



# Ramsey County Sheriff's Office

Bob Fletcher, Sheriff

# Neighborhood Watch

## Public Safety Services Division – Crime Prevention Unit

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www.RamseyCountySheriff.us

Neighbors and Deputies working together for safer communities

## Block Captain News – September 2019

Next Meeting Tuesday, November 12 – 6:30 pm

Ramsey County Public Works Building - Marsden Room  
1425 Paul Kirkwold Drive, Arden Hills MN 55112  
Near intersection of Highway 96 and Hamline

***In this issue:***

- Night to Unite 2019 Recap
- Robocalls & Scams
- School Safety – School Buses
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### Night to Unite 2019 – THANK YOU!

Another great night of neighbors getting together to celebrate public safety. A huge thank you to the event hosts and organizers who made it happen!! The 48 teams of Ambassadors who visited 208 registered parties returned to the patrol station enthused about their adventures listening, learning and sharing with residents. The generosity shown through the donations of school supplies was once again heartwarming. Each of the fifteen schools in our seven communities will receive ten or more large boxes of supplies to assist our students in need.

Share your thoughts on improvements at [www.SurveyMonkey.com/r/NTU-Survey2019](http://www.SurveyMonkey.com/r/NTU-Survey2019), and mark your calendars for Tuesday, August 4, 2020!



## What about those annoying robocalls?

If you answer the phone and hear a recorded message instead of a live person, it's a robocall. If you're getting a lot of robocalls trying to sell you something, odds are the calls are illegal. Many are also probably scams.

### What to do:

- Hang up the phone
- Don't press any numbers
- Consider blocking the number
- Report it to the FTC at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://ftc.gov/complaint)

## ROBOCALLS

**If you answer the phone and hear a recorded message instead of a live person, it's a robocall.**

Companies need your written permission to use robocalls to sell things to you.

**Why you're getting so many robocalls:**  
Often, it's scammers. The internet makes it cheap and easy for them to call from anywhere in the world.

**What you can do about them:**  
1. Hang up. If you press any numbers, you might get even more calls.  
2. Use call blocking. Talk to your phone carrier and read expert reviews about your options.

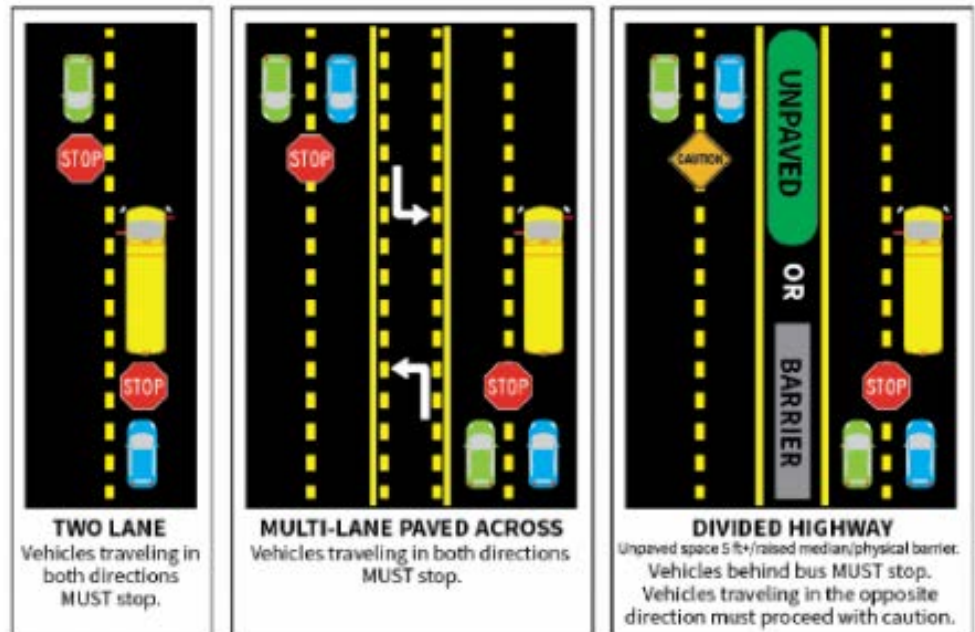
**REPORT**  
robocalls to the FTC at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://ftc.gov/complaint)

**LEARN**  
more at [ftc.gov/calls](https://ftc.gov/calls)

## School Bus Safety – something to think about every day!

### School bus safety for motorists

- In Minnesota, motorists must stop at least 20 feet from a school bus that is displaying red flashing lights or a stop arm when approaching from the rear and from the opposite direction on undivided roads.
- Motorists should slow down, pay attention and anticipate school children and buses, especially in neighborhoods and school zones.
- The best way to be aware of your surroundings is to put the distractions away.
- School bus safety requires participation from students as well as drivers. Parents, it is important to educate your children about proper school bus safety.



### Tips for children

- When getting off a bus, look to be sure no cars are passing on the shoulder.
- Wait for the bus driver to signal that it's safe to cross.
- When crossing the street to get on the bus or to go home, make eye contact with motorists before proceeding.

The School Safety Patrol (crossings and buses) will be assisting fellow students throughout the year on the journey to and from school. Look for those bright orange traffic flags when driving in the morning and evening hours. The 900+ School Patrol students in suburban Ramsey County are recognized by the Sheriff's Foundation with a roller-skating party in December and a big event in May at Aldrich Arena.

**More discussion topics and resources for parents:** <https://www.nsc.org/home-safety>

## Scam, Scam, everywhere a Scam - Government imposter scams top the list of reported frauds to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

Pretending to be someone people trust is what scammers do. They may claim to be a well-known company or a beloved family member, but data from the FTC's Consumer Sentinel Network suggest that pretending to be the government may be scammers' favorite ruse. Since 2014, the FTC has gotten nearly 1.3 million reports about government imposters. That's far more than any other type of fraud reported in the same timeframe.

The top government imposters reported in the first five months in 2019 have both familiar and new faces. There has been a recent dramatic surge in Social Security imposters, but IRS imposters are still hanging on in the top five.

Government imposters will adapt quickly to find new ways to get your money. Lots of

government agencies have been impersonated. Scammers use "bureau" or "administration" in their name to make their government grant offers sound official and use generic names like "sheriff's office" to suggest a hefty law enforcement presence.

The scammer's pitch is even more convincing when they fake the number on your caller ID so it shows the name or phone number of a real government agency. It's illegal to fake the number on caller ID, but scammers know it helps convince people that the caller really is with the government.

Oh, the stories scammers tell . . .

- Phony Social Security Administration – "Your Social Security number has been frozen, but we'll help you keep your money 'safe!'"
- Health & Human Services/Medicare con – "Call now for your free back brace!"
- IRS imposter – "There's a lawsuit against you for unpaid taxes."
- Fake government grant offer – "You're eligible for a government grant . . . for a fee."
- Bogus police, sheriff, or FBI – "There is a warrant for your arrest for failing to appear in court!"

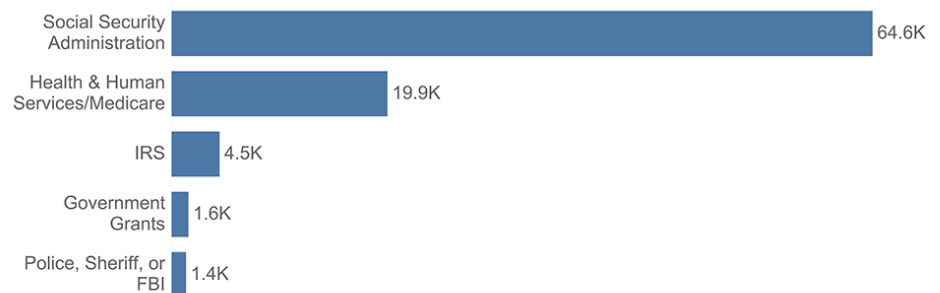
The vast majority of people who report this type of scam say it started with a phone call, and these callers have their mind games down pat. Government impersonators can create a sense of urgent fear, telling you to send money right away or provide your social security number to avoid arrest or some other trouble. Or they can play the good guy, promising to help you get some free benefit like a grant or prize, or even a back brace. Scammers like to make the situation so immediate that you can't stop to check it out.

### What you can do to protect yourself against imposters:

- Be suspicious of any call from a government agency asking for money or information. Government agencies don't call you with threats, or promises of – or demands for – money. Scammers do.
- Don't trust caller ID – it can be faked. Even if it might look like a real call, don't trust it.
- Never pay with a gift card or wire transfer. If someone tells you to pay this way, it's a scam.
- Check with the real agency. Look up their number. Call them to find out if they're trying to reach you – and why.
- Double check with someone you trust before sending money, agreeing to an offer or signing a contract. Take a moment to think things through, don't be rushed into sending money.

Report government imposter scams to the FTC at [FTC.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint). To learn more, visit [ftc.gov/imposters](https://www.ftc.gov/imposters).

**Top Government Imposters by Number of Reports**  
January - May 2019



## Fright Farm Haunted House: the legendary horror experience of October!

Mark your calendars to attend the 23rd season of Fright Farm Haunted House. Since 1996, Fright Farm has provided frightening scenes in a blend of horror, local legend, and folklore for tens of thousands of audience members. Survivors of the haunted house can experience other activities on the grounds including attractions, selfie spots, food, beverages, and carnival games.



Fright Farm will open on Friday, October 4, 2019 from 7-11 p.m. Fright Farm will then be open every Friday and Saturday night during the month of October including October 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, and 26. Open on Halloween, October 31. Don't forget about the Low Scare event on Sunday, October 27 from noon-4 p.m. This is a tamer version of the haunt that includes free prizes, fun activities, and family-friendly costumes. Low Scare has a \$6 admission price for all ages.

Tickets to Fright Farm are just \$12 for all ages. All proceeds from Fright Farm benefit the nonprofit Ramsey County Sheriff's Foundation which supports important public safety and community programs. Visit [www.frightfarm.org](http://www.frightfarm.org) for more information.

Located among the relics of the Ramsey County Poor Farm and Cemetery in a massive, historic barn, Fright Farm takes place in the heart of the east metro just one mile south of Highway 36 on White Bear Avenue in Maplewood, Minnesota.



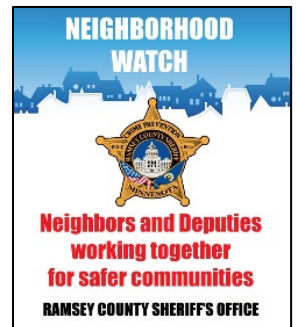
## Seat Belt Enforcement: extra patrol efforts scheduled for September 16 – 28

## Neighborhood Watch is simply Neighbors and Deputies working together.

Involved neighbors are more likely to have open communication lines with each other, deputies, and the whole community. When neighbors know each other's names, normal patterns, and look out for each other, it is likely that they will report any activity that doesn't fit with regular schedules. Involved neighbors look out for each other.

Information sharing on crime prevention, crime trends, and law enforcement issues is a key element to the Neighborhood Watch program of the Sheriff's Office.

Neighborhood Watch program [information and forms](#) to help your block organization are available on the county [website](#). **Please complete and return** the [Block Captain registration form](#) to ensure the Sheriff's Office has your most current contact information. THANKS!



## Mark your calendars for 2019 events:

**Tuesday, November 12** – 6:30 pm – Captains Meeting, 1425 Paul Kirkwold Drive, Arden Hills

**Thank you for working for safer neighborhoods!**



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**Remember – when you See Something, Say Something, Call 9-1-1**