



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 – January 2023

Next Meeting Tuesday, January 31 – 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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Door-to-door solicitors
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In-person meeting – reserve Tuesday 1/31/23 on your calendar

The Crime Prevention team has reserved the Marsden Room at the Ramsey County Public Works building in Arden Hills for Tuesday, January 31, 2023, to host our Neighborhood Watch Block Captains quarterly meeting. Topics will include 911/Emergency Communication protocols, how the drone program works, traffic update and traffic stop questions, and current events. We look forward to seeing those able to attend, the meeting will start at 6:30 pm and will run until 8:00 pm.

When is ice safe?

According to the Minnesota DNR there really is no sure answer. You can't judge the strength of ice just by its appearance, age, thickness, temperature, or whether or not the ice is covered with snow. Strength is based on all these factors -- plus the depth of water under the ice, size of the water body, water chemistry and currents, the distribution of the load on the ice, and local climatic conditions.

This graphic from the DNR has guidelines for new, clear ice. If you're venturing out on white ice, you should double the recommended thickness.

The DNR does not measure ice thickness on Minnesota lakes. Your safety is your responsibility. Learn more about ice safety at the DNR website:

www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/ice



The mid-December snowstorm that dropped heavy, wet snow across much of the state significantly affected ice conditions. Slush adds weight to the ice and its effects can be unpredictable. When on the ice, please double check ice thickness for yourself and do not rely on tracks in the snow or secondhand information. Measure only the clear ice, not the slush or snow on top of it.

Peddlers, Solicitors, Transient Merchants – rules in place to protect residents, avoid fraud and scams

Most households have experienced the knock at the door from someone selling a product, a service, asking for donations, or canvassing for religious or political organizations.

Each community in Ramsey County has a local ordinance to regulate this activity, and most are similar. It is not against state law to conduct business going house-to-house, door-to-door, business-to-business, street-to-street, or any other place-to-place, for the purposes of offering for sale or obtaining, or attempting to obtain, orders for goods, wares, products, merchandise, other personal property or services provided the solicitor follows common guidelines.

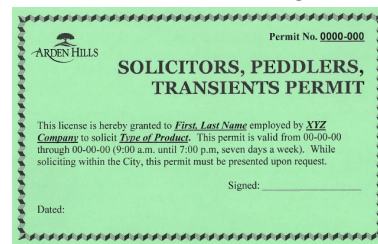
North Oaks does not allow any door-to-door solicitors. Every other county city except Roseville requires a Solicitor/Peddler Permit or License. The license application requires a background check conducted of each individual who would like to solicit in the city. The permit/license must then be displayed or available upon request by residents. There are some exemptions such as children selling school fundraising, political candidates, people selling newspapers or soliciting donations for a nonprofit organization that each city has established. Check your local ordinances for detailed information.

Soliciting is allowed only between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

If you wish to exclude solicitors, you can place a sign reading "Peddlers and Solicitors Prohibited" near your front door. The sign must be at least 4"x4" and the printing is 48 points in size.

Solicitors must leave a property when asked and may not conduct business in a manner a reasonable person would find obscene, threatening, intimidating or abusive.

When you encounter a solicitor in violation, report it as a non-emergency call to 911.



Warning signs of door-to-door scams

- **Demanding upfront payment.** Real companies will not ask you pay the entire cost upfront.
- **Cash only.** Up-front cash or cash for a cheaper rate are frequently used by scammers.
- **Too good to be true.** If the deal seems to be good to be true – it usually is.
- **No permit.** If they do not have a solicitor permit or company identification, it's usually a scam.
- **Scare tactics.** Scammers try to scare you and make you feel afraid, so you'll pay them sooner.
- **Verbal estimates or agreements.** Real contractors and salespeople provide written quotes.

How to avoid door-to-door scams

- **Do Not let strangers in your home.** Think before you let someone in who you don't know.
- **Do your research.** Don't buy right away. Get written materials and contact information. A real salesperson will provide details and offer to come back at a different time if that works for you.
- **Hire only well-known, licensed contractors.** Most cities require a license to do business in the city, such as tree trimmers, contractors who are not State licensed, etc. Check with city hall. Most home improvement and mechanical projects will require permits from the city.
 - **Require written contracts.** Details on what will be done, when, at what cost, etc.
 - **Never pay in full upfront or pay in cash.** Checks and credit card payments provide a record.
 - **Cancel if necessary.** Know how to cancel and the deadlines involved.

Door-to-door sales activity is often weather or seasonally driven. For example, tree trimming in cold weather is recommended for certain varieties, which can bring out nefarious persons. Each community serviced by the Sheriff's Office licenses tree trimmer businesses and verifies that they are indeed licensed, bonded, and insured. Check your city website for licensed tree trimmers. After major weather events be aware and on the lookout for roofing and home repair scammers.

Searching for love or companionship?

February is often a time our attention is drawn to romance especially with Valentine's Day on the 14th. 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



Current top scams

[Government impersonators](#) –scammers claim to be Sheriff, and someone is in trouble unless you pay.

[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

Keep your personal information safe in 2023

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.

Sheriff Crime Prevention community classes in Arden Hills

Arden Hills is sponsoring crime prevention presentations on the topics of Fraud on January 18 and Physical Safety on February 23. Registration information on the [Arden Hills website](#).



Coyotes active around town

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 these new adults are looking for their own territory to set up housekeeping. New pups are whelped in April or early May. Animal Control and deputies do not respond to coyote sightings except when dangerous.

More info: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/livingwith_wildlife/coyotes/index.html

Winter storms can strand motorists – be prepared

The December storms impacted the holiday season across America, disrupting travel, creating havoc, and stranding motorists. While us Minnesotans 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>

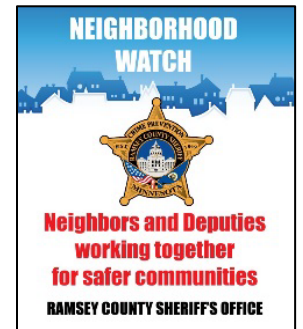
Car Winter Survival Kit Checklist		
<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight & Extra Batteries	<input type="checkbox"/> Blankets/Sleeping Bag	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra Clothing Hats, Mittens, Parkas, Boots
<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Perishable Food Granola Bars,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

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 2023 events:

Tuesday, January 31 – 6:30pm – Captains Meeting, 1425 Paul Kirkwold Drive, Arden Hills

Tuesday, August 1 –between 5pm to 9pm dependent upon neighborhood – **Night to Unite**

Details for quarterly meetings and distribution of Night to Unite materials are under construction

Thank you for working for safer neighborhoods!



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