

# Munford Crime Prevention Newsletter • November, 2023

## Community Survey

The Community Survey is available at [tiptonconstables.org](https://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](https://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](https://tiptonconstables.org)

## This Month's Driver Safety Tip

Police vehicles attempting to stop drivers will do so by means of a visual, flashing blue or flashing blue and red lights, and/or an audible signal. Remember, a police officer never knows what to expect when stopping a driver. Do not let your emotions or sudden unexplained movements (or those of your passengers) raise tensions or anxiety in the situation. A police officer may be more likely to listen to what you have to say and less likely to feel threatened by you (or your passengers) if you follow these guidelines:

- Drive as closely as is safely practical to the **right-hand edge** or curb of the road, clear of an intersection, stop/park
- Limit the movements of the driver and/or passengers while stopping your vehicle.
- Drivers should keep their hands on the steering wheel and passengers should keep their hands in plain view. Drivers should advise officers if they have a handgun permit and if they are armed.
- Provide your driver license and/or vehicle registration when requested.
- Keep all vehicle doors closed and remain in the vehicle unless asked to get out.
- If the stop is made after dark, turn on the vehicle's interior light before the officer approaches.
- If enforcement action is taken against you that you disagree with, do not argue with the officer at the scene. Traffic violations and traffic crimes charged against you are decided in court.



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### Points of Interest

- Air Conditioner Theft can be expensive. See our tips to secure your unit.
- Scams can happen to anyone. Be on guard with these helpful tips.
- When you feel unsafe in your vehicle, there's something you can do!
- The electronics you carry not only have sensitive information, the devices are expensive. See our tips for theft prevention.

## Air Conditioner Theft



### Safety Tips While Driving

- Always look inside your vehicle before getting in.
- Lock all doors immediately after you are in the vehicle.
- Never pick up hitchhikers.
- If a stranger approaches while you are in a vehicle, keep the windows up, doors locked and engine running.
- Honk your horn if you need to attract attention.
- Park in well-lit areas at night.
- Always lock your car when leaving it.
- Consider installing an auto burglar alarm system.
- Don't leave anything valuable in your car if at all possible.

As the season changes to cooler weather, most are not using their air conditioners as much. As such, you may not notice if something happens to your air conditioner. Air Conditioning Theft is occurring at an alarming rate across Tennessee. Thieves remove the coil (otherwise known as the core) from ground and roof Air Conditioning (A/C) Units. They target homes, businesses, schools and churches. They often take the A/C coils from vacant homes and businesses. Businesses are also susceptible when they are closed. Schools and Churches are vulnerable when they are out of session. The lack of identification marks on the coils makes it difficult to identify victims and successfully apprehend/ prosecute criminals. The coils are made of copper and aluminum. The thieves take the stolen A/C coils to metal recyclers. The recyclers pay an average of \$60 per household coil and \$200 per commercial coil. A new coil cannot be used to repair the damaged unit. The entire A/C unit must be replaced. Home owners pay an average of \$2,000 (or an average of \$500 to \$1,000 insurance deductible) to get the A/C unit replaced. However, it can cost as much as \$8,000. Since businesses and churches often have large A/C units, the replacement cost can be in the tens of thousands. Since schools have multiple large units, the cost can be in the hundreds of thousands.

### Tips on How to Prevent your A/C Coil from getting Stolen

- **Security Screws** - Replace your existing A/C cover screws with Security Screws. It is a simple and inexpensive way to protect the A/C Coil. The cost is often under \$20 for ground units and under \$50 for roof top units). We recommend everyone do it.
- **Alarm** - If you have an existing building alarm, you can add an A/C alarm now. Any loss in pressure in the A/C lines or power and the A/C alarm will trip your building alarm. There is only a one time installation fee to get the A/C alarm.
- **Cage** - An A/C unit cage can be a viable option. It will provide some protect to the unit. The cost will vary greatly depending on if you need to re-pour your concrete pad or not.
- **GPS** - The #1 way to protect your A/C coil is to get a GPS/Motion Detector. It is the most expensive option because there is an annual fee. But for locations that are at high risk and have expensive units, the cost is well worth it.
- **For window units:**
  - Screw in plastic vent flaps directly to the window frame. If the air conditioner is smaller than the window, plastic vent flaps need to be pulled tightly to cover up the holes. This is a vulnerable spot for burglars. Use three or more screws to attach it directly to the window frame.
  - Install a small window sensor alarm. Magnetic controls set above the air conditioner will go off if the unit is moved or the window is opened. The high-pitched noise will alert anyone in the home and likely scare the burglar.
  - Add a sliding window lock to each side of the window frame. Depending on the type, the locks are bolted or screwed in. They prevent burglars from sliding the window up and down. Attach the lock into the frame just above the window. Tighten it securely.

Another way to help prevent A/C theft (and any theft for that matter) is to install motion detector lights or continuous lights on the corners, sides, and back of your house (especially where the A/C is). Look for suspicious people and vehicles in your neighborhood. If you see a suspicious person enter a side or backyard, they may be attempting to steal the A/C coil.

**If the crime is in progress, call 911.**

## Laptop Theft Prevention

Laptop and other portable electronic devices are easy targets for theft. In addition to the cost of replacement, they often have personal information and data that can be difficult or impossible to recover and protect.

### Why Do Crooks Steal Laptops and Other Electronics?

Laptop computers, tablets, cellular phones, and other personal electronics have become a target of choice for thieves all over the country. Why? Because they are small, valuable, can be removed quickly, are easily hidden, and there is a market for them. A thief can sell a stolen laptop, phone, or other device to an unsuspecting used computer store or pawnshop, and easily receive up to half its value in cash.

### Laptop Theft Prevention Tips

- Never leave your laptop out in the open and unattended.
- Even in a locked vehicle, never leave a laptop in plain sight where they are subject to a "smash and grab" type theft.
- Don't let unaccompanied strangers wander around in your apartment building, workplace, or other areas not open to outsiders.
- If you find someone wandering around, offer assistance and deliver visitors to their destinations.
- Keep doors and windows to your home or apartment locked at all times. Never prop open your door.
- Lock your laptop in your office prior to leaving the office each day.
- Carry your laptop in a nondescript carrying case, briefcase, or bag. Placing it in a case designed for computers is an immediate alert to thieves that you have a laptop.
- Write down the serial number and model number of your laptop and keep it in a safe secure place.
- Apply distinctive paint markings (such as indelible markers) to make your laptop unique and easily identifiable.
- Back up your information on hard drives. Store them at home or office in a safe place. Back up important data daily.
- Use your laptops (USS) Universal Security Slot to attach to a cable and lock and secure it to a stationary unbreakable object
- Consider purchasing one of the new theft alarm systems (theft retrieval program / tracking and recovery) made for laptops. Compu-trace, Lojack, etc.
- Return the completed warranty card to the manufacturer. This may help "flag it" if a thief ever sends it in the maintenance.
- If privately owned, make sure the laptop is covered by the homeowner's insurance policy. A rider or special insurance policy may be needed.
- Do not leave sensitive data on the computer, i.e. social security numbers, student information, personal phone numbers, or credit card numbers.
- Full disk encryption software is highly recommended when laptops must contain sensitive data or credit card numbers.
- BE AWARE that if your computer is stolen, automatic log-ins can make it easy for a thief to send inappropriate messages with your accounts. Use password protection and require a person to log in every time the computer goes to sleep or powers down.



## 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](http://tiptonconstables.org) for class schedules and offerings to make sure our community is prepared.

## How to Minimize Becoming the Victim of a Scam

- Be suspicious of any stranger calling or emailing that is asking for money.
- Safeguard your personal information and take the recommended measures to prevent identity theft.
- Never provide personally identifiable information such as your social security numbers, birth date, credit card numbers or address.
- Do not wire money to unknown individuals.
- Never accept a job that requires depositing checks into your account or wiring portions to other individuals.

## Core Values

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Integrity

Service before self

Excellence

Compassion



## What's a Constable?

Constables operate as individually elected officers 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!

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 supplement 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.

## Tipton County Constables

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