

Virginia Beach Police Department

occasio facit furem - opportunity makes the thief

City of Virginia Beach - A Certified Crime Prevention Community



CRIME PREVENTION CHRONICLE

Winter 2009

www.VBgov.com



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PODCASTING

City of Virginia Beach Podcasting

Watch or listen to the very best from VBgov.com whenever and wherever you want! Want the latest news? Departmental events and information? Podcasting can now be found on vbgov.com. Podcasting is the latest in on-the-go, on-demand technology. With podcasting, you can watch or listen to video, programs or events whenever and wherever you choose. Podcasts are *video or audio* files that are automatically downloaded to your personal computer, and then transferred to an iPod or other digital media player using a podcasting application. Departments currently available include Economic Development, Libraries, Media and Communication Group - "my Virginia Beach", and Police.

Police Crime Prevention Podcasting

The Virginia Beach Police Department is committed to providing a safe community and improving the quality of life for all people. Podcasting is one of the many ways we provide information to the community in an attempt to reduce crime through public education, prevention, and awareness. Podcasts are available on the Crime Prevention Unit and various programs offered through the unit.

One of the functions of the Crime Prevention Unit is to gather crime tips. These tips are designed to educate citizens on ways to protect themselves and their assets. Each episode will give crime prevention tips on a topic. A new topic will be highlighted each month, so check back frequently or subscribe to the RSS feed to keep up to date with the crime prevention tip. Current tips available include Auto Theft Prevention, Child Safety, and Holiday Shopping Safety.

PREVENT STOLEN CARS AND THEFTS FROM CARS

Remember to lock your vehicles and take your keys with you.

Keep valuables out of sight.

Immediately report all suspicious activity to the police.

CRIME PREVENTION STEERING COMMITTEE

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month at the ODU/NSU Higher Education Center, 1881 University Lane off of Concert Drive in Virginia Beach. Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.

2009 Meeting Schedule and Guest Speaker information

- February 11th – Car Fit Training from AAA
- March 11th – Jail Tour, call the Crime Prevention Unit for more details
- April 8th – Court Appointed Special Advocacy (CASA)
- May 13th – Community Oriented Policing
- June 10th – Commonwealth Challenge

For more information on the Crime Prevention Steering Committee, please contact the Crime Prevention Unit at (757) 385-1006 or (757) 385-1757.

PREVENTING THEFT OF ELECTRONICS

Thefts of various popular electronics such as iPods, GPS units, and laptops are unfortunately becoming all too common. These items are frequently easy to steal and are quick money for a criminal selling it on the street. According to the FBI's National Crime Information Center, the number of reported laptop thefts increased almost 48 per cent over the last two years, from 73,700 to almost 109,000. The number of reported phone robberies jumped 33 per cent over the same period, from 60,100 to nearly 80,300. In the past three years, theft of Apple iPods and other digital music players surged 91 per cent from 8,900 to more than 17,000. The data include all reported incidents from pick-pocketing to commercial heists. It's so bad that a 2007 study showed iPod robberies bumped up overall crime rates in some major U.S. cities. According to a study by policy group the Urban Institute, felonies increased 18.3 per cent in New York subways in 2005 - but minus iPod thefts, the amount of subway crime would have actually decreased by 3 per cent for the year. The same study said that stolen iPods accounted for 4 per cent of all robberies in Washington, D.C., in 2007. (Reported by Forbes.com, December 2008.)

One of the easiest steps you can take to prevent a theft is to keep valuable electronic equipment out of sight. Many of these stolen items are in plain view inside cars, and frequently the cars are unlocked. You may also want to take the extra step of removing the suction cup for the GPS from the windshield and taking the GPS inside each night.

Criminals may cruise your garbage for signs of valuables. Putting boxes with designations like Wii, Playstation, Sony, Nintendo, etc., in front of the house on trash day can advertise to potential burglars what nice things you may have inside the house. Parents should also know who their kids allow in the house, since so many of our cases involve suspects who are known to a family member.

Having an accurate catalog of all your serial numbers for all electronic systems, such as stereo systems and game systems, and keeping that in a safe area is essential. Owner applied numbers can also be an investigative aid. Taking and keeping pictures of the equipment, and also jewelry, is a big help. This information can assist detectives who are investigating your case with identifying the suspect, prosecuting the criminal, positively identifying the owner, and even returning the property to the owner. Investigators also have to prove that the thief, in fact, has stolen property in their possession.

According to our own property crimes detectives, iPods are so commonly stolen/sold without an accurate account of serial numbers, that it is frustrating how many cases go unsolved. Also to note, most people believe they would be able to identify their iPods by the playlist, but all pawn shops have a common practice of deleting all data from laptops and iPods.

There are other ways to make your property less valuable to the thieves. Thieves find it difficult to fence property that's been marked. Separating valuables (i.e. taking cd's/dvd's/video game discs) from their original packages makes them less desirable to steal. Most pawn shops want to take items in their packaging for higher value.

There are many other ways to prevent your electronics, such as a laptop, from being stolen, or help you get it back if it is. If you cannot keep it out of sight, gadgets on the market include an actual physical lock such as a cable lock. There are security alarms which can be attached to the lock and sounds if someone disconnects the cable. A motion sensor alarm can be attached to the device and sounds if it is moved. There are tracking and recovery software programs available for laptops. Recovery services can provide a registration and labeling system for your property. Data logging programs for laptops are an excellent idea. That allows the user to get IP addresses and commonly used username/password ideas to identify a suspect. Hard-drive encryption options help protect your personal or business information if your laptop is stolen. This can also reduce your chances of becoming a victim of identity theft. There is even a product available that can use the computer's built-in camera to secretly snap pictures of the thief every 30 minutes. The pictures are sent to your personal e-mail or online photo-storage account.

Take the time to get to know your equipment and what your options are. The few minutes you spend on it now may be a small investment toward preventing becoming the victim of theft, or aid in the prosecution if you do become a victim.



Remember - PLEASE LOCK YOUR VEHICLES ... Help prevent theft!

POLICE MEMORIAL WEEK



National Police Week, which occurs each year during the week of May 15th, recognizes the service and sacrifice of U.S. law enforcement. Established by a joint resolution of Congress in 1962, National Police Week pays special recognition to those law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty for the safety and protection of others. One of the officers who will be honored during Police Week 2009 is our own Detective Michael Smith Phillips, who was killed during an undercover narcotics operation on August 7, 2008.

The Police Unity Tour remembers these true heroes each year with a 250 mile bicycle trek from the Tidewater area of Virginia to Washington, DC. This event takes place every May 10th, 11th & 12th, the days preceding National Peace Officers Memorial Day (May 15th). The Police Unity Tour of Virginia is comprised of Law Enforcement Officers, family members and friends from not only Virginia, but all across North America. They all participate for one common cause; to ensure our fallen brothers and sisters are never forgotten. The Unity Tour riders raise money which is given to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) during Police Week. To date, the Police Unity Tour has been able to collectively deliver **5.6 million dollars** to the NLEOMF, and have pledged to continue to donate at least 1 million dollars every year.



The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial is a tribute to all federal, state and local law enforcement officers. Engraved on it's blue-gray marble walls are the names of nearly 19,000 officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. The Memorial Fund receives no government or taxpayer revenue, instead it relies on the contributions of organizations and individuals. We strongly encourage you to stop by the Memorial the next time you are visiting

Washington, DC. The *Judiciary Square* Metro stop on the Red Line will bring you directly to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. For more information or to get involved, check out the National Law Enforcement Memorial website at www.nleomf.org and the Police Unity Tour website at www.policeunitytour.org

Help Protect Those Who Protect You!!!

Do you know that Virginia law protects police officers and other emergency workers stopped alongside our highways? Section 46.2-921.1 of the Code of Virginia states: "The driver of any motor vehicle, upon approaching a stationary emergency vehicle displaying emergency lights, shall proceed with caution and, if reasonable, with due regard for safety and traffic conditions, yield the right-of-way by making a lane change into a lane not adjacent to that occupied by the stationary emergency vehicle or if changing lanes would be unreasonable or unsafe, proceed with due caution and maintain a safe speed for highway conditions. A conviction for violation of this law is punishable up to a \$2,500 fine and/or 12 months in jail."

MOVE OVER OR SLOW DOWN!!!!

TALLWOOD AND PRINCESS ANNE HIGH SCHOOLS TO HOST THE EVERY 15 MINUTES ANTI-DRINKING AND DRIVING PROGRAM

The Virginia Beach Police Department Crime Prevention Unit, in coordination with the city of Virginia Beach Public Schools, will be hosting an anti-drinking and driving awareness program called "Every 15 Minutes". The program will be at Tallwood High School on March 10-11, and Princess Anne High School on April 7-8. The program is designed as an interactive two day event that will educate high school students by identifying problems associated with their driving, socializing, and alcohol related activities.

It is the intent of this program to help the individual student understand that their behavior has a rippling effect on those around them: family, friends, classmates, etc. The program's name was derived from the fact that every fifteen minutes in the United States at least one person is killed as a result of an alcohol related incident to include alcohol related traffic accidents. For more information visit "programs" on the Crime Prevention link on the Virginia Beach city website at vbgov.com, or contact MPO Jim McElligott at 385-1330.

UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS

- ◇ The **Virginia Beach Crime Prevention Steering Committee** meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m., at the ODU-NSU Higher Education Center. For more information, contact MPO Jim McElligott at 385-1330.
- ◇ The next **Citizens Police Academy** will be February 24 through May 26, with classes held every Tuesday night from 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. The class will be held at the Virginia Beach Law Enforcement Training Academy. Contact MPO Jeff Eaton at 385-1066 for more information.
- ◇ The next **Senior Citizens' Police Academy** will be March 2 through April 20, each Monday morning from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at Jamestown Commons on College Park Boulevard. Applications may be picked up at any Virginia Beach Police Precinct, the Crime Prevention Unit at Building #15 in the City Municipal Center, or on the City of Virginia Beach web site at www.VBgov.com/dept/police. Applicants must be 55 years of age and applications for this session must be received by February 20. Citizens will become informed as to the actual role of the police and in return, the police will benefit from the wealth of knowledge the citizens can give about their community. Contact MPO Dolly Deans 385-1068 for more information.
- ◇ The “**Every 15 Minutes**” program will be presented at Tallwood High School on March 10-11 and Princess Anne High School on April 7-8. “Every 15 Minutes” is a school-based program which raises awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving. Contact MPO Jim McElligott at 385-1330 to get involved.
- ◇ The next “**Best Defense**” **self defense workshop** will be held in April. Stay tuned for more information!
- ◇ **Virginia Beach C.E.R.T. (Community Emergency Response Team)** trains citizens in skills that will benefit themselves and the community in the event of a large scale emergency. Contact the program coordinator at 219-2874 for more information on how to sign up for a class.

*Newsletter compiled and edited by
members of the Crime Prevention Unit
All or parts of this newsletter may be copied.
**To be added to the list to receive the newsletter
electronically, or if you have
Questions or comments, please call 385-1006***

VIRGINIA BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

Crime Prevention Unit
2509 Princess Anne Road
Municipal Center, Building 15
Virginia Beach, VA 23456