



Community Watch Newsletter



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Our Mission

The mission of the Bonner County Sheriff's Office Community Watch Program is to proactively partner with law abiding citizens to prevent and reduce crime. This will be accomplished through communication, crime prevention education and assisting communities, neighborhoods and businesses in achieving a safe environment for its residents.

Greetings to all of the Bonner County Community Force Block Watch Captains!

Thank you for stepping up in your area of Bonner County and taking a leadership position in your local community watch group.

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Snow Bird Safety

Millions of retirees will be leaving for warmer climates this winter that can put them at risk by leaving their home and going to another location i.e., out of state. There are criminals who specifically focus on older people who are seasonal residents.

So be sure to have a neighbor or friend check your house from time to time to make sure there are no water pipe bursts or someone has vandalized the home. Having a well-lit home is a good deterrent. You can use a timer on your lights to create an effect that someone is home. Leaving a TV or radio on is also another good idea.

You may want to consider having your heat system set a specific temperature or have the water supply shut off. Also have someone make sure your driveway is clear of snow and that no newspapers are lying around. If you are gone during the spring and summer months have someone mow the lawn. Have your mail and newspaper deliveries stopped while you are gone.

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Watch Captains Questions and Answers

This newsletter is as much yours as it is the Community Watch Program. As such we want to ensure you have an opportunity to ask questions and get answers to issues you may have. The questions will remain anonymous, but the issues and discussion will be an important part of our communication and education process.

Call or email your question to Sheryl Kins at skins@bonnercountyid.gov. It will then become part of the next newsletter.

Question: This last year there has been a couple of serious crimes in Bonner County. As a block captain I thought we would receive information on these serious cases to pass on to our neighbors.

Answer: For the past several months the issue of keeping block captains informed on important events has been a discussion within the Community Watch Volunteer Team.

The following is a list of things being discussed, developed or will be implemented to help address the concerns raised with your question.

1. The BCSO has the ability to use their reverse phone directory call out to notify the public of emergencies in the immediate area in which the event is occurring.
2. You can also sign up with the website WWW.NIXLE.COM, which will allow you to receive notification of events involving a particular law enforcement agency. In other words, when you sign up you can sign up to only receive Bonner County Sheriff Office notifications, but you can also other agency's like Sandpoint Police Department or Bonner County EMS. The key is the agency also has to be a subscriber to the website, which the BCSO does.

We have also discussed the possibility of deputies being able to stop and talk to block watch captains when they are in the area. And while this is

desirable, it's not possible to do on a regular basis.

Discussions are in the works to develop a means with the deputies' in car computers to have the block watch captains locations available to them. As for now this system is not available, but we understand that with the growth of the block watch program more and more block captains will be added making it a greater need.

With that said, it was determined that each Community Watch Team (CWT) Volunteer would be responsible for reaching out to the block watch captains that they are most familiar with or in which they helped establish that specific neighborhood watch group on a regular basis much like this newsletter does.

Keep in mind that the CWT volunteers do not have an inside track as to the details of any one particular case. And, as volunteers are word is not official. That can only come from a regular employee of the Sheriff's Office. However, where details can be provided to help protect the public or where we receive official information from the BCSO, this will certainly be offered to the block captains as it becomes available. We will also seek out answers to your questions.

During this last year at the two block watch captain training sessions, opportunities were provided to block watch captains to share their email addresses among each other so that the flow of information could occur between block captains around Bonner County.

Finally it is noted that Bonner County now has 48 block captains with 571 involved neighbors. You should be very proud of your work and that of your community. All of your efforts are appreciated.

Crime Statistics

According to the Idaho State Police Statistical Center that compiles information provided to them from all law enforcement agencies in Idaho the following was compiled.

The most recent analysis comes from 2016 where the overall the crime rate throughout Idaho up about 0.07%. However the most serious of crimes like robbery, murder, arson, rape, fraud, etc. is up 5.4% over 2015.

While only 28 hate crimes were reported it measures at 27.3% over 2015

In all of Bonner County offenses are up 3.7% from 2015 with Larceny and Narcotic offenses leading all other crimes.

The overall trend shows an increase in offenses from 1901 offenses in 2013 to 2011 offenses in 2016.

The number of arrests has decreased from 1922 arrests in 2013 to 1657 arrests in 2016. **Note:** An arrest can include more than one offense.

For a clearer picture and additional details you can access the Idaho State Police Crime Statistical Center at [WWW. ISP.Idaho.Gov](http://WWW.ISP.Idaho.Gov) and then follow the links.



Have an emergency contact if you get in an accident or some other emergency occurs while you're gone. Have important medical information, copies of prescriptions and bank account numbers with you.

Also, contact your insurance company to ensure you have your current insurance information and you have coverage on your home.

Let your family know your destination and how long you'll be gone. Be sure to let your credit card company know your destination so their fraud department can stop bogus charges. Try to just use one credit card.

Stay away from WI-FI spots such as coffee shops, other business or libraries. Hackers can access sensitive data on log in information and financial accounts.

Some Snowbird scams are repair rip offs by criminals who pretend to be auto repair men, utility workers, contractors, etc. Never let a stranger inside your home.

Scam artists tend to focus on vehicles with an out of state license and they will often disable your vehicle by flattening your tire or pulling a wire out from under the hood. They will then approach you and offer help for an outrageous price. Sometimes there are two or more people and one will try to distract you. As in all situations be aware of your surrounding and strangers who may come in contact with you.

Humor in Uniform

A circus performer was pulled over by a police officer for speeding. As the officer was writing the ticket, she noticed several machetes in the car. "What are those for?" she asked suspiciously.

"I'm a juggler," the man replied. "I use those in my act."

"Well, show me then," the officer demanded.

So the man got out the machetes and started juggling them – first three, then more, finally seven at one time, overhand, underhand, behind the back, putting on a dazzling show and amazing the officer.

Another car passed by. The driver did a double take, and said, "My God. I've got to give up drinking! Look at the test they're giving now."



Bonner County Sheriff Office Webpage

Currently the BCSO does not have a Webmaster, but actively recruiting, to ensure current public information is provided to the public.

Proactively the use of social media is being used and all press releases on being placed on the BCSO Facebook page.

You don't have to sign up for Facebook to look at it - just click on the Facebook icon at the bottom of the www.bonnerso.org homepage. When the Facebook page pops up click on the "Not Now" prompt at the bottom of the page and you now access the BCSO Facebook page.



Crime Prevention

While you are preparing your home and property for winter and you happen to be outside, take some extra time to store away any extra tools that have been left out, make sure your outside lights are working, trim back bushes and trees for visibility on your property from potential criminals and check window screens to see if they are in need of repair.

Remember, that most property crimes are crimes of opportunity, criminals love to take advantage of our tendency to keep our property unsecured.

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