

## Munford Crime Prevention Newsletter - September 2024



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## September Driver Safety Tips

**Tip#31 Look both ways.** Pedestrians are required to use crosswalks where available and should cross the street only at intersections. Pedestrians are strongly warned about the hazards of crossing the road between intersections and/or stepping out into the roadway from between parked cars. Tennessee Law TCA – 55-8-134

**Tip#32 Just how good are your brakes?** Drivers should always allow a safe driving distance between vehicles. You should never follow too closely. Proper driving distance will allow drivers to slow and stop their vehicle whenever conditions require. Weather, traffic and roadway conditions should always be considered when determining what a safe distance is. It is recommended that you keep a 2 to 4 second gap between you and another vehicle. Even though Tennessee law does not require inspections – you should have tires and brakes inspected periodically. Tennessee Law TCA – 55-9-205

**Tip#33 It is against the law to drive off the main traveled portion of the highway.** Emergency lanes are not designed for vehicle travel. Do not use the

emergency lane as a turn lane unless the area and pavement are clearly marked for that purpose. A vehicle traveling through the emergency lane creates hazards for vehicles that are making proper and legal right turns off the roadway. Tennessee Law TCA – 55-8-115

## Gift Card Scams

Gift card fraud is a common scam where criminals trick victims into purchasing or using gift cards for fraudulent purposes. Here are some tips to help you avoid falling victim to gift card fraud:

### **1. Be Wary of Unsolicited Requests:**

If someone contacts you unexpectedly (via phone, email, text, or social media) and asks you to purchase gift cards, it's likely a scam. Legitimate businesses, government agencies, and service providers will never ask for payment through gift cards.

### **2. Inspect Gift Cards Before Purchase:**

When buying a gift card in-store, inspect it carefully. Look for any signs of tampering, such as scratched-off codes, exposed PIN numbers, or damaged packaging. If anything seems suspicious, choose a different card and report the tampered one to store management.

### **3. Only Buy from Trusted Sources:**

Purchase gift cards directly from reputable stores, retailers, or the official websites of the issuing brands. Avoid buying gift cards from online auction sites, classified ads, or other unauthorized third-party sellers, as these cards could be stolen or fake.

### **4. Use Gift Cards Promptly:**

Try to use your gift cards as soon as possible. The longer you wait, the greater the risk that fraudsters could gain access to the card's balance, especially if the card was tampered with before purchase.

### **5. Keep the Receipt:**

Always keep the receipt after purchasing a gift card. If you encounter any issues, such as a balance discrepancy or a card not working, the receipt will be essential for resolving the problem with the retailer or issuing company.

### **6. Protect the Card's Information:**

Never share the card number or PIN with anyone you do not know or trust. Once a fraudster has this information, they can easily drain the card's balance. Also, avoid taking pictures of gift cards and posting them online, as this could expose the card details to scammers.

### **7. Be Cautious of Scams Targeting Gift Card Holders:**

Be aware of common scams where criminals ask you to pay for services or debts with gift cards. If someone pressures you to pay with a gift card, it's almost certainly a scam. Hang up or ignore the request and report it to the authorities.

**8. Monitor Gift Card Balances:**

Regularly check the balance of your gift cards, especially if you don't plan to use them immediately. Some issuers allow you to monitor your card's balance online or through their customer service line. If you notice any unauthorized charges or a depleted balance, report it right away.

**9. Educate Family and Friends:**

Ensure that your family and friends are aware of gift card scams, especially elderly individuals who are often targeted. Educating others can help prevent them from becoming victims.

**10. Report Fraudulent Activity:**

If you suspect or experience gift card fraud, report it to the retailer where the card was purchased, the company that issued the card, and local law enforcement. You can also report gift card fraud to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Better Business Bureau (BBB).



This Amazon gift card was purchased at a grocery store by a Tipton County resident. You would think you could trust such a purchase at a well known location. The code was obliterated so that when the card was purchased, only the criminal had the code. They carefully placed the protective strip back over the obliterated code so it was undetectable.

The individual who purchased this card intended to use it immediately. When this fraud was found 2 hours after purchase, this gentleman went directly back to the store and completed a "KCRC Case" at the service counter at the store. Had this card been given to someone else, it might have been months later that the card was discovered and the balance used. The purchaser would have been stuck.

**Card Tampering Technique:** These fraudsters focus on gift cards openly displayed on store racks. They meticulously scratch off the protective layer covering the PIN or barcode, carefully record the numbers, and then expertly reseal the packaging, often using perfectly matched stickers. Once an unsuspecting customer purchases and activates the card, the scammer has all the information they need to make unauthorized online purchases, draining the card's value.

## Warning Signs: How to Spot a Gift Card Scam

**Scratched-off PIN:** If the protective coating over the PIN looks disturbed or shows any signs of tampering, consider it a major red flag. Avoid purchasing any card that appears to have been compromised.

**Loose Packaging or Damage:** Carefully examine the gift card's packaging for any indications of it being resealed or for any noticeable damage. Trust your instincts and steer clear of any cards that don't look pristine.

**Suspicious Requests:** No legitimate company, government agency, or service provider will ever request payment through gift cards. If someone instructs you to resolve a debt, pay a fine, or handle any kind of transaction using a gift card, immediately terminate the communication—it's a scam.

**Too Good to Be True Deals:** Be skeptical of emails, text messages, or websites promising steep discounts on gift cards—these could be fraudulent traps designed to steal your money.

## How to Protect Yourself from Gift Card Fraud

**Inspect the Card:** Before making a purchase, carefully scrutinize the card for any signs of tampering. Look for scratches on the PIN, damage to the packaging, or anything else that seems suspicious.

**Trust Your Gut:** If something feels off, don't ignore your intuition. Walk away from any deal or offer that seems too good to be true or raises any red flags.

We will emphasize these three points (covered earlier):

- **Buy Securely:** Opt to purchase gift cards from behind the service counter or from a secure locked case. Avoid picking cards from open displays where they can be easily tampered with.
- **Use Quickly:** Once you have a gift card in your possession, it's wise to use the funds as soon as possible. The longer a card remains unused, the greater the opportunity for scammers to potentially target it.
- **Keep Receipts and Records:** Always retain the receipts of your gift card purchases and diligently track the card balances. This will help you quickly identify any unauthorized activity.

## Stay Informed & Get Connected

For the latest updates on community safety, crime prevention tips, and local events, we encourage you to visit the Tipton Constables Facebook page. Stay informed about the efforts of our dedicated law enforcement officers as they work tirelessly to keep our community safe. By following the page, you'll gain access to valuable information, timely alerts, and opportunities to engage with your local constables. Join the Tipton Constables Facebook community today and be an active participant in fostering a safer, more connected neighborhood. Your involvement makes a difference!





## Crime Prevention Information

# Are You Interested in Disaster Preparedness?

If you're passionate about disaster preparedness and want to make a difference in your community, joining the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) offers incredible benefits. CERT members receive specialized training in disaster response, such as fire safety, search and rescue, first aid, and basic disaster medical operations. This prepares you to act quickly and efficiently when disaster strikes.

Being part of a CERT team enhances your personal readiness, ensuring you can help both your family and neighbors during emergencies. You'll also gain valuable leadership skills and foster strong relationships with local first responders, contributing to a more resilient community.

Moreover, CERT volunteers play a crucial role in supporting local emergency services during large-scale events. By joining, you become part of a national network of trained citizens dedicated to keeping their communities safe and prepared for the unexpected.

In short, joining CERT empowers you to help save lives and protect your community during crises while expanding your knowledge and preparedness skills. Individuals of all skill and physical abilities are welcome to join the team.

# Create Your Recovery Kit

- Generators
- Disinfectants
- Senior Citizen Supplies (Diapers/Bed Pads, Etc.)
- Scrub Brushes
- Mops
- Towels
- Wash Cloths
- Cleaning Rags
- Baby Wipes/Diapers
- Dish Towels
- Clorox
- Sanitizing Wipes
- Sheets
- Hand Sanitizers/Lotions
- First-Aid supplies
- Chapstick
- Work and Cleaning Gloves
- Duct Tape
- Brushes & Brooms

- Rubber Boots
- P-100 Masks
- Paper Towel
- Aluminum Foil
- Dish Soap
- Paper Plates and Cups
- Food Storage Containers
- Ziploc Bags
- Large Garbage Bags
- Plastic Eating Utensils
- Tool Kits
- Tire Repair Kits
- Empty 5-gallon Gas Cans
- Tarps
- Mosquito Repellent
- Rain Gear
- Sunscreen
- Plastic Sheeting
- Plastic Tarps
- Shovels
- Toothbrush

- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Personal Hygiene Products

## Dry Food/Hydration

- Gallons of Water
- Sports Drinks
- Bottled Water
- Dry Cereal
- Canned Fruits
- Ready to eat Canned Soup/Meat
- Canned Pasta
- Canned Beans
- Peanut Butter
- Bread
- Bananas
- Apples
- Oranges
- Crackers
- Nuts
- Granola Bars
- Energy Bars



#yourconstablecares



## Starting a Neighborhood Watch

A neighborhood watch program is a group of people living in the same area who want to make their neighborhood safer by working together and in conjunction with local law enforcement to reduce crime and improve their quality of life. Neighborhood watch groups have regular meetings to plan how they will accomplish their specific goals and leaders with assigned responsibilities. Neighborhood watch is homeland security at the most local level. It is an opportunity to volunteer and work towards increasing the safety and security of our homes and our homeland. Neighborhood watch empowers citizens and communities to become active in emergency preparedness, as well as the fight against crime and community disasters.

**Would you like to start a neighborhood watch program on your street?**

We will help you...Please gather a list of at least 8 individuals in your neighborhood that would commit to working towards your neighborhood watch and let's schedule a meeting to help you get started.

## Starting a Neighborhood Watch

# Back to School Crime Prevention: Protecting Kids and Communities

As the school year kicks off, families and communities become busier with a flurry of activities—from morning drop-offs to after-school programs and sports events. While this time of year brings excitement and new beginnings, it also presents unique security challenges. Increased daily activities, homes left empty during school hours, and new online engagements can create opportunities for crime. Below, we offer key tips to help protect kids, families, and communities during the back-to-school season.

### Safety Tips for Walking to School and Riding the Bus

Ensuring children's safety on their way to and from school is a top priority. Whether they are walking, biking, or riding the bus, these tips can help reduce risks.

- Walking to School:
  - Plan the Route: Map out the safest route for children to take, ideally using sidewalks and crossing guards. Choose paths that avoid isolated areas and busy streets.
  - Walk in Groups: Encourage children to walk with friends or neighbors. There's safety in numbers, and it reduces the likelihood of being targeted by criminals.
  - Teach Awareness: Remind children to avoid distractions like headphones or phones while walking. They should stay aware of their surroundings and avoid speaking to strangers.
  - Stranger Danger: Educate children on what to do if approached by a stranger. They should know to never accept rides or gifts from people they don't know and to report suspicious behavior to trusted adults.
- Riding the Bus:
  - At the Bus Stop: Children should arrive at the bus stop early, stay away from the curb, and stand in a group. Teach them to wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before approaching.
  - On the Bus: Ensure that children know the rules of bus safety, including staying seated and keeping their belongings secured.
  - Exiting Safely: After exiting the bus, children should always cross the street in front of the bus, where the driver can see them, and look both ways before crossing.

### Protecting Personal Belongings and Digital Security for Students

As students head back to school, they often carry expensive items like smartphones, tablets, and laptops. Additionally, increased digital activity, including online classes and social networking, brings new cybersecurity concerns.

- Label Belongings: Make sure that all of your child's belongings are labeled with their name and contact information. Consider using labels that are



not immediately visible to others, like inside a backpack or on the back of a laptop.

- **Encourage Secure Backpacks:** Teach children to always zip up their backpacks and keep them close in crowded areas, such as hallways or buses. Remind them never to leave their bags unattended.
- **Online Safety Education:** Equip students with knowledge about online security. They should avoid sharing personal information, such as home addresses, school schedules, or phone numbers, on social media or unsecured websites.
- **Use Strong Passwords:** Help students set strong, unique passwords for their online accounts. Encourage the use of two-factor authentication (2FA) whenever possible for added protection.
- **Avoid Public Wi-Fi:** Remind students not to use public Wi-Fi for logging into important accounts, such as school portals or banking apps. If necessary, a virtual private network (VPN) can offer added protection on public networks.

Back to school is an exciting time for students and families, but it's important to be proactive about crime prevention during this busy season. From ensuring kids' safety on their commute to reinforcing home security and protecting personal belongings, these steps can help safeguard your family and your community. By taking a few extra precautions, you can enjoy the school year with peace of mind.

For more information, take a look at SafeWise:

URL: <https://www.safewise.com/resources/back-to-school-safety-guide/>

## Are you concerned about church safety?

Our Tennessee Constable for Munford is offering FREE church safety & security classes for our local church leaders. Please influence your church leaders to visit [tiptonconstables.org](http://tiptonconstables.org) for class schedules and offerings to make sure our community is prepared. Not in Tipton County!

**Church Safety**

## Getting Ready for Fall: Essential Crime Prevention Tips

As the summer months transition into fall, the changing season brings a shift not only in the weather but also in patterns of criminal activity. With shorter daylight hours, holiday shopping, and busier schedules, it's crucial to focus on crime prevention measures. Whether you're a homeowner, a business owner, or just someone looking to protect yourself and your community, here are some essential fall crime prevention tips to help you stay safe.

### 1. Secure Your Home

- With earlier sunsets and longer nights, home security becomes even more critical in the fall. Take these steps to make your home a less inviting target for burglars:

- **Check Locks and Windows:** Make sure all doors and windows are securely locked, especially when you're not home. Consider upgrading to deadbolt locks or smart locks for added security.
- **Outdoor Lighting:** Install motion-activated lights around your property, especially near entry points. Bright, well-lit homes are far less likely to be targeted by thieves.
- **Home Security Systems:** If you haven't already, invest in a home security system with cameras and alarms. Modern systems often include smartphone alerts that notify you when suspicious activity occurs.
- **Trim Landscaping:** Overgrown bushes and trees provide hiding spots for potential criminals. Keep your yard well-maintained and trim back any foliage that obscures windows or doorways.

## **2. Be Cautious During Holiday Shopping**

- Fall signals the start of the holiday season, with many people starting their holiday shopping earlier. This also creates opportunities for theft, both in stores and online.
- **Be Mindful of Packages:** If you order items online, ensure packages are delivered to a safe location. Porch pirates are more active during the holiday season. Consider using a package lockbox or requesting deliveries to a work address.
- **Protect Your Purchases:** When shopping in stores, never leave your purchases visible in your car. Lock them in the trunk or take them with you.
- **Watch for Online Scams:** The holiday season is prime time for phishing scams and fake online retailers. Only shop from trusted websites and avoid clicking on suspicious email links.

## **3. Vehicle Security**

- With the back-to-school rush and upcoming holiday travel, vehicle theft and break-ins tend to increase in the fall. Here's how to protect your car:
- **Lock Doors and Windows:** It may seem obvious, but many thefts happen when vehicles are left unlocked. Always double-check that your car is securely locked.
- **Hide Valuables:** Don't leave items such as electronics, bags, or wallets visible inside your car. These are common targets for thieves.
- **Park Smart:** Whenever possible, park in well-lit areas or secure garages. Avoid parking in isolated or dark spots where criminals can operate unnoticed.

## **4. Neighborhood Watch Programs**

- Fall is a great time to join or start a neighborhood watch program. With children back in school and families settling into their routines, there's strength in numbers when it comes to community safety.
- **Get Involved:** Introduce yourself to neighbors and exchange contact information in case of emergencies. Neighbors who look out for one another can help deter crime.
- **Coordinate with Local Police:** Work with local law enforcement to host crime prevention meetings. Many police departments offer resources and training to neighborhood watch groups.

## **5. Prepare for Seasonal Changes**

- As the weather changes, so should your crime prevention tactics. Inclement weather, such as rain and wind, can provide cover for criminals. Here's how to stay safe:
- **Keep Walkways Clear:** Fall leaves can obscure walkways, making it easier for criminals to approach unnoticed. Keep walkways and driveways clear and well-lit.
- **Check Your Surveillance:** If you have outdoor cameras or security systems, ensure they are functioning properly and have a clear view, even in poor weather conditions.

## **6. Be Cyber-Savvy**

- As people spend more time indoors and online in the fall, cybercrime becomes a growing concern. Here's how to protect yourself:
- Update Passwords: Make sure all your online accounts have strong, unique passwords. Consider using a password manager to keep track of them.
- Use Two-Factor Authentication: Enable two-factor authentication on all your important accounts to add an extra layer of security.
- Beware of Phishing Emails: Scammers often take advantage of seasonal events to send phishing emails. Be cautious about unsolicited emails asking for personal information.

By taking these crime prevention steps, you can ensure that you, your family, and your community remain safe throughout the fall season. Crime prevention is a community effort, and being proactive can make all the difference in keeping criminals at bay.

## Let's Connect...

[Facebook Page](#)

## What's a Constable?

Constables operate as individually elected county officials at no cost to the citizens or governments of the county. Constables supply their vehicles, fuel, and equipment. They stand ready to aid or assist all citizens and/or agencies within the county. The Tennessee Constable is a non salaried office! ABSOLUTELY no tax dollars are used to support the Constable's office.

The mission of the Constable's Office is to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Tipton County by working collaboratively with area law enforcement, General Sessions court, and our community to prevent crime, enforce the law, increase mobility, and target violent offenders for prosecution.

They work hand-in-hand with the county Sheriff's Office and local Police Departments. Constables are also at the disposal of the various fire departments, EMS units, and rescue squads as well as any state or federal agency which might have use of their services.

**Integrity - Compassion - Service Before Self - Excellence**