure to inappropriate material-** Your child can be exposed to pornography, hate groups, or groups that encourage violent or illegal behavior.

- **Physical molestation-** Probably the first fear of parents, and statistically the least likely to happen, there are people who use the internet to find young victims.

- **Invasion of privacy-** Your child could give out personal information such as your address, credit card numbers, passwords, bank account numbers, etc. to people who have no need for this information.

While the downsides may cause considerable concern, this does not mean that your child should be cut off from access to the internet. As with other aspects of your child's life, some interest on your part with some practical family rules that you enforce should help to keep your child from becoming a victim.

Some signs that your child is at risk with the internet includes:

- **Spending lots of time on the internet-** Especially at night on and on weekends. While pedophiles/sex offenders use the internet at all hours of the day, most work during the day and surf emails and chat rooms at night, after work.

- **There is pornography in your child's computer-** Sex offenders use pornography to open the door to sexual discussion and eventually seduction. Be sure to look for pornography in your child's floppy disks.

- **Your child receives calls from men that you do not know-** Or your child makes long distance phone calls to phone numbers that are strange to you.

- **Your child receives letters, gifts, or packages in the mail from someone you do not know-** Gifts are often used to lure young victims. Some have even sent plane tickets for victims to use for a face to face meeting.

- **Your child quickly turns off the monitor or changes screens-**

Internet Safety– *How to Protect Your Family cont.*

- **Your child becomes withdrawn from the family-** Sex offenders often try to drive a wedge between children and their parents. If your child has been victimized sexually, they may withdraw from the family.

Preventing Your Child from Becoming a Victim. You may not be able to prevent contact with online sex offenders, exposure to inappropriate sites, or keep your personal information totatally secret, but there are things you can do to minimize the opportunities that they happen. One of those things is NOT to ban your child from the internet. The internet is too rich of an information resource for your child and you to be cutoff from it. Some things you can do include:

- Talk to your child about some of the dangers of the internet as well as it's many benefits.

- Have your child, from time to time, show you the web sites that he/she visits.

- Keep the computer in a common area of the house. It is too hard to be secretive if a parent or a sibling can see what your child is doing on the computer. Do not put the computer in the child's bedroom; a computer there would allow a sex offender too easy of an opportunity to "talk" secretly to your child.

- Utilize the parental controls available through your internet service provider and/or blocking software through companies such as Net Nanny or Cyber Patrol.

- Be open and honest about your monitoring of your child's computer/internet use. Let your child talk to you about the internet. If they admit or if you find inappropriate files on their computer, DO NOT get mad. Talk to them about the significance of what you found. And remember, if you find porn spam in your child's inbox that it may have been sent randomly.

- Become familiar with your child's school's and the local library's internet safeguards. Also, talk to the parents of your child's friends about the internet safeguards that they use.

- Learn about your computer and the internet. Your child can probably show you a lot about your computer. You can also learn about internet safety through a local organization called "The Internet and your Child." This organization teaches parents and other people who oversee children about internet safety through a free program of lessons taught by volunteer law enforcement officials and computer professionals. To learn more about their program go to http://www.theinternetandyourchild.org or write:

**The Internet and Your Child
PO Box 5386
Kent, WA 98064**

Internet Guidelines- *For Kids*

- *In chat rooms, assume that people you talk to are not friends, unless you personally know them.*

- *Do not meet strangers you have talked to in a chat room unless one of your parents are with you and the meeting is in a public place.*

- *Do not give out personal information on the internet.*

- *Never download files from an unknown source.*

- *Never respond to messages that are insulting, suggestive, obscene, belligerent or harassing.*

- *Assume that some of what you read or what people say in a chat room are lies.*

- *Never use your real name on the internet, even with friends that you know.*

COMMUNITY POLICING
in Snohomish County

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

CRIME STOPPERS Of Puget Sound

1-800-CRIME-13

Sheriff Office Precincts:
- North-
    (425) 388-7939
- South-
    (425) 744-6868
- East-
    (360) 805-6770
- Crime Prevention Center (128th S.W.)
    (425) 710-0232

Internet Safety– *Where to Go For More Information*

Computers and the internet can be daunting subjects for adults and parents. Add the potential of harm and ID theft, well, that can seem overwhelming. For more information on internet safety go to:

- SafeKids.com (http://www.safekids.com/) which has a comprehensive web site encouraging the positive aspects of the net and information on how to avoid becoming a victim.

- The FBI web site and look at "A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety" at http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguide.htm

- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at http://www.missingkids.com/. Their library under "Education and Resources has a number of documents that cover internet safety.

- GetNet Wise (www.getnetwise.org) provides good information on online safety, positive web sites for kids and how to report online trouble to law enforcement.

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