

Waunakee Police Department Newsletter

March 2011



Protect Your Wallet and Identity Theft

Losing your wallet has always been a hassle, but now it's downright dangerous. Not only do you have to replace your driver's license, credit cards, and other identification, but you need to think about whether you could become a victim of identity theft.

Many wallets contain enough personal information for an identity thief to steal your identity without a great deal of difficulty. To minimize this possibility there are some things you can do.

- Clean out your wallet. Instead of carrying everything you think you might need in every situation, carry only what you know you will need. This means the contents of your wallet will change depending upon whether you're going shopping, on vacation or just to work.
- Never carry your social security card in your wallet. You probably know your SS# anyway and the chances that someone will ask to see your actual card are slim and none.
- If you want the security of carrying a credit card with you on all occasions, just carry one. Leave the others at home until you're actually going to use them. Some people write "Photo ID Required" on the back of their credit card instead of their signature for added protection.
- Make a copy of everything you carry in your wallet. That way you'll not only have easy access to the phone numbers you will need to report a stolen credit card right away, but a copy will be better than nothing for the time it takes to get a replacement driver's license, insurance card, etc.
- Don't leave your wallet in your car. It takes less than 15 seconds for someone to smash your car window, grab your wallet, and be out of sight.

If your wallet is lost or stolen; follow these steps to minimize the chance of identity theft.

- Call police in the jurisdiction where your credit card(s) was stolen to report the theft.
- Call the companies that issued your credit cards to report the theft as soon as possible. Use the toll free number -- most companies are available 24 hours a day, and the number is usually on the back of the card.

- Call the three national credit-reporting agencies to report the theft, and ask to attach a 'fraud alert' to all your credit cards. Here are the three agencies and their numbers: Equifax: 1-800-525-6285, Experian: 1-888-397-3742, and Trans Union: 1-800-680-7289
- If your social security card is missing, call the Social Security Administration (fraud line) at 1-800-269-0271. If your driver's license was taken, be sure to contact the Wisconsin Department of Transportation at 1-608-266-2353.

Protect Your Valuables and Help Recover Stolen Property

The Waunakee Police Department takes a number of reports of stolen property each year. Many times the stolen property is taken from vehicles. In order to combat this crime, it is recommended to always lock vehicle doors even if the vehicle is parked inside a garage. It's also strongly urged that valuable items are removed from the vehicle or kept out of plain view. Many thieves are opportunists and if a valuable item is not seen or effort needs to be done to get into a vehicle; many times thieves will move on to an easier, more promising target.

In many cases of stolen property reported to the police department; the victims are unable to provide officers with detailed descriptions of the item/s that have been stolen. Here are a few tips which will aid officers in recovering lost or stolen property:

- Take a picture of your valuable item.
- Put your initials on it.
- Write down the serial number and keep it in a safe place.

Pictures are extremely helpful in that many times there is a unique mark or feature on an item.

The serial numbers are just as important. If an officer is provided with a serial number of the stolen property, the serial number is entered into a nationwide law enforcement database. This database is used to assist officers from other jurisdictions in identifying stolen property they come into contact with during their course of work.

Neighborhood Electric Vehicles

As the weather gets warmer and the road conditions improve; residents may begin seeing Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV's) traveling the streets. NEV's are electric powered vehicles which are considered street legal low speed vehicles. Waunakee has adopted a village ordinance permitting the use of NEV's on village streets. There are several restrictions that must be followed in order to comply with state law and the ordinance.

NEV's may be operated on village streets that have a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour or less, and are subject to the following restrictions.

- (1) The person operating the NEV must hold a valid Wisconsin operator's license or a valid operator's license from another state.
- (2) The NEV must be licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

- (3) The NEV shall:
- (a) Be a four-wheeled vehicle
 - (b) Have a speed range of at least 20 miles per hour and not more than 25 miles per hour on a paved surface.
 - (c) Have a gross vehicle weight at rest of less than 3,000 pounds.
 - (d) Be operated with headlamps on at all times.
- (4) The NEV shall be equipped with the following:
- (a) Headlamps
 - (b) Front and Rear turn signal lamps.
 - (c) Tail lamps
 - (d) Stop lamps
 - (e) Reflex reflectors: one red on each side as far to the rear as practicable, and one red on the rear (three total).
 - (f) An exterior mirror mounted on the driver's side of the vehicle and either an exterior mirror mounted on the passenger's side of the vehicle or an interior rearview mirror.
 - (g) A parking brake.
 - (h) A windshield that conforms to the requirements of the federal motor vehicle safety standard on glazing materials.
 - (i) A vehicle identification number.
 - (j) Seatbelts.

Questions can be sent to newsletter@waunakeepd.org Questions submitted may be featured in future newsletters. The person submitting the question will not be identified.