

# Missoula County Neighborhood Watch

## Newsletter



**Volume 4Q2020**

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## Neighborhood Watch: Proactive Crime Prevention

‘Neighborhood Watch’ is an organization of concerned citizens who look out for their neighborhoods and each other. Initiated in the 1960s, Neighborhood Watch is one of the oldest and most effective crime prevention concepts in the USA. Missoula Neighborhood Watch focuses on 1) observation and reporting of suspicious activity and 2) training citizens in ways to make their homes and neighborhoods safer.

Neighborhood Watch in Missoula County consists of General Members and a Board of Directors. Membership is open to all citizens of Missoula County. Missoula Office of Neighborhoods, the Police Department and the Sheriff’s Office play active roles in Neighborhood Watch.

# Crime Report - Cybersecurity\*



While considering your Cybersecurity (October is Cybersecurity Awareness month) also consider the tactics of scammers.

We have seen an increase in callers reporting phone or online scams. Recently we took multiple complaints of someone claiming to be an agent with the Social Security Office. The caller (scammer) states the someone has stolen your identity and is charging items in your name and you now have Warrants. To avoid arrest they request that the individual send money from their banks. This is the most recent reported scam of many in the last few months.

The FCC offers the following tips to help you protect yourself from scams, including coronavirus scams:

- Do not respond to calls or texts from unknown numbers, or any others that appear suspicious.
- Never share your personal or financial information via email, text messages, or over the phone.
- Be cautious if you're being pressured to share any information or make a payment immediately.
- Scammers often spoof phone numbers to trick you into answering or responding. Remember that government agencies will never call you to ask for personal information or money.
- Do not click any links in a text message. If a friend sends you a text with a suspicious link that seems out of character, call them to make sure they weren't hacked.
- Always check on a charity (for example, by calling or looking at its actual website) before donating.

\*Information above is courtesy of Information Officer Jeannette Smith of the Missoula County Sheriff's Office

# Crime Report – Hunting Season and Bike Registration\*

## Hunting Season - Keep your Gear Safe and Record Serial Numbers

With hunting season beginning, this is a friendly reminder not to leave any of your bows, firearms, packs/gear in your vehicle or where they are easily accessible/visible. In the past week alone, there was more than 35 incidents where occupied structures or vehicles were entered and items of value were stolen with firearms and hunting gear being some of the popular items. Also, remember to write down any serial numbers for all of your items, especially firearms in the event they are taken. Having a serial number drastically improves the chances of recovering the stolen items.

## Project 529: Protection for your Bike

Project 529 is a website that allows you to register/search/report stolen bikes in Missoula. For more information, see:

<https://project529.com/garage/organizations/missoulapolicedepartment/landing>

Simple chains and cheap locks are easily defeated. Do some research and invest in a good quality lock to keep your bike safe.

# Smart911\*

## Smart911 saves time and saves lives

- **Over 80%** of calls made to 9-1-1 come from mobile phones. When you dial 9-1-1 from a mobile phone, the 9-1-1 call takers have very little information to help you – only your phone number and a very general sense of your location.
- This is a serious problem in an emergency when seconds count, particularly if you or your loved ones have medical conditions, or are unable to safely speak.
- With Smart911, you can provide 9-1-1 call takers and first responders critical information you want them to know in any kind of emergency.
- When you call 9-1-1, your Smart911 Safety Profile displays on the 9-1-1 screen and the 9-1-1 call takers can view your addresses, medical information, home information, description of pets and vehicles, and emergency contacts. You can provide as much or as little information as you like.
- Smart911 is a national service meaning your Smart911 Safety Profile travels with you and is visible to any participating 9-1-1 center nationwide.

## Always Be Notified with Smart911

- With Alerts powered by Smart911, you can sign up for notifications from your community to keep you informed of weather, traffic, and other emergencies. Hear immediately about life-saving actions you must take to keep yourself and your family safe.

Find Smart911 at <https://www.smart911.com/> or download the Smart911 app.

\*Information above is from <https://safety.smart911.com/how-it-works> and <https://www.smart911.com/>

# Customer Service Scams\*

Take care when looking online for customer service phone numbers. Online searches for product support or technical help can trap the unwary. Here are some tips to keep yourself protected:

1. Go directly to the company's website to find its customer service number.
2. Don't ask devices such as Alexa or Siri to find customer service information.
3. Check the URL for misspellings or other oddities.
4. Never agree to pay for a service that should be free.
5. Don't give anyone remote access to your computer.

AARP provides help if you have questions related to scams:

1. AARP Fraud Watch Network helpline: 877-908-3360.
2. The latest fraud news and advice can be found at <https://www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork>

\*The above information was taken from the September 2020 AARP Bulletin, page 32-33, and is used with permission.