



## Ramsey County Sheriff's Office

## Neighborhood Watch

Bob Fletcher, Sheriff

### Public Safety Services Division – Crime Prevention Unit

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Neighbors and Deputies working together for safer communities

## Block Captain News – January 2022

Next Meeting Tuesday, March 22 – 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

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### In-person meeting?! – reserve Tuesday 3/22/22 on your calendar

With an optimistic view into the future the Crime Prevention team has reserved the Marsden Room at the Ramsey County Public Works building in Arden Hills for Tuesday, March 22, 2022 to host our Neighborhood Watch Block Captains quarterly meeting. It's been a long two years since we've held an in-person gathering to discuss public safety issues facing our neighborhoods. We look forward to seeing those able to attend, the meeting will start at 6:30 pm and will run until 8:00 pm. Masks will likely be required.

### How to avoid buying fake COVID tests online

News from the Federal Trade Commission:

The news is filled with images of long lines at in-person COVID testing sites and reports of limited supplies of at-home test kits. It's not a surprise that, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, fake and unauthorized at-home testing kits are popping up online as opportunistic scammers take advantage of the spike in demand.

Using these fake products isn't just a waste of money, it increases your risk of unknowingly spreading COVID-19 or not getting the appropriate treatment. So, if you're shopping online for COVID test kits and related items:

- Make sure the test you're buying is authorized by the FDA. Check the FDA's lists of [antigen diagnostic tests](#) and [molecular diagnostic tests](#) before you buy to find the tests authorized for home use. (EUA is "emergency use authorization.")
- Check out a seller before you buy, especially if you're buying from a site you don't know. Search online for the website, company, or seller's name plus words like "scam," "complaint," or "review."
- Compare online reviews from a wide variety of websites. You can get a good idea about a company, product, or service from reading user reviews on various retail or shopping comparison sites. Think about the source of the review. Ask yourself: Where is this review coming from? Is it from an expert organization or individual customers?

Pay by credit card. If you're charged for an order you never got, or for a product that's not as advertised, contact your credit card company and dispute the charge.

Learn more about COVID-related frauds at [ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams](https://ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams).



## Animal Control Corner - Coyotes

Winter brings more coyote sightings. Beyond the white snow background making them easier to spot, the January/February breeding season prompts more activity as last year's juveniles are pushed out and the new adults are looking for their own territory to set up housekeeping. New pups are whelped in April or early May.

More info: [https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/livingwith\\_wildlife/coyotes/index.html](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/livingwith_wildlife/coyotes/index.html)

## Winter storm strands motorists for 24 hours on Interstate

The early January storm that hit the east coast stranded hundreds of motorists on a fifty-mile stretch of Interstate 95 in Virginia, most overnight and up to 30 hours for some. While we in Minnesota claim to be able handle whatever winter dishes out it raises the question: are you and your vehicle prepared for an emergency? Take the time to make sure you have an emergency kit in each of your vehicles.

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/educational-materials/Documents/Winter-Survival-Brochure.pdf>

Car Winter Survival Kit Checklist	
<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight & Extra Batteries	<input type="checkbox"/> Blankets/Sleeping Bag
<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Perishable Food Granola Bars, Dried nuts, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Shovel	<input type="checkbox"/> Bottled Water
<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Scraper with Brush	<input type="checkbox"/> Booster Cables
	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra Clothing Hats, Mittens, Parkas, Boots
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sand/Kitty Litter Used for Traction
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cell Phone & Charger
	<input type="checkbox"/> Flares/Triangles & other Bright Objects

## Scams can be a wet blanket in the search for love

February is often a time our attention is drawn to romance especially with Valentine's Day on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately, online romance scams are among the most reported scams, with losses reaching a record \$304 million in 2020. While millions of people are successfully using online dating apps or social networking sites to meet someone, there are many scammers hiding behind false profiles trolling for the unsuspecting to trick into sending money or personal information. Red flags include professing love quickly; claims to be overseas in military or business; asks for money; lures you off the dating site; plans to visit in person but can't because of an emergency; etc. Bottom line is slow down and talk to someone you trust, don't let a scammer rush you.

More information: [ftc.gov/romancescams](https://ftc.gov/romancescams)

## Current top scams

[Social Security Scams](#) – Scammers pretend to be from Social Security Administration.

[Phone Scams](#) – the perennial favorite of scammers through the years. Don't hesitate to hang up.

[Phishing Scams](#) – Email or [text](#) messages to trick you into giving them your personal information

[Unemployment Benefits Scams](#) – Imposters are filing claims for unemployment benefits

## **New Minnesota laws in effect January 1, 2022**

The Legislature takes their task of fine tuning the laws, policies, rules and regulations for the state seriously and here are some Special Session changes that took effect the first of this year: ([source](#))

### **PUBLIC SAFETY - Property forfeiture revisions**

The omnibus public safety and judiciary policy and finance law revises Minnesota's forfeiture system for property seized in relation to criminal activity.

Effective Jan. 1, 2022, changes include:

- a vehicle is not subject to forfeiture if the driver fails to appear for a scheduled court appearance and fails to voluntarily surrender within 48 hours of that required appearance;
- forfeiture notices must contain a warning to a person — other than the driver — who may have an ownership interest in a vehicle that has been seized how to assert an innocent owner claim;
- a forfeiture proceeding in relation to a DWI offense is stayed in certain circumstances if the driver becomes a program participant in the ignition interlock program;
- identifying specific ways a law enforcement agency or prosecuting authority can use forfeiture obtained money;
- personal property and real property, other than homestead property exempt from seizure, is subject to forfeiture if it is an instrument or represents the proceeds of a controlled substance offense;
- money totaling \$1,500 and any precious metals or stones are subject to forfeiture if there is probable cause to believe they represent the proceeds of a controlled substance offense; and
- a vehicle is subject to forfeiture if used in transportation or exchange of controlled substances intended for distribution or sale and the controlled substances had a value of at least \$100.

In addition, the legislative auditor's office is to conduct an audit on the efficacy of forfeiture and ignition interlock in DWI cases and report to the Legislature by Jan. 15, 2025. Per the law, "The audit shall assess the financial impact of the programs, the efficacy in reducing recidivism, and the impacts, if any, on public safety."

### **TRANSPORTATION - Driver's license suspension, new license plates**

Beginning Jan. 1, 2022, a person's driver's license cannot be suspended following a conviction for driving after suspension, driving after revocation or based solely on a person's failure to pay a traffic ticket, parking fine or surcharge following a conviction for a vehicle operation or parking citation.

The provisions are part of the omnibus transportation finance and policy law.

Other provisions include:

- the Department of Public Safety cannot suspend a person's driver's license based on failure to appear in court after receiving a citation for a petty misdemeanor or driving after suspension;
- the department can suspend a driver's license in conformance with the nonresident violator compact;
- a trio of special license plates — Minnesota 100 Club, agriculture and honorary consul — will be created; and
- a manufacturer or distributor of an electric-assisted bicycle must apply a label to the bicycle containing the classification number, top assisted speed and motor wattage of the electric assisted bicycle.

Additional information on new laws in the areas of Commerce, Elections, Environment & Natural Resources, Family, and Health & Human Services can be found at

<https://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/leginfo/0122nlrelease.pdf?v=010122>

Summaries of all laws passed by the 2021 Legislature in regular and special sessions are available online from nonpartisan House Public Information Services at [www.house.mn/newlaws/#/search/2021](http://www.house.mn/newlaws/#/search/2021).

## Keep your personal information safe in the New Year

Scammers and hackers are always looking for new ways to [steal your personal information online](#). Make your Resolution List complete by adding “update my security software” and “[protect my personal information](#)” to the mix. Here are some steps you can take to help protect yourself and your information:

- **Keep your security software, internet browser, and operating system up to date.** Updating your software regularly helps make sure you have critical patches and protections against security threats.
- **Create and use strong passwords.** Making a password longer — 12 characters or more — is one of the easiest ways to increase its strength. Consider using a passphrase of random words so that your password is more memorable, but avoid using common words or phrases. Check out this password checklist, and don't use the same password for different accounts.
- **Use multi-factor authentication.** Some accounts offer extra security by requiring two or more credentials to log in. You may have to give both a password and a passcode you get from an authentication app to log into your account. Multi-factor authentication makes it harder for scammers to log in to your accounts even if they manage to steal your username and password.
- **Back up your data to protect it.** Keep an extra copy of all your files with a secure cloud storage service or save your files to an external storage device. That way, if something happens — say a virus, your device crashes, or you're hacked — you still have your files.
- **Protect your home network.** Your devices, accounts, and whole network are only as secure as your router since it's the connecting point between your devices and the internet. Check out how to make [your router more secure](#).

Also, remember to report fraud, scams, or bad business practices to the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](http://ReportFraud.ftc.gov).

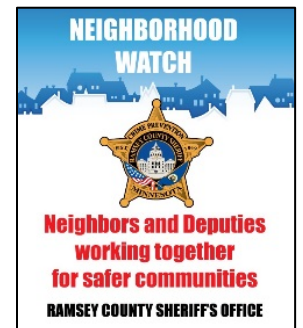


## Neighborhood Watch is about Neighbors and Deputies working together

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 2022 events:

**Tuesday, March 22** – 6:30 pm – Captains Meeting, 1425 Paul Kirkwold Drive, Arden Hills

**Tuesday, May 2** – 6:30 pm – Captains Meeting, 1425 Paul Kirkwold Drive, Arden Hills

**Tuesday, August 2** – Night to Unite events in neighborhoods throughout the community

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



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