



# Ramsey County Sheriff's Office

# Neighborhood Watch

Bob Fletcher, Sheriff

## Public Safety Services Division – Crime Prevention Unit

1411 Paul Kirkwold Drive • Arden Hills, Minnesota 55112

Phone: 651-266-7339 • Fax: 651-266-7337

www.RamseyCountySheriff.us



## Block Captain News – September 2022

Next Meeting Thursday, October 27 – 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:

- School Bus Safety reminder
- Thefts from Auto in Parks
- Catalytic Converter Thefts
- Medicare Identity Theft
- Inflation Worry Scams
- Four Signs of a Scam

## THANK YOU Night to Unite event hosts!

Once again, the first Tuesday in August brought neighbors together to celebrate and promote safe communities. We at the Sheriff's Office thank the Fire Departments and City/Community resources that attended events and we appreciate the understanding and condolences expressed for our absence at events this year.

A big thanks to community generosity for the school supplies donated and collected! They have been distributed to our local community schools and students in need.

We have a short survey to help review this year's efforts and help us plan for next year. [Complete the survey](#) or [drop us an email](#) with your thoughts and ideas.

Mark your calendars for Night to Unite 2023 – Tuesday, August 1, 2023



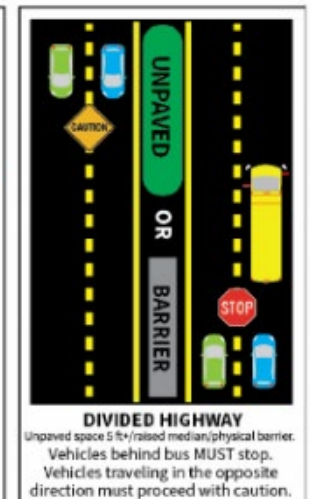
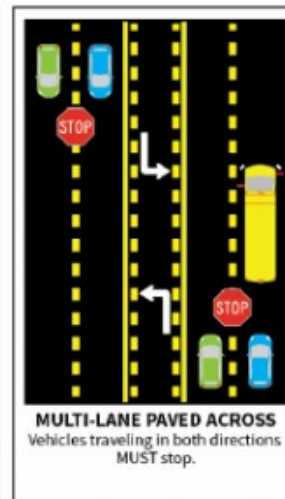
## School Bus Safety – pay attention to it every day!



Kids will be back in the classrooms after Labor Day. Also, back will be children waiting on the side of our roads for those big yellow buses to pick them up and deliver them back home safely. Many students will also be walking and biking to and from school – let's help make those journeys safe too!

### School bus reminders 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.
- Drivers who violate the law face a \$500 fine. Criminal charges are also possible.
- Motorists should slow down, pay attention, and anticipate school children and buses, especially in neighborhoods and school zones.

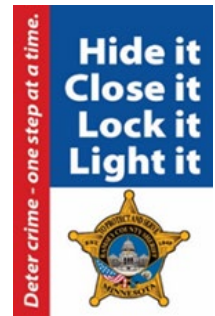


## Crimes of Convenience – still happening

Criminals continue to look for the easy score. An unattended item, an unlocked door, an open window, an open garage door, easy grab and go opportunities are what thieves prey upon.

Crime prevention is about awareness of what crimes are happening and how they are being committed. Taking away the easy scores are the first steps to prevent becoming a crime victim.

The simple Hide/Close/Lock/Light message is applicable in many situations.



## Parks parking lots - prime targets for thefts from auto

Ramsey County and our communities have great parks and outdoor spaces that bring joy to those who like to be out in nature. There are off-leash dog parks, extensive nature trails, playgrounds, picnic shelters, lakes, creeks, swimming beaches, and more.

Unfortunately, the parking lots are dangerous places for purses, laptops, mobile devices, and other valuables left behind in vehicles while their owners are out enjoying the amenities. It only takes a moment for a thief to break a window and grab stuff.

Best precaution is to not leave anything in your vehicle. Only bring the items to the park that you will be carrying with you while you're enjoying the park. A vehicle showing nothing to steal will likely be ignored by the thieves who prowl parking lots.

If you must leave personal property in your vehicle, make certain it is out of view. Do this BEFORE you arrive in the parking lot. It is likely that thieves are already in the lot watching for targets who are inadvertently showing themselves.

## Catalytic Converter Thefts - remain a frustrating problem

The precious metals inside catalytic converters combined with the inability to track a detached converter to a specific vehicle, the ease of stealing them from many vehicles, and state laws surrounding metal recycling make them convenient targets for thieves. For too many months deputies have been responding one or more times per day to reports of catalytic converter thefts.

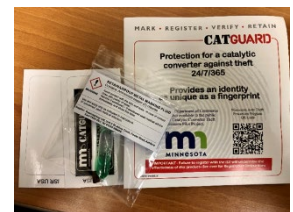
Until changes in the laws or manufacturing process are made it will remain up to you to protect your property. Deter theft by parking in secure areas; etch your full vehicle VIN onto your converter; install a protective shield or guard; paint with High Temp paint; and report suspicious activity promptly.

## CATGUARD Catalytic Converter Marking Kits Available

The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office has partnered with the Minnesota Commerce Fraud Bureau in a pilot program to promote catalytic converter theft prevention by distributing self-install marking kits to residents of Ramsey County who have a high-risk for theft vehicle, or have had a catalytic converter stolen.

The marking kits include:

- a label to be installed on a "cool to the touch" catalytic converter and then painted with a special fluid that causes a unique number to be etched into the catalytic converter after the vehicle is started.
- two warning labels that your vehicle has a marked catalytic converter.
- information on "how to register the label's unique code number" and "information updates" which allows law enforcement to trace the marked converter back to a specific vehicle if the converter is stolen and later recovered.



For more information visit: <https://tinyurl.com/RCatGuard>

## Protect your Medicare number, your other info, and your money

By Bridget Small, FTC

In 2021, the FTC got almost a million reports about impersonation scammers — [fake government agents](#), pretend [grandkids](#), bogus [sweethearts](#), and others who took almost \$2.3 billion from people across the country. So far this year, impersonation scams are still the most-reported fraud.

Scammers keep changing their stories to catch you off-guard.

Some scams even ask you for your Medicare number. If anyone surprises you with a call, email, text, or message on social media and asks for money or personal information — no matter what story they tell — it's most likely a scam.

Learn about [protecting your number](#) from health care fraud. Then, take steps to keep impersonators away from your money and valuable information:

### Reduce unwanted calls and email

- Use [call blocking technology](#) or devices that stop unwanted calls — like scams calls and illegal robocalls — before they reach you.
- Use email spam filters to reduce [phishing scam attempts](#), and set your computer software to [update automatically](#).

### Keep information private

- Medicare won't call or text to ask you for money. Even if your Caller ID says it's Medicare, it [could be faked](#). Don't share personal or financial information with anyone who calls, emails, or texts saying they are from a [government agency](#).
- Don't click links or open attachments in email and text messages, even if they seem to come from Medicare or a company you know. They could be messages [phishing](#) for your account numbers, passwords, or other information.

### Protect your money

- Refuse to pay anyone who demands payment by [wire transfer](#), [gift card](#), or [cryptocurrency](#). Only scammers [tell you to pay these ways](#). It's hard to track those payments, and almost impossible to get your money back.

If you suspect a scam, tell the FTC: [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](#).

More info: [Unwanted Calls, Emails, and Texts](#), [Medicare Impersonators](#)

## As prices rise, keep an eye out for scammers

By Kira Krown, FTC

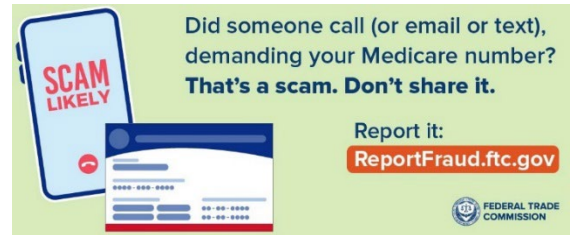
With the cost of groceries, housing, and many other things rising, you might be looking for ways to cut costs. You aren't alone. Across the country, people are worried about high prices impacting their budgets. And scammers are taking notice.

Scammers may zero in on your anxiety over money in several ways. They might say they're from the government and giving away grant money for home repairs or unpaid bills. Or they have an investment that's guaranteed to deliver quick and high returns. Or they know of a high-paying job that's yours as soon as you pay a fee or give them your personal information.

To spot and avoid these types of scams, here are some things to remember:

- **The government won't get in touch out of the blue about grants.** It won't call, text, reach out through social media, or email you. In fact, real government grants require an application, are completely free to apply for, and are always for a specific purpose.
- **All investments have risks.** No one can guarantee a specific amount of return on an investment, or that an investment will be successful.
- **Honest employers won't ask you to pay to get a job.** If someone claims you can make a lot of money in a short time with little effort — you just need to pay for starter kits, "training," or certifications — that's a scam.

If you come across any of these, or other scams, report it to the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](#). Find resources to help you manage your money at [Consumer.gov](#).



## Four signs that it's a scam

Recognizing these common signs of a scam could help you avoid falling for one.

### 1. Scammers PRETEND to be from an organization you know.

Scammers often pretend to be contacting you on behalf of the government. They might use a real name, like the Social Security Administration, the IRS, the Sheriff's Office, or Medicare, or make up a name that sounds official. Some pretend to be from a business you know, like a utility company, a tech company, or even a charity asking for donations.

They use technology to change the phone number that appears on your caller ID. So the name and number you see might not be real.

### 2. Scammers say there's a PROBLEM or a PRIZE.

They might say you're in trouble with the government. Or you owe money. Or someone in your family had an emergency. Or that there's a virus on your computer.

Some scammers say there's a problem with one of your accounts and that you need to verify some information.

Others will lie and say you won money in a lottery or sweepstakes but have to pay a fee to get it.

### 3. Scammers PRESSURE you to act immediately.

Scammers want you to act before you have time to think. If you're on the phone, they might tell you not to hang up so you can't check out their story.

They might threaten to arrest you, sue you, take away your driver's or business license, or deport you. They might say your computer is about to be corrupted.

### 4. Scammers tell you to PAY in a specific way.

They often insist that you pay by sending money through a money transfer company or by putting money on a gift card and then giving them the number on the back.

Some will send you a check (that will later turn out to be fake), tell you to deposit it, and then send them money.

## 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:

Thursday, October 27 – 6:30pm – Captains Meeting, 1425 Paul Kirkwold Drive, Arden Hills

Thank you for working for safer neighborhoods!



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Deputy Alicia Ouellette  
Crime Prevention Specialist  
651-266-7339

Randy Gustafson  
Crime Prevention Coordinator  
651-266-7315

email address: [CrimePrevention@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:CrimePrevention@co.ramsey.mn.us)

website: [www.RamseyCountySheriff.us](http://www.RamseyCountySheriff.us)

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