

# Waunakee Police Department

## Newsletter

### December 2016



### Crime Prevention/Holiday Safety Tips

The Holiday season is here. This time of year we often have busy schedules that include traveling to places for family gatherings, shopping and other festivities. The following are some reminders to keep you and your property safe.

- Even though you are rushed and thinking about a thousand things, stay alert to your surroundings, criminals often target people who are distracted.
- Travel on populated, well-lit streets. If possible, avoid traveling alone.
- Don't drink and drive. If you plan on celebrating with alcohol, plan on staying over or plan on having a designated driver.
- Do not leave packages or valuables on the seat of your car. This creates a temptation for thieves. If you must leave something in the car, lock it in the trunk or put it out of sight.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, "con-artists" may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.
- When leaving home for an extended time, have a neighbor or family member watch your house and pick up your newspapers and mail. (The Waunakee Police Department offers a Vacation watch service.)
- Create an up-to-date home inventory including make, model, serial numbers, other detailed descriptions, and photographs of items of value (including jewelry). This inventory should be kept somewhere safe.
- It is not uncommon for criminals to take advantage of the generosity of people during the holiday season by soliciting donations door-to-door for charitable causes although no charity is involved. Check up on the charity before you decide to donate.

**Members of the Waunakee Police Department would like to wish you and yours a safe, happy holiday season and a wonderful New Year.**



## Snow Removal

Reminder: It is the responsibility of the property owner to clear sidewalks of snow and ice within 24 hours of the end of the snow or ice event.



## Alternate Side Parking

Odd-Even side parking is currently in effect and will end April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017. Alternate side parking is regulated between 2:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m. on Waunakee Streets. Park your vehicles so it will be on the even numbered side of the street on even numbered mornings and on the odd side of the street on odd numbered mornings unless posted otherwise.

Citations not paid within 10 days of issuance result in higher fines. Citations not paid within 28 days of issuance will result in vehicle registration being suspended.



We continue to have Waunakee residents report they have been contacted by individuals who have attempted to scam them out of money. Below are some scams that have been reported the the WNPD recently.

### Computer tech support scam

You receive a call out of the blue claiming that your computer has a virus and that the caller can help you get rid of it. The callers often falsely claim to represent Microsoft or a local tech support company to gain your trust. They tell you that they can remove the (non-existent) virus from your computer for a fee. The caller asks you to download software from the internet that grants them remote access to your system.

If you allow these scammers to access your computer, they can load any number of malicious software programs onto your machine and they may access your files as well. If you give them your credit card number to pay for their “services,” you can expect to get ripped off there too. A recent victim of this scam was requested to purchase an iTunes gift card for payment. This is typically a phone-based scam, but sometimes it is introduced as an online pop-up message which states your computer is infected by a virus. The message on your computer screen will request for you to call a specific phone number for help.

*What to do:*

- Hang up the phone or close the pop-up.

- A tech support representative (Microsoft or otherwise) will never contact you to tell you that your computer has a virus.
- If you question whether your computer is actually infected, run a system scan using the antivirus protection software on your computer. Keep your antivirus software updated in order to protect you from the latest malware.
- If you need additional help, take your computer to a local, trusted tech support business.

### **Grand Prize Grocery Scam**

A Waunakee resident recently reported they received a check in the mail for \$8980.29, for allegedly being the winner of the “Grand Prize Grocery Giveaway.” The winner however was requested to send in a payment to collect the winnings. Thankfully this resident did not fall for this scam. Always remember, legitimate sweepstakes don’t make you pay a fee or buy something to enter or improve your chances of winning — that includes paying taxes, shipping and handling charges, or processing fees to get your prize. There’s also no reason to give someone your checking account number or credit card number in response to a sweepstakes promotion.

### **Grandparent Scam**

Most commonly the scammer will pretend to be a grandchild with the scammer attempting to confuse the facts, create panic, and get the grandparent to act on emotion. They want the grandparent to wire money quickly without thinking it through or asking questions. The scammer’s message will almost always include an urgent situation – I have been arrested, or mugged, or am in the hospital – Please help!

The scammer’s story tends to work best if they can convince the grandparent that they (the supposed grandchild) are traveling overseas or even in another state. This situation allows the scammer to confuse the facts about the local laws, act like the phone connection is poor, or to justify why the money must be sent by wire transfer.

Once the grandparent wires the money, more calls may follow, asking for even more money. With this trick, the scammer will likely involve other callers to pose as police, attorneys, doctors, or bail bondsmen reconfirming the story and the claim for more money. With the advancements in technology and social media sites, scammers are finding it easier to acquire personal information on the person they are claiming to be and/or of the grandparents they are calling.

The Bureau of Consumer Protection offers the following steps to help prevent you from becoming a victim to such scams:

- Be suspicious of anyone who calls unexpectedly asking for money.
- Stay calm and do not make quick decisions or react without thinking about the situation.
- Never wire money based on a request made over the phone or in an e-mail... especially overseas. Wiring money is like giving cash – once you send it, you will not get it back. Same for cashier’s checks and personal checks – Do Not Send!
- Resist the urge or pressure to act quickly. Scammers want you to send money quickly so that you do not have time to verify their claims.
- Never provide the caller with credit card numbers or other banking information.
- Verify the emergency, check the story out with someone else in your family or circle of friends, even if you have been told to keep it a secret.
- Research the situation by contacting law enforcement or the hospital to verify your family member is there. If they are not, report the situation.
- If you attempt to contact your grandchild directly, use a number that you know is theirs and not the number the caller provided.
- Verify the person’s identity by asking questions that a stranger could not possibly answer. Scammers may have some personal information on you or your loved ones.
- Do not fill in blank spots. Refrain from mentioning other family member’s names and personal information.

- If you are ever unsure what to do, contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection or the Waunakee Police Department for assistance.
- Encourage family and friends to not put personal information on social media sites. Scammers and thieves watch for people to list dates and locations of trips they are on, or going to be on.

For more information please visit the Wisconsin Department of Trade and Consumer protection at [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/News\\_Media/ConsumerAlerts.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/News_Media/ConsumerAlerts.aspx)

### **Online Sale Scam**

Although most online transactions are safe, you should use caution when selling items on websites such as Craigslist. Unfortunately, some people using these websites make promises regarding payments through PayPal but do not follow through with the payment. We recently investigated a scam where the victim was sent a fake receipt which looked like it was from PayPal but it was not. Look for common warning signs that someone may be trying to scam you when you are buying or selling online.

- The buyer can't meet in person because of a number of reasons (i.e., they are a soldier in Iraq/Afghanistan, etc.).
- The buyer requested you send the item to their "shipping agent." (Some other individual)
- The buyer offered you more money than you were asking.
- The buyer asked you to send money through Western Union or MoneyGram to the "shipping agent."
- The buyer only sends you text messages and won't speak to you on the phone.
- If you received an email seemingly from PayPal that states you received money, confirm with your bank that you received the funds before shipping the item.



## **Snowmobiles**

Snowmobiles are only allowed to be operated on designated trails or private property with the owner's consent while in the village limits. If the snowmobile is being operated on private property and not on a designated trail, the snowmobile cannot be operated between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. The speed limit is 15 mph throughout the village.

For a map of the Waunakee trails go to: <http://www.waunakee.com/DocumentCenter/Home/View/490>



## Living with Urban Wildlife

Urban settings like Waunakee typically offer accessible food, water and shelter that create thriving wildlife. Some wildlife species such as deer, cottontail rabbits, Canada geese and raccoons have adapted to people and are often seen in urban environments. Other species such as coyotes, red foxes and skunks are common in urban areas but are rarely seen. This sometimes causes conflicts between humans and animals. Below are a few tips to avoid nuisance animals damaging your property.

- Feeding causes wild animals to become accustomed to people which can pose a human health and safety risk and endanger the animal.
- Congregating wildlife in one area by feeding allows for diseases to spread more easily and may bring carnivores into close proximity to people.
- Some foods are not good for wildlife. For instance poor quality diets of corn and hay in winter may kill some deer, chocolate can kill members of the dog family like coyotes and foxes and bread provides little nutrition for ducks, geese and other birds.
- Remove all sources of food from your yard, especially pet food and treats.
- Encircle the bottom of your porch with fencing to prevent animals from denning underneath.
- Screen window wells, chimneys, stove pipes and any vents with wire mesh or commercially made grates.

The Waunakee Police Department occasionally receives calls about nuisance wildlife for a number of reasons. We are happy to assist you but be aware we are not professionals in wildlife management. If you have questions or are experiencing nuisance problems with wildlife species other than bears, wolves and birds, and would like to speak with someone with more experience in dealing with wildlife: please contact the DNR service center 266-2621 or 275-3266. The local DNR staff will provide advice and assistance over the phone to help you legally solve your nuisance problems. You can also visit the WIDNR website for more information. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/damage.html>



## Facebook

Please “like” our Waunakee Police Department Facebook page. We provide information regarding local events, safety tips and press releases for major incidents. You can also send us your questions through private messages and tips on any recent crimes that have taken place.

## Newsletter ideas or topics

If you have a topic or idea you would like us to consider for future Waunakee Police Newsletter, please email the idea for consideration to the address below.

Questions can be sent to [newsletter@waunakeepd.org](mailto:newsletter@waunakeepd.org). Questions submitted may be featured in future newsletters. The person submitting the question will not be identified.