

# Neighborhood News

EL PASO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE | December 2019

## Quick Tip:

To report Non-Emergency events, 390-5555 is the non-emergency reporting number for the Sheriff's Office. To report Emergency or in-progress events to the Sheriff's Office, 911 is the reporting number. When reporting you will be asked to provide your name, address, phone number and what you wish to report. Explain your suspicion or circumstance to the emergency dispatcher with as much useful information you can provide at the time. Note details such as license plate numbers, vehicle or personal descriptions (colors, hair styles, glasses, tattoos, distinguishable clothing, etc.). **Remember, if you don't tell us about an issue, we can't impact the problem.**



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## Personal Safety and Awareness

As reported in the previous newsletter, the Sheriff's Office continues to experience an increase in reported residential home burglaries, car burglaries, and motor vehicle thefts. In an effort to help prevent these crimes from continuing to occur, it is extremely important that Neighborhood Watch group participants report suspicious activity, such as suspicious vehicles or people, to the non-emergency number at the Sheriff's Office which is 390-5555. As I mentioned in the Quick Tips section, "we can't impact the problem if we don't know of the problem". With that said, this section will be focused on refreshing some safety tips that are important to help you from becoming a victim, not only during this Holiday Season, but throughout your daily happenings in 2020.

### AWARENESS

- Stay alert – Be careful about letting your guard down in certain areas.
- Keep your mind and know your surroundings. Some things to consider are, WHO is around you (persons), WHAT is around you (Landscape, doors, cars, etc), and knowing WHERE you are (area layout, entry's and exits, safety locations, etc.).
- Be suspicious of everyone and everything around you. Report suspicious behavior or activity to the police immediately so that we can assist in preventing or solving a future crime from occurring. There is a big difference from being suspicious and aware verses being paranoid.
- Act confident and walk with a purpose. Make good eye contact and speak to when addressed. This will show a potential

criminal that you have noticed him/her. Don't be meek!!

- Trust your first instincts. This is sometimes call "mother intuition" or gut feeling. When I speak to your groups, I will always iterate that "if the hair on the back of your neck stands up, something probably is not right".

### REPORTING TO THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

- When reporting on a cellular phone, state where you are currently located first and THEN what emergency you might be experiencing. You will be asked to provide your personal and other information by the dispatcher once you are in a position of safety. Reporting your location first is so important as cell phone service can occasionally be interrupted or intermittent.

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## **HOME SECURITY**

- Do not open doors to strangers. Verbally or visually identify the person/s. You can do this by installing peepholes or video doorbell systems which are very beneficial during these times. Video doorbells furthermore help deputies when trying to identify a suspect/s or obtaining vehicle information, ie. Porch pirates.
- Use external lighting for better visibility. Lighting is the cheapest and most effective method of deterring criminal activity. Leave your porch and patio lights on after dark.
- Have a home escape route planned and know how and where you are going to reunite with the occupants of your home.
- Know your neighbors and community. Know what is normal for your community such as cars, kids, delivery persons, and patterns.
- As mentioned in previous newsletters, keep your garage door closed, even during daytime hours. Many garage related property crimes are opportunistic and easily preventable by simply keeping your garage doors closed.



## **PERSONAL THEFT PREVENTION**

- Be familiar with the area in which you are walking or shopping. Practice walking in populated or well-lit areas.
- Remain alert. Do not become so focused on shopping that you forget your surroundings. Criminals practice looking for unattended or unfocused/distracted victims.
- Do not carry too many items in your hands. It is difficult to defend yourself in time of crisis when your hands are

full holding a cellphone, keys, purse/backpack, store bought items, etc.

- Walk with others or ask a security person to accompany you to your vehicle if you feel something is not right.
- Regarding purses and wallets; all purses should be carried on the inside shoulder nearest a wall or another person. Purses carried on the outside shoulder are easier to remove and stolen. Keep your purse zipped or snapped as thieves will steal your wallet out of your purse if it remains open, ie: in a shopping cart. Never leave your purse unattended in a vehicle, ie: when loading groceries in your vehicle. Finally, never fight with a criminal over your purse. The purse is not worth becoming injured over, it can be replaced.

## **VEHICLE AND PARKING SAFETY**

- Keep your vehicle in good mechanical condition to avoid breakdowns.
- Use good common sense when driving through unsafe areas. Lock your vehicle doors and keep your windows rolled up.



- Report motorist assists, but do not stop unless you perceive there is an emergency. False vehicle breakdowns are common tactics criminals will use to bait people into bad situations.
- Keep your valuable items locked in the trunk. For example, if you are going to the mall to shop, pull over a couple blocks before arriving at the mall in a safe area and put your items in the trunk. Don't do it at the mall as criminals wait and watch who store those items in their trunk.

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- If you are involved in a rear end accident, look before getting out of your vehicle. Is it just an accident or a carjacking attempt?
- If you believe you are being followed, use your rear-view mirrors to obtain a vehicle description and a plate number, if possible. Also try and observe how many people might be in the car that is suspected to be following. Change streets and direction all while traveling to a well-lit area while you are calling the police to report the activity. Stay in populated areas. Know where local police stations are located.
- Park your vehicle near exits, entrances and lighted areas and use the vehicle alarm if one is installed. Make sure your vehicle is locked when leaving by checking all the doors.
- Do not hide extra vehicle keys on the outside of your vehicle. Criminals know where to find them.
- Look at three cars in all four directions when returning to your vehicle for suspicious people or activities.
- Look in the car before entering it. Look to make sure nobody is in the back seat.

#### **HOTELS / VACATIONS**

- Know the general area of the hotel and surrounding area. Check the Community Crime Map for the area you are traveling to make better decisions of places to stay.
- Notify a family member or friend of your travel schedule and where you are staying in the event you need to be reached in an emergency.

- Leave the television on to appear the room is occupied.
- Become familiar with the entry and exit points of the hotel.

#### **SELF DEFENSE**

- If you are interested in self defense training, use creditable instructors. The Sheriff's Office offers a self defense training class that is taught by certified deputies. If interested, please let me know and I will get you the information.
- Pepper spray is an effective tool, most of the time. It can be purchased online or various other stores. Use it as a last resort and with common sense. Remember, know how to use this tool and how to get to it quickly in time of crisis. Any tool/weapon can be used against you by a criminal if you are unfamiliar with how to use it.
- If you believe you are going to become a victim of a violent crime, Yell, Scream, Fight, and Act/have a plan. Act quickly as criminals do not want to be recognized or caught. You might have one chance!!

The tips mentioned above are some common-sense measures that most people practice daily. However, at times a quick reminder of how to protect yourself in today's society can be extremely helpful. The overall theme of this section is SELF AWARENESS and BEING FAMILIAR WITH YOUR SURROUNDINGS. Most people do not fall victim of an assault or violent crime. Hopefully by practicing some of the measures listed above you can be more informed and safer in your daily travels.

## **Sheriff's Office Marijuana Statistics**

The Sheriff's Office released the marijuana statistics from July 2019 – December 2019. The numbers illustrated below reflect both the City of Colorado Springs and El Paso County combined.

In 2017, Sheriff Bill Elder laid out illegal marijuana enforcement, addressing mental health in the community and reducing the average daily jail population as his top priorities for the next four years of his administration. The Sheriff's Office will be releasing monthly statistics on the work that is being done to stop the diversion of legal marijuana to the illegal marijuana market.

#### **Illegal and Black-Market Marijuana Enforcement statistics:**

|                    |       |                        |             |
|--------------------|-------|------------------------|-------------|
| • Search Warrants: | 41    | • Processed Marijuana: | 977.87 lbs. |
| • Knock & Talks:   | 21    | • Cash Seized:         | \$58,078    |
| • Grows Visited:   | 54    | • Guns Seized:         | 12          |
| • Plants Seized:   | 2,067 | • Arrests:             | 12          |



## A Personal THANK YOU!

I want to personally thank all the communities and neighborhoods that I have had the opportunity to meet and work with throughout this year. As compared to 2018, the Neighborhood Watch group has grown at a steady pace averaging about two new groups starting each month. There are currently 118 active groups participating in the Neighborhood Watch program and it is my commitment to continue growing the program to help your deputies on patrol impact the issues that are affecting your neighborhoods and communities. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to the program.

Regarding a change to next year's newsletter, I will be posting a quarterly newsletter in 2020, as opposed to monthly, which will continue to reflect tips, a main article containing what I believe will benefit your communities, and three months of crime statistics at the end of the newsletter. I will also continue to publish the upcoming events the Sheriff's Office will be hosting such as Coffee with a Cop events, National Night Out, and other happenings in the newsletter. I will continue sending the newsletter to the block captains so they can send them out, as well. I hope this format works as I do not want to inundate your emails with too much information. Also, if you could please send me an email with the current block captains, that is extremely helpful in keeping my database current. Lastly, in the upcoming year I will be partnering with our media section along with our Public Information Officer to post crime prevention and safety tips on Twitter and Facebook so please look for those postings.

Finally, I'd like to wish all your communities a safe and happy holiday season. Furthermore, my hope is that you have a great and safe 2020. This is such a wonderful time of year to spend with family and friends and reflect on 2019. I truly hope that 2020 is a prosperous year in your communities and with your neighbors. Thank you again for all your support this year.

## Crime Prevention Tips

As stated in previous newsletters, please remember to keep your garage doors down when you are away from your residence. Most residential burglaries are opportunistic crime. A criminal doesn't have to use much effort to walk into open garages and possibly into your residence. Lock the man doors that go from garage into your residence during evening hours. Also remember to remove your automatic garage door opener remote, or at minimum, hide the remote somewhere in the vehicle where it can not be seen from the outside. The best practice is to remove the remote if the vehicle is going to be left outside during odd hours. The Sheriff's Office is still experiencing a large amount of burglaries involving open garage doors, to include occurrences during daylight hours.

Car burglaries (CTA) can be prevented by locking your car doors when you are away from your vehicle. Also, remember to take your valuables out of your car. Before you get to your destination, pull over and put your valuables in the trunk. Don't do this at your destination as criminals will watch for this and enter your vehicle and open the trunk to get those items. Like garage burglaries, the Sheriff's Office is still experiencing an increased number of cases regarding car burglaries with unlocked car doors. PLEASE make sure your vehicle is locked and all valuables are removed from inside the vehicle, if possible. Leave your porch and patio lights on during evening hours. Remember, a criminal doesn't want to get caught. By lighting up your residence and neighborhood, that might deter a burglar from coming to your neighborhood and make him or her choose to go to another neighborhood that is not well lit. The low energy LED exteriors lights are great bulbs and last a long time.

Place a security system sign in your front yard. Make sure it is visible for people to see from the street or as they approach. Have the sign lit with a cheap solar light for evening hours. Also, explore the options for video doorbells and exterior cameras. These technologies are priceless when it comes to your safety and are extremely beneficial to law enforcement agencies when establishing suspect information or vehicle information involved in criminal activity.

**\*\*You can now go to the Community Crime Map which is a Lexis Nexis product to check the crime activity in your neighborhood or community. It will show the same numbers that I present at meetings with some limitations such as names, addresses, etc. for privacy reasons but it is a great snapshot of activity in your areas. You can also utilize the map in your travels if you plan on traveling out of state. This product is an excellent means of showing crime activity across the nation.\*\***

Schedule the Crime Prevention Coordinator to come to your residence and conduct a CPTED evaluation (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design). This evaluation takes about 30 minutes and items looked at are lights, locks, landscape, and security areas. This evaluation will provide you with "options to consider" to make your residence more secure and there is no charge for the evaluation. A CPTED evaluation is a free service offered to home residents and businesses by the Sheriff's Office.

**HELP US HELP YOU BY CHOOSING NOT TO BECOME A VICTIM  
OF CRIME AND MAKING IT TOUGH FOR CRIMINALS TO  
COMMIT THEIR CRIMES.**

## Going on Vacation?

Going on vacation can sometimes be stressful. Let us help you relax a bit. The El Paso County Sheriff's Office provides a service in unincorporated El Paso County when Patrol Deputies or Citizen's Patrol volunteers are available. During these times, they will conduct directed patrol checks at your properties while you are away.

To participate please go to [www.epcsheriffsoffice.com](http://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com) and under Services select Vacation Check Request Form.

## Interested in learning more about the Sheriff's Office?

Are you interested in learning more about what the Sheriff's Office has to offer residents of Unincorporated El Paso County? Request a representative from one of our numerous units to come and speak with your group.

To participate please go to [www.epcsheriffsoffice.com](http://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com) and under Community select Speakers Bureau and submit the Speaker Request.



## FOR EMERGENCIES: DIAL 9-1-1

El Paso County Sheriff's Office Dispatch (non-emergency crime reporting): **390-5555**

EPSO Telephone Reporting System (for minor crimes without suspect information): **520-7111**

EPSO Traffic Hotline (for reporting problem areas or traffic violations): **520-7192**

EPSO Tip Line (for reporting suspicious activity or the location of wanted persons): **520-7777**

***Always remember to report criminal activity or suspicious behavior promptly.***

For more information, contact the Crime Prevention Coordinator: **520-7151**

# Crimes in Your Neighborhood: Highlights From *October/November*

| District 1   |    | District 2                   |    | District 3                   |    |
|--|----|------------------------------|----|------------------------------|----|
| Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)   | 3  | Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)   | 0  | Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)   | 23 |
| Burglaries   | 2  | Burglaries                   | 1  | Burglaries                   | 8  |
| Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)   | 7  | Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA) | 1  | Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA) | 39 |
| Thefts   | 15 | Thefts                       | 14 | Thefts                       | 60 |
| Criminal Mischief  | 19 | Criminal Mischief            | 4  | Criminal Mischief            | 47 |
| District 4   |    | District 5                   |    | District 6                   |    |
| Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)   | 11 | Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)   | 19 | Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)   | 9  |
| Burglaries   | 5  | Burglaries                   | 2  | Burglaries                   | 2  |
| Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)   | 16 | Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA) | 8  | Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA) | 2  |
| Thefts   | 44 | Thefts                       | 47 | Thefts                       | 20 |
| Criminal Mischief  | 25 | Criminal Mischief            | 23 | Criminal Mischief            | 29 |
| <b><i>District 1</i></b> —Woodmoor/Canterbury, Gleneagle, Kings Deer, Club Villas, Palmer Lake, Monument |    | District 7                   |    | District 8                   |    |
|  |    | Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)   | 12 | Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)   | 0  |
|  |    | Burglaries                   | 1  | Burglaries                   | 2  |
|  |    | Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA) | 14 | Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA) | 2  |
|  |    | Thefts                       | 25 | Thefts                       | 4  |
| <b><i>District 2</i></b> —Black Forest, Wissler Ranch, Hawk Ridge  |    | Criminal Mischief            | 13 | Criminal Mischief            | 1  |

**District 1**—Woodmoor/Canterbury, Gleneagle, Kings Deer, Club Villas, Palmer Lake, Monument

**District 2**—Black Forest, Wissler Ranch, Hawk Ridge

**District 3**—Cimarron Hills, Constitution Hills, Claremont Ranch, Park Vista & Siefert

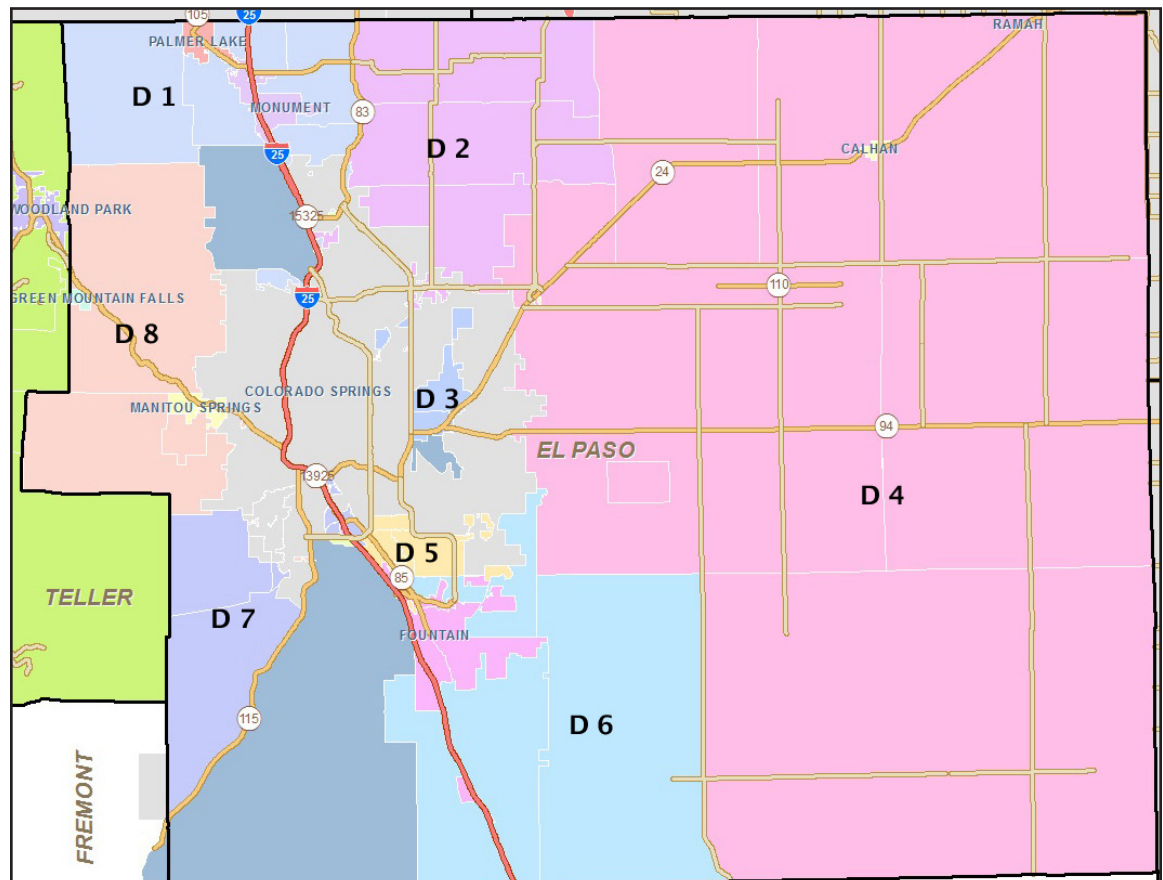
**District 4**—Woodmen Hills, Falcon, areas east of Meridian Road

**District 5**—Security, Fountain Valley, Colorado Centre, Clearview Estates, Southmoor

**District 6**—Widefield and Little Ranches area

**District 7**—Stratmoor Valley, Stratmoor Hills, B Street, Hwy 115

**District 8**—West Colorado Avenue, Ute Pass, Green Mountain Falls, Cascade, Rampart Range



**\*\*The above statistics reflect the various assigned Sheriff's Office districts and furthermore illustrate a "snapshot" of what the Sheriff's Office is experiencing across El Paso County. If you are interested in individual neighborhoods or areas, please contact Brent Ambuehl, the Crime Prevention Coordinator for the Sheriff's Office at (719) 520-7151 or email at [brentambuehl@elpasoco.com](mailto:brentambuehl@elpasoco.com) for more specific information. You can also utilize the Community Crime Map from Lexis Nexis to provide a snapshot of the criminal activity in your neighborhood or community\*\***



## Upcoming Events

### Cocoa with a Cop

Saturday, December 21, 2019

9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Starbucks, 5070 North Nevada Avenue, Colorado Springs

*Join Sheriff Elder, the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, local and State law enforcement officers for an informal and friendly conversation. This is a great time to speak with these folks on issues or concerns that might be on your mind.*



The 2020 calendar is still be finalized so please stay tuned for updates in the next newsletter and via e-mail dissemination.