



THE INDEPENDENCE
Neighborhood Watch Newsletter

January 2012

Neighborhood Watch Members,

A Neighborhood Watch group should not be complicated or difficult to maintain. The idea is based on maintaining cooperation within neighborhoods and with the police department to keep our city a safer place in which to live.

I have spoken with various block captains and individuals who have expressed frustration and confusion over some of the current requirements of the Neighborhood Watch program. My goal for **2012** is to revamp the citywide program making it easier for new watch groups to start and register and to simplify the requirements for Captains who do not have the free time to dedicate to some of the administrative aspects of the program. In an effort to streamline some of the confusion and frustrations, we are making the previous participation levels still optional but not a major focus of the program. In fact, the revamped program will have Bronze (level II), Silver (level III) and Gold (level IV) optional participation levels. Level I participation will be basically starting a group and registering it with the department. (see new guidebook on the neighborhood watch website for details. www.indepmo.org/neighborhoodwatch)

We will require that registered groups have a maximum number of 25-30 residences per group, unless the group is registered with the approval of a home owners association or is in an organized residential environment such as an apartment complex or mobile home park. These previously established organizations have proven to make the Neighborhood Watch a great auxiliary piece. It is unrealistic to believe that a block captain can or should be responsible for more than 25-30 homes. Claiming more area than can be monitored and realistically partnered with also limits the opportunity for other interested persons to start their own successful watch group. For example, I have been asked by a resident of a neighborhood how he could start a neighborhood watch group in his area. I later found out that his street was already “claimed” by a large group but the interested resident was totally unaware of this. This is an example of an area that is too large. Do not bite off more than you can chew..

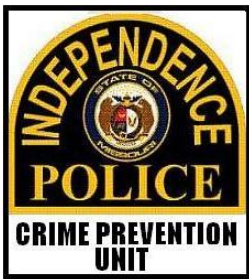
This residence limit may not be popular at first, but it does coincide with other city neighborhood watch programs and is not simply my idea. The idea of a “block watch” is based on small geographic areas, not entire neighborhoods where organization is difficult to maintain. Many larger groups will have to divide their areas and register separately. However, we recommend that neighboring blocks interact often, and even sharing meetings.

We will use only ONE registration form per watch group, per year. This is the only mandated form to submit to our office. If groups want to submit the optional participation levels form, this will be accepted and greatly appreciated. Each watch group will receive an award for the Bronze, Silver and Gold participation levels, annually. The Block Captain will be listed on the group’s certificate but only one award per group will be given. Of course, Block Captains may award distinguished neighborhood watchers in the group. This is highly encouraged. Please contact me with any questions.

Remain Vigilant,

Officer John Syme

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Crime Prevention Unit Tips

January: Winter Safety for your Home and Vehicle

As winter weather approaches, residents need to be prepared. Families can take actions now that will help prevent unneeded hardships and possible life-threatening situations as hazardous cold weather approaches.

Residents can prepare for the winter storm by taking the following precautions: Prepare for possible isolation in your home. Ensure you have enough food to sustain your family for at least 72 hours. Make sure everyone in your home has a warm coat, gloves and hat. Check on elderly or disabled friends, neighbors or employees. If you have to drive, follow the tips on page 3. Keep your gas tank full. Keep your cell phone charged. If temperatures remain below freezing for a day or more, leave a faucet dripping so water won't freeze in the pipes and open cabinet doors below sinks.



Prepare a disaster supplies kit for your HOME: (1.) Three-day supply of water (one gallon of water per person per day for drinking and hygiene). (2.) Three-day supply of non perishable, high-energy food and a manual can opener. (3.) First aid kit and essential medications. (4.) Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio. (5.) Flashlight, and extra batteries. (6.) Extra warm clothing, including boots, mittens, and a hat. (7.) Copies of important documents (birth certificate, title/deed to home, insurance policies, etc) in a water-proof container.

Make sure your elderly loved ones/neighbors are prepared for the storm. The ability to feel a change in temperature decreases with age, and older people are more susceptible to health problems caused by the cold. For anyone over 65 years of age, place an easy-to-read thermometer in an indoor location where you or they can check it or see it frequently. Residents who are on an oxygen generator make sure you've contacted your oxygen supplier for extra oxygen tanks in case there's a power outage and the oxygen generator quits. Also, if your medications are running low and you might need a refill, do it today and tomorrow.

Prepare a disaster supplies kit for your VEHICLE: (1.) Blankets or sleeping bags (2.) Jumper cables (3.) Fire extinguisher (5 lb., A-B-C type) (4.) Compass and road maps. (5.) Shovel (6.) Tire repair kit and pump. (7.) Flares (8.) Extra clothing to keep dry and gloves. (9.) Sack of sand or cat litter (for tire traction) (10.) Tow rope or chain.

Safety Tips In the Home

Make sure you have working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms properly installed in your home. Alarms should be installed in a central location outside each separate sleeping area. Test your smoke alarms monthly and install fresh batteries annually. Give space heaters their space; keep combustible material at least three feet away from the heater. Keep all combustible materials off of floor furnaces. Remove any combustibles from central heater closets. Use a metal grate to hold the logs inside the fireplace. Use an approved metal or glass screen in front of the fireplace to prevent embers from flying out of the firebox. Remember to open the damper before lighting the fireplace. Never use your oven to heat your home.

Safety Tips Outside the Home

If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle, generator, or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow. During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up. Only use barbecue grills – which can produce CO – outside. Never use them in the home, garage, or near building openings as a heat source

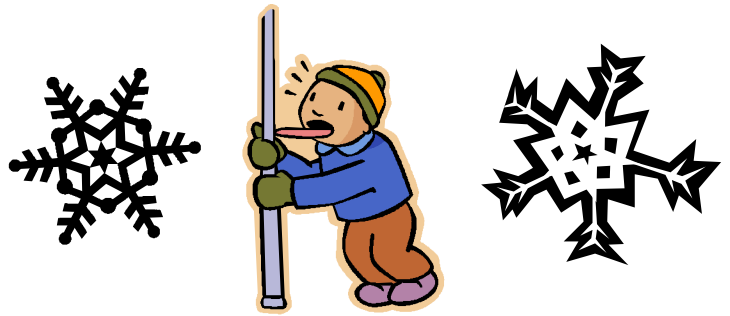
Tips for DRIVING in Snow & Ice

We see a lot of vehicle crashes around Independence during the winter months, which are partially due to the snowy and icy road conditions. The best advice for driving in bad winter weather is not to drive at all, if you can avoid it. If you must go out wait until the snow plows and sanding trucks have had a chance to do their work, and allow yourself extra time to reach your destination.

- **Decrease your speed** and leave yourself plenty of room to stop. You should allow at least three times more space than usual between you and the car in front of you.
- **Brake gently** to avoid skidding. If your wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake.
- **Turn on your lights** to increase your visibility to other motorists.
- **Use low gears** to keep traction, especially on hills.
- **Don't use cruise control** or overdrive on icy roads.
- **Be especially careful** on bridges, overpasses and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.
- **Don't pass snow plows** and sanding trucks. The drivers have limited visibility, and you're likely to find the road in front of them worse than the road behind them.
- **Don't assume your vehicle can handle all conditions**. Even four-wheel and front-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble on winter roads.

If your rear wheels skid...

- Take your foot off the accelerator.
- Steer in the direction you want the front wheels to go. If your rear wheels are sliding left, steer left. If they're sliding right, steer right.
- If your rear wheels start sliding the other way as you recover, ease the steering toward that side. You might have to steer left and right a few times to get your vehicle completely under control.
- If you have standard brakes, pump them gently.
- If you have anti-lock brakes (ABS), do not pump the brakes. Apply steady pressure to the brakes. You will feel the brakes pulse—this is normal.



(Official Safety Tip: Do not place your tongue on a frozen pole)

If your vehicle gets stuck...

- Do not spin your wheels. This will only dig you in deeper.
- Turn your wheels from side to side a few times to push snow out of the way.
- Use a light touch on the gas to ease your car out.
- Use a shovel to clear snow away from the wheels and the underside of the car.
- Pour sand, kitty litter, gravel or salt in the path of the wheels, to help traction.

E-mail us your articles
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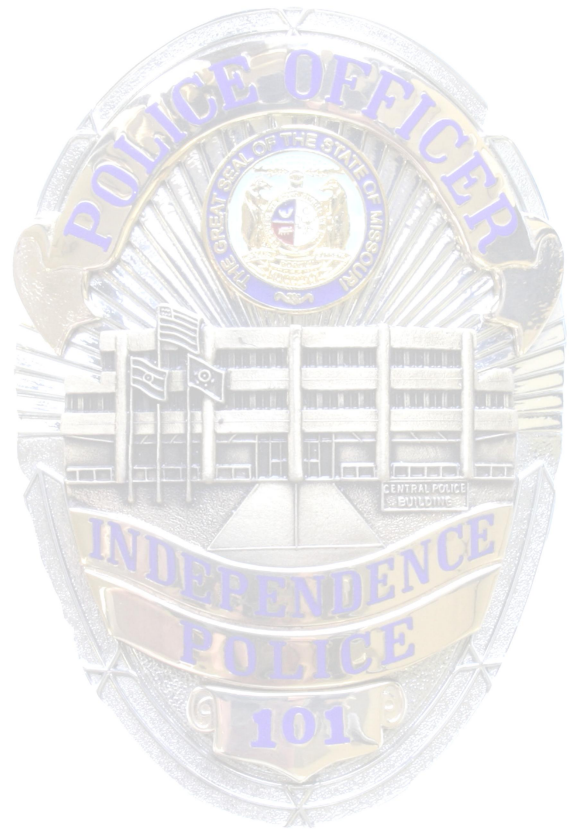
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Return Service Requested



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH
INDEPENDENCE, MO



"We Call The Police"



"Keeping President Harry S. Truman's Hometown Safe"

Congratulations 2011 *Level III* Watch Groups

- The Bedford Coventry Safety Hawks*
- The Cottage Eagle Watchers*
- The Country Meadows Meadowlarks*
- The Crescent Whistleblowers*
- The Glendale Screaming Eagles*
- The Hardy Bunch*
- The Maywood Watchdogs*
- The Park Avenue Angels*
- The Ralston Lookouts*
- The Susquehannah Village Neighborhood Watch*
- The Victorian Vigilantes*

Upcoming

Captains' Meetings

Truman High School
7:00 PM, Room 240

- January 3rd
- February 14th (*2nd Tuesday)
- March 13th (*2nd Tuesday)
- April 17th (*3rd Tuesday)