



Ramsey County Sheriff's Office

Neighborhood Watch

Bob Fletcher, Sheriff

Public Safety Services Division – Crime Prevention Unit

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Block Captain News – January 2024

Next Block Captain Meeting – Tuesday, Jan. 16th, 2024, at 6:30 pm

Ramsey County Public Works Building - Marsden Room
1425 Paul Kirkwold Drive, Arden Hills MN 55112

2024 Block Captain Meeting Dates:

Tuesday, January 16th, 2024, at 6:30 pm

Tuesday, April 16th, 2024, at 6:30 pm

Tuesday, July 23rd, 2024, at 6:30 pm (also Night to Unite Bag Pickup)

Tuesday, October 15th, 2024, at 6:30 pm

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Upcoming Coffee with a Cop events:

January 12th, 2024, at 10:00am at **Shoreview Target Store Starbucks**
3800 Lexington Ave N, Shoreview, MN 55126

January 24th, 2024 at 8:30am at **Vadnais Heights Panera Bread**
959 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127

February 14th, 2024 at 7:30am at **North Oaks Caribou Coffee**
113 Village Center Dr, North Oaks, MN 55127



The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office will be popping up around the contract cities at various venues throughout the winter season. *Watch for a flyer at a local café or store near you!*

There is no such thing as 100 percent safe ice.



December 2023 set a record for the warmest on record since 1877 which has brought more calls for help on Minnesota Lakes. According to the Minnesota DNR there really is no sure answer to when is ice safe. 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



Ice Safety Gear for the New Year!

The unexpected can happen so remember to be prepared as you head out onto the lakes this winter season. The DNR recommends these items when out on the ice:

- Foam life jacket or flotation suit
- Ice picks
- Emergency whistle
- Chisel or drill and tap measure (to check ice thickness)
- Ice cleats
- Cell phone and personal locator beacon
- Rope

Other things to consider:

- Tell someone where you are going and time you will be back.
- Keep cell phone close to your body so battery does not drain due to cold weather.

Trending Scams

Ramsey County Sheriff's Office Scam Impersonators

Have you received a call recently from a Ramsey County Deputy? The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office has been getting reports over the last few months that Deputies names have been used by scammers. The scammers are using real Deputies names, badge numbers, phone numbers, and other office information when making scamming calls in order to sound official and legitimate.

So how do you determine if the person on the phone is a scammer or law enforcement? First, law enforcement will not contact community members by telephone to "demand" any form of payment or request any "personal or sensitive information." If there is any legal action by Ramsey County it will be done in person by a uniformed law enforcement officer, such as, the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office Civil Unit who serves all of Ramsey County's legal papers.

The Federal Trade Commission recommends these tips to avoid government scam:

- Don't ever wire money or use gift cards, cryptocurrency, or payment app to pay someone who says they work for the government.
- Don't give your financial or personal information to someone who calls, texts, emails, or messages you on social media and says they're with the government.
- Don't trust your caller ID.

- Don't click on links in unexpected emails, texts, or social media messages.

If you do send money, give personal information, call the local law enforcement agency where the cards were purchased to file a report. For more information also see: [How to Avoid a Government Impersonation Scam](#)

Gift Cards, look before you buy

Over the holidays the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office saw a trend in stolen gift card information before the cards were purchased at the store. People are going to local stores and scratching or "ripping back" the activation codes. Some scammers are even putting on a sticker with a fake barcode to cover up the gift cards real barcode. They then put the cards back and either keep calling to see if the cards have been activated or set up a computer program that has an algorithm that follows the numbers. Once the scammer gets notified the card number is activated, they use or transfer the money.

When buying gift cards:

- Confirm packaging has not been tampered with.
- Confirm the activation code has not been scratched or tampered with.
- If you see anything suspicious, report it to the store.
- If you purchase a card but find there is no money on the card, call the local Law Enforcement agency where the cards were purchased to report it.



Porch Pirate follow up

The neighborhood watch block captain meeting in October of 2023 had a presentation about Porch Pirates and mail theft. This was due to the expectation that people would be shopping and shipping more to their homes before the holiday season. Looking back at the data for 2023, Theft-Mail/Package theft reports made to the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office showed a 53 percent increase in the last three months of the year. The month of December alone had 25 percent of the total yearly amount of Theft-Mail/Package theft reports for all of 2023. So, as we enter into the new year, please consider one of these ways to "deter" Porch Pirates and mail/package theft in your neighborhoods.

- Curbside pickup (Target, Walmart, Lowes, Etc.)
- Require a signature
- Video surveillance (some with packaging code for alerts)
- Get a P.O. Box.
- Track your package (get the updates for arrival)
- Purchase shipping insurance
- Have items sent to a TRUSTED neighbor who is home
- Have items sent to your work
- Respond to delivery at the door or to the alerts to bring the package in ASAP
- Lock Box (outside main door or use community lock box)
- Pick up at: UPS, FedEx pick-up spot, Amazon Locker, etc.

Home Safety Tip of the Month!



Even though the days are slowly getting brighter, it is still very important to keep your exterior lights on at night to deter crime. This one step of flipping a switch or switching to “dusk-to-dawn” lighting to have adequate lighting in your driveways and at the main entrances to your home can easily save you thousands of dollars. Many think that running lights all night hike up your electrical bill but with new LED lighting their high

efficiency has brought the cost down significantly.

The National Institute of Crime Prevention states the “benefits of property lighting” are:

- Less criminal activity
- Improvement in quality of life
- Improvement in perception of safety
- Increased pedestrian activity
- Increased property values

The recommendation is to have a light fixture at each door into the home or garage. These fixtures should be partial to full cutoff lamps to direct light adequately and deter light glare. Door entrance lighting on the side or back yard of a home can be on a motion sensor to be activated only by movement. Something important to be mindful of is light trespassing into your neighbors’ homes. Some community neighborhood issues are about a neighbor with too much light that enters other neighbors’ windows. Many may be surprised that some cities have light trespass city ordinances. This is why full cut off light fixtures are highly recommended. See image to the right about light trespass and how to properly direct light with little to no glare.



As important as lighting is for safety always remember to consult a professional and review Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) standards.

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.

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!

Online information of activity in your neighborhood – [CommunityCrimeMap.com](#)

Thank you for working for safer neighborhoods!



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

