



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.

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

As of this writing we have 69 Neighborhood Co-Captains, 48 groups and 986 members.

The following information is taken from *When Disaster Strikes*, a publication of L.A.W. Publications.

Emergency Preparedness

How Vulnerable are you?

The world is not safe. Each day brings new stories of people whose lives have been turned upside down. The disaster may be a natural occurrence, such as a hurricane, or man-made, such as a terrorist bombing. Either way, the destruction experienced by victims can be devastating.

Although we may not be able to avoid a disaster, we can be prepared for one by:

- Preparing to minimize the damage to our lives and property.
- Preparing to survive.
- Preparing to help others.

The probability of being hit by specific types of disasters varies, depending on where you live. In our part of the world, we most likely will experience earthquakes, wildfires, flooding or some kind of terror attack or mass shooting.

General Disaster Kit

A minimum list of what to have on hand:

- Battery-operated radio and flashlight.
- Plenty of batteries.
- Food and water for a least a few days.
- Non-electric can opener.
- First Aid Kit.

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Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery. People are being bought, sold and smuggled, often beaten, starved and forced to work as prostitutes or to take jobs as migrant, domestic, restaurant, or factory workers, with little or no pay.

Worldwide estimates indicated that 21 million people are victims of human trafficking. In the United States alone, government estimates indicate that between 600,000 and 800,000 individuals are trafficked into the country each year.

The sale of human beings is highly profitable. In fact, it is estimated to be the third most profitable international crime, next to the sale of weapons and drugs. Unlike weapons and drugs, human beings are often sold and resold over a lifetime making them highly profitable for many years. Some estimate the profits of human trafficking to be \$7-10 billion a year.

The enslavement and exploitation of human beings has an extensive history, dating back to the earliest civilizations. Today, trafficking of humans is believed to occur on every continent, and it's believed that there are more people enslaved now than at any other time in human history.

Human trafficking is often "hidden in plain sight." There are a number of red flags or indicators, which can help alert you to human trafficking. Recognizing the signs is the first step in identifying victims. The indicators listed are just a few that may alert you to a potential human trafficking situation.

Behavior or Physical State:

- Does the victim defer to another person to speak for him or her?
- Does the victim show signs of physical or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement or torture?
- Does the victim act fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense or nervous/paranoid?
- Does the victim have few or no personal possessions?

Social Behavior:

- Can the victim freely contact friends and family?
- Is the victim allowed to socialize by attending religious services?
- Has the victim been threatened with harm if the victim attempts escape?

Work Conditions and Immigration Status:

- Does the victim work excessively long or unusual hours?
- Was the victim recruited for one purpose and forced to engage in some other job?
- Is the victim's salary being garnished to pay off a smuggling fee?
- Has the victim been threatened with deportation or arrest?
- Is the victim in possession of identification and travel documents? If not, who has control of the documents?

Minor Victims:

- Is the victim a juvenile engaged in commercial sex?

How Can You Help?

- Report suspicious activity to the police even if you think it does not matter.
- Be on the lookout for people who appear to be under guard.
- Report children with unidentified or unexplained injuries to police or child services.

The previous information was from a publication of L.A.W. Publications.



SAFETY IN PARKS

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People like to take their children to parks to play, especially in the spring or summer. Adults like to use parks for jogging, taking walks and sightseeing. Children should be kept away from parks that allow pets to roam freely or are unleashed. Unfortunately, predators target parks, as they know that people are alone and not paying attention to their surroundings. For example: runners listening to music with their headphones and not paying attention. Predators like to surprise a person in a remote location with no other people around them.

When parents take their children to parks, they should always keep a watchful eye on them, as it only takes a few seconds for a predator to snatch up a child. Always be aware of your surroundings, because predators use parks to watch for kids wandering away from adult supervision. In the event of a possible assault, it's a good idea to have pepper spray or a stun-gun for your personal defense. You will only have seconds to respond, so be sure you are familiar with how they work. Those precious seconds can give you time enough to get away safely.

Explain to your child that there can be bad people out there, looking to snatch them up. You can buy a personal alarm system that sends out high pitched sounds. If a child feels threatened by someone, they can activate it. Some alarms can be programmed to go off automatically anytime they are beyond a certain distance from you. There are many personal alarm systems with keychains for adults and children that you can buy online. Search "personal safety alarm devices" on your computer. You can purchase them for as little as \$5.00 on up at Amazon.com or eBay. Walmart also sells them for around \$8.00 to \$15.00. Or you can also have your child carry a very loud sounding whistle. Also, be sure to have your cell phone with you so you can call 911, if needed.

- Essential medicines.
- Extra clothing and blankets.
- Hand sanitizer.
- Fire extinguisher.
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Small tool kit.
- Rope.
- Duct tape.

Make sure your family insurance is adequate. Take video or photographs of valuables and record serial numbers. Keep these in a safe place, such as a safety deposit box or trusted friend's home. They will help prove what your family owned, if your home is burglarized, damaged or destroyed.

After a disaster everything changes. The effects of different disasters can vary widely. These are some common effects that may occur:

- Electricity, water and phones, including cell phones, may not work.
- Police and rescue workers may not be able to reach you for some time.
- Public transportation may not run.
- Traffic signals and street signs may be down and roads may be impassable.
- Familiar landmarks may be gone.
- Stores may be closed.
- ATM's may not work.
- Gas pumps may not work.

Have a plan for yourself and your family

The time to prepare for a disaster is BEFORE it happens! Make sure each family member knows what to do in each type of disaster. Have a plan for where and how to meet if separated. Also, choose a relative or friend out-of-state, who all family members will call to check in with, if they become separated.

One of the benefits of being prepared is that you can help others when a disaster strikes. Know who your neighbors are, so you can check on them and vice versa.

Humor in Uniform

An elderly Idahoan called 911 on his cell phone to report that his car has been broken into.

He is hysterical as he explains his situation to the dispatcher, "They've stolen the stereo, the steering wheel, the brake pedal and even the accelerator!" he cried.

The dispatcher said, "Stay calm... An officer is on the way."

A few minutes later, the officer radios in. "Disregard," he says. "He got in the back-seat by mistake."



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 sheryl.kins@bonnercountyid.gov. It will then become part of the next newsletter.

Question: Does the Community Watch Program cover businesses as well?

Answer: In short the answer is “yes”; we have just recently begun evaluating this topic in order to meet a business’s need.

Although the approach may be different, it is because a business can have the problem of educating staff, and when there is staff turnover, training becomes complicated. We are discussing options that might help the business owner with training employees on what to watch for: everything from what your local Community Watch Group looks for by being alert to dealing with internal theft, counterfeit money and shoplifting.

Keep an eye out for more information on this subject in future newsletters.



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