

Munford Crime Prevention Newsletter • January, 2024

Community Survey

The Community Survey is available at tiptonconstables.org
The purpose of the Community Survey is to gather the thoughts and opinions of the members of our community. These are presented to our government officials to inform them of the needs in our community. If you haven't taken the community survey, please consider taking it at: tiptonconstables.org/survey

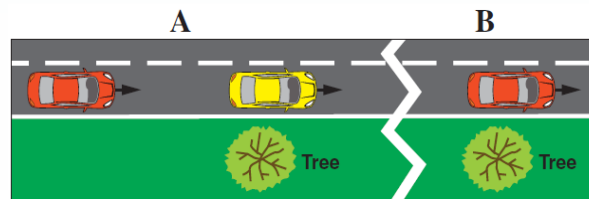
Results of the survey will be presented here in the crime prevention newsletter. You can sign up for the electronic version of the newsletter at tiptonconstables.org

Driver's Safety Tip - Following Too Closely

Tennessee law states: *"The driver of a motor vehicle shall not follow another vehicle more closely than is reasonable and prudent, having due regard for the speed of such vehicles and the traffic upon and the condition of the highway."*

Use the following tips to determine if you are following too closely:

- As the car ahead of you passes a stationary point on the road (a sign post, driveway, utility pole, etc.), count the seconds it takes you to reach the same spot. (In the illustration below, you are driving the red vehicle.)
- Count to yourself "one-thousand and one, one-thousand and two," etc. You should NOT reach the same point on the road before you finish counting to at least "one thousand-three." If you do, you are following too closely.
- Slow down slightly to increase the space between you and the other vehicle. Find another spot to check your new following distance.



Good drivers keep this safe following distance or space cushion to have a better view of the road. The more space you allow between your car and the car ahead, the more time you will have to see and react to traffic hazards or crashes down the road.



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Points of Interest

- Have you heard of crotch rocket gangs? This deadly trend is on the rise and innocent people are getting injured.
- Did you know that there are certain crimes that primarily happen during specific seasons?
- What to do if you got a new electronic device.
- What crime prevention tactics do you need to employ in 2024?
- What to do if you got a suspicious package, first call 911, then read this.

Beat the Winter Blues and Prevent Seasonal Crimes



"Crotch Rocket" Gangs

The term refers to packs of motorcycle riders who assemble then film themselves performing stunts and disrupting traffic.

In some cases these events have turned violent, resulting in beatings of automobile drivers who object to the disruption. In 2013, the driver of an SUV was chased by bikers, then dragged the driver out and beat him, police say

Police can not safely pursue the perpetrators due to the speed and agility of the motorcycles. "You can't chase them because they're crazy," said former New York and Los Angeles chief of police Bill Bratton, now an NBC News analyst. "They endanger themselves and others."

If you see this activity on the road, call 911 or *THP for the Tennessee Highway Patrol.

The post-holiday winter can bring a decrease in temperatures as well as an increase in certain criminal activities. As the days get shorter and colder, it's important to be extra vigilant and take precautions against common winter crimes:

- **Vehicle Theft and Break-Ins**—Don't make it easy for criminals by leaving cars unlocked with valuables in plain sight. Always remove keys from the ignition, roll up windows, and lock doors—even if just running a quick errand. An idling, unattended vehicle is an open invitation for thieves. Help prevent warming up car thefts by using remote starters or staying with your vehicle while it warms up.
- **Home Burglaries**—Burglars look for unoccupied homes in winter when families go on vacation. Create the illusion of an occupied house by using timers on lights and televisions. Stop mail/newspaper deliveries and have someone shovel snow from walkways. Make sure all doors and windows have working locks.
- **Furnace Fraud**—The winter months bring an influx of home repair scams and furnace con artists. Never let unsolicited workers into your home for on-the-spot repairs or inspections. Verify companies before hiring and get written estimates first.
- **Slips and Falls**—Clear ice, snow, and debris from sidewalks and entrances to prevent injuries and lawsuits. Use salt, sand, or traction mats on walkways. If hazards can't be cleared promptly, block off and warn people of slip risks with signs/cones.
- **Porch Piracy**—More people shop online in winter, leading to increased package thefts from doorsteps. Have deliveries redirected to secure locations or require signatures. Ask neighbors to grab packages quickly, or invest in lockboxes or security cameras.
- **Foiled Fireplace Risks**—Fireplaces and wood stoves must be properly vented and cleaned to prevent indoor air hazards and house fires. Never burn wrapping paper, boxes, or plastics and safely dispose of ashes in a metal container away from structures.

Whether it's preventing vehicle theft, deterring home invasions, or avoiding injury hazards, stay one step ahead of winter's criminal elements. Remain vigilant and don't let your guard down even in the colder months.

If the crime is in progress, call 911.

Crime Prevention in 2024

As we welcome 2024, it's the perfect time to renew your commitment to crime prevention and personal safety. The new year brings new opportunities for criminals looking to take advantage of distractions and lapses in security. Stay vigilant by adopting these crime prevention resolutions:

1. **Secure Your Vehicle and Belongings**—Don't leave valuable items like laptops, purses, or electronics in plain sight inside your vehicle, even if it's locked. This is an open invitation for smash-and-grab thieves. Get in the habit of keeping your car interior clear and locking your doors every time you exit the vehicle. Never leave a weapon in an unattended vehicle. Gun theft is on the rise!
2. **Be Smart About Home Security**—The busy holiday season is primetime for home burglaries. Reinforce entry points like doors and windows with proper locks, sensors, and lighting. If going out of town, put lights and televisions on timers to make the home appear occupied. Have a trusted neighbor collect mail and check on the property regularly.
3. **Watch Out for Scams**—Criminals ramp up phishing, identity theft, and fraud scams after the holidays when people are checking bills and finances. Be extremely cautious about sharing personal, credit card, or banking information over the phone, email, or websites that seem suspicious. Cross-shred sensitive documents before discarding.
4. **Stay Alert While Shopping**—Shopping malls, stores, and parking lots are prime targets for robberies and thefts in January as crowds clear out. Don't overburden yourself with too many packages that reduce mobility and awareness. Have keys ready before reaching your vehicle. Request security escorts if needed.
5. **Practice Situational Awareness**—Don't get so distracted by phone calls, texting, music, or zoning out that you lose track of your surroundings. Criminals seek out easy targets who are unaware of their environment. Keep your head up and remain aware, especially in less populated areas.
6. **Update Security Systems and Habits**—The new year is a great opportunity to review and update passwords, security software, home locks, and safety routines. Replace batteries in detectors, set up new passwords, and reprogram codes. Break bad habits like hiding spare keys outside or leaving doors/windows unlocked.

Making crime prevention a priority in 2024 will help keep you, your loved ones, possessions, and community safer all year long. Report any suspicious activities promptly to authorities.

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 them to visit tiptonconstables.org for class schedules and offerings to make sure our community is prepared.

Got a new device for Christmas?

That brand new tablet or cell phone is going to bring you great joy—as long as you keep it safe. Here are a few tips for making sure no one gets ahold of it:

- Don't lay your electronics down while you are out and about. Leave them in your vehicle or at home.
- Record the serial number and keep it in a safe place.
- Activate tracking software in the device — many include this for free.
- Lock your device with a password only you know.
- Change passwords often and don't keep them on your device.

Core Values

Integrity

Service before self

Excellence

Compassion



Suspicious Package Delivered to Your Home?

You probably already have some ideas what makes a package suspicious. Here are some other tips to help you identify a package that deserves additional scrutiny:

- No return address
- Strange smell or noises coming from inside the package
- Misspelled words
- Oddly shaped packages, stains on the outside

If you find a suspicious package has been delivered to you, don't shake the package. Place it on the flat surface and cover it with something, like an upside down trashcan.

Immediately wash your hands and have everyone leave the room. Call 911 to have authorities check it out.

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