



Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office Neighborhood Watch Newsletter

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Sheriff J. Grayson Robinson

Preparing For Winter

With winter just around the corner it is important time to plan for the hazards and dangers of the winter season. Below are some safety tips to help you prepare for the coming winter:



BEFORE the storm...

- Be familiar with winter storm warning messages.
- Service snow removal equipment and have rock salt on hand to melt ice on walkways and kitty litter to generate temporary traction.
- Make sure you have sufficient heating fuel; regular fuel sources may be cut off.

Winterize your home

- Insulate walls and attic.
- Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows.
- Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic from the inside.

Have safe emergency heating equipment available

- Fireplace with ample supply of wood.
- Small, well-vented, wood, coal, or camp stove with fuel.
- Portable space heaters. (Kerosene Heaters: Check with your local fire department on the legality of using kerosene heaters in your community. Use only the correct fuel for your unit and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Refuel outdoors only, and only when cool. Keep your kerosene heater at least three feet away from furniture and other flammable objects.)

Keep pipes from freezing

- Wrap pipes in insulation or layers of old newspapers.
- Cover the newspapers with plastic to keep out moisture.
- Let faucets drip a little to avoid freezing.
- Know how to shut off water valves.

Have disaster supplies on hand, in case the power goes out

(Refer to your [72-Hour Family Preparedness Kit](#))

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Portable, battery-operated, radio and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- One-week supply of food (include items that do not require refrigeration or cooking in case the power is shut off)
- Manual can opener
- One-week supply of essential prescription medications
- Extra blankets and sleeping bags
- Fire extinguisher (A-B-C type)

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MISSION STATEMENT

Committed to Quality Service With an Emphasis on Integrity,
Professionalism and Community Spirit

Preparing For Winter continued

Develop an emergency communication plan.

- In case family members are separated from one another during a winter storm (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together.
- Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact."
- After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.
- Make sure that all family members know how to respond after a severe winter storm.
- Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1, police, or fire department, and which radio station to tune to for emergency information.

DURING the storm...

If Indoors --

- Stay indoors and dress warmly.
- Conserve fuel.
- Lower the thermostat to 65 degrees during the day and 55 degrees at night. Close off unused rooms.
- If the pipes freeze, remove any insulation or layers of newspapers and wrap pipes in rags.
- Completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they were most exposed to the cold (or where the cold was most likely to penetrate).
- Listen to the radio or television to get the latest information.

If Outdoors --

- Dress warmly.
- Wear loose-fitting, layered, lightweight clothing. Layers can be removed to prevent perspiration and chill. Outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent. Mittens are warmer than gloves because fingers generate warmth when they touch each other.
- Stretch before you go out.
- If you go out to shovel snow, do a few stretching exercises to warm up your body. Also take frequent breaks.
- Cover your mouth.
- Protect your lungs from extremely cold air by covering your mouth when outdoors. Try not to speak unless absolutely necessary.



- Avoid overexertion. Cold weather puts an added strain on the heart. Unaccustomed exercise such as shoveling snow or pushing a car can bring on a heart attack or make other medical conditions worse. Be aware of symptoms of dehydration.
- Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.
- Keep dry.
- Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses all of its insulating value and transmits heat rapidly.
- Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance--infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities.

Wind Chill

• "Wind chill" is a calculation of how cold it feels outside when the effects of temperature and wind speed are combined. A strong wind combined with a temperature of just below freezing can have the same effect as a still air temperature about 35 degrees colder.

• Winter Storm Watches and Warnings

A winter storm watch indicates that severe winter weather may affect your area. A winter storm warning indicates that severe winter weather conditions are definitely on the way.

• A blizzard warning means that large amounts of falling or blowing snow and sustained winds of at least 35 miles per hour are expected for several hours.

• Frostbite is a severe reaction to cold exposure that can permanently damage its victims. A loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in fingers, toes, or nose and ear lobes are symptoms of frostbite.

• Hypothermia is a condition brought on when the body temperature drops to less than 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Symptoms of hypothermia include uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory lapses, frequent stumbling, drowsiness, and exhaustion.

• If frostbite or hypothermia is suspected, begin warming the person slowly and seek immediate medical assistance. Warm the person's trunk (mid-body) first. Use your own body heat to help. Arms and legs should be warmed last because stimulation of the limbs can drive cold blood toward the heart and lead to heart failure. Put person in dry clothing and wrap their entire body in a blanket.



The holiday season can be one of the highest crime times of the year, please take the following precautions to ensure the safety of you and your family:

Before You Shop

- Avoid carrying a purse. Use a fanny pack or deep pockets in clothing to carry what you need.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Pay for purchases with a check, credit card, or debit card when possible.
- Be extremely careful using ATM machines. Use them in populated places and be constantly paying attention to what's going on around you.
- Teach children to go to a store clerk or security guard and ask for help if they become separated. They should never go into the parking lot alone
- Leave the mall well before closing time. This way, there is greater assurance you will walk out with other people. There is safety in numbers.
- Avoid shopping until you are exhausted. You are more alert when you are less tired.
- When hurried, or in a crowded shop, make sure you get all forms of I.D. and credit cards returned to you before leaving
- Mall security can escort you to your car upon request if you have too many packages or if you are leaving the mall after closing.
- When leaving, be aware of your surroundings. When approaching your car look around, underneath, and inside your car for anything suspicious. Hiding in the parking lot is a common practice for criminals and they will take you by surprise.
- When leaving, have your keys in your hand and ready to use.
- Keep your packages stored out of sight in the trunk of your car.

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave your house or apartment, even for a few minutes.
- Be wary of solicitations for charitable donations. They may attempt to take advantage of people's generosity during the holidays. Ask for identification, how donated funds are used and if contributions are tax deductible.
- If you are suspicious about a solicitor's behavior contact the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office or your local law enforcement agency.



While Shopping

- If you have to carry a purse, carry it close to your body and always zipped. Do not put it in a shopping cart.
- Park strategically close to the mall is optimum. Park in well-lit areas.
- Know exactly where you parked your car. Make a mental note or write it down so you will know exactly where to go when you leave the mall.



At Home

- Keep gifts hidden from view through outside windows.
- After opening gifts, breakdown cardboard boxes of expensive electronics and fancy stores and put them in plastic bags to hide the fact you have valuable items in your home.

Don't Be A Statistic! Help Prevent Auto Theft

Auto theft is a crime of opportunity. One of the biggest problems facing the Sheriff's Office is "puffers". What are puffers? Puffers are cars left running, unattended. Many times in the winter, a person will leave their car running outside their residence allowing it to warm up. Some Puffers are cars left outside of stores or businesses with the intention of keeping the car warm in the cold weather. After all, you're only going to be inside for a minute, right? Well, a minute is all a car thief needs. Don't become a statistic. The good news is, as with many crimes of opportunity there are things you can do to decrease your chance of becoming a victim.

- Don't leave your car running unattended. (Did you know that pursuant to CRS 42-4-1206 it is illegal in Colorado to leave your keys in a running vehicle?)
- Always close and secure your garage door no matter the time of day. Thieves are always looking for the split second they need to take something you worked hard for.

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Halloween Safety

Halloween is a fun time for kids however, it is also an important time to be extra vigilant for possible safety hazards. Some tips to make Halloween fun and safe for your children include:

Costume safety

Choose a costume made of flame retardant material. Costumes should be short enough so that they don't cause your child to trip and fall. For good visibility, add some reflective tape to the costume or bag he/she is using to carry candy or make/choose a costume made of bright material that is visible in the dark. Masks should fit securely and allow your child to see well and not hinder visibility. If using **face paint**, make sure it is non-toxic and hypoallergenic. Knives, swords and other props should be made of a flexible material, so that they don't pose a hazard if fallen upon.

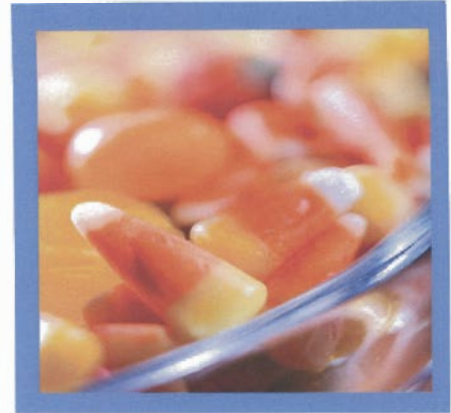
Trick-or-Treating safety

Children should be well supervised by an adult when trick-or-treating. Older children should trick-or-treat in large groups, in well known neighborhoods. Carry a flashlight. Never enter anyone's house. Walk, don't run. Stick to well lit houses in familiar neighborhoods only. Follow traffic signals and rules of the road. Drive slowly. Avoid taking shortcuts across backyards or alleys. Stick to the sidewalks of well lit streets.

Candy safety

Instruct your children to bring all candy home before eating it so that you can carefully inspect it for tampering. Children shouldn't snack while they're out trick-or-treating, before parents have a chance to inspect the goodies. To help prevent children from munching, give them a snack or light meal before they go – don't send them out on an empty stomach. Tell children not to accept (and especially not to eat) anything that isn't commercially wrapped. Throw out candy or treats that are homemade, unwrapped or if they appear to have been tampered with (pinholes in wrappers, torn wrappers, etc.).

Parents of young children should remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies or small toys. Wash all fresh fruit thoroughly, inspect it for holes, including small punctures, and cut it open before allowing children to eat it.



General safety tips

Homeowners should prepare their home for trick-or-treaters by removing obstacles from the front yard, restraining dogs and other animals, and lighting the house well. Provide treats that are individually wrapped candy or offer kids nonfood treats, such as stickers and erasers.

Artificial lights and candles are a safer alternative to real candles with a flame that can pose a fire hazard.

If going to an adult Halloween party, make sure that you don't drink and drive. Use a designated driver if alcohol is being consumed.



Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office

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Auto Theft Continued

- Do not leave keys in your vehicle. Even if you lock your car it only takes a second for a car thief to break the window and make off with your car.
- Remove your valuables from your vehicle when you're not in it. (This is most important when shopping at a mall or grocery store).
- Always lock your doors. (A car thief will look for the cars that aren't locked first because those are the easiest targets).
- Report all suspicious persons and activities to the Sheriff's Office immediately.

There are no guarantees in life, however following these simple safety suggestions will help to reduce the chances that you may become the victim of an auto theft.

Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office

To report a crime

303-795-4711