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**THE SALEM CITY  
CRIME PREVENTION  
CONNECTION**

SALEM CITY  
POLICE

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## Who, What, When, Where

November 2010



The chances of being a victim of crime are fairly slim; however, if there is one lesson to be learned from acts of crime it is that they can occur anywhere at anytime.

According to Benjamin Franklin there is nothing certain but death and taxes. Fortunately, "crime" is not part of his famous quote, and for good reason. Most crimes are truly preventable and taking the right steps to deter or prevent crime will keep you and your property safe. Let's face it, most burglars, thieves and other criminals aren't looking for the *hardest* home to burglarize or the most difficult person to rob; they are looking for the *easiest* route to gaining what they want and what they think they need to support their lifestyle.

So let's imagine their mindset. There are two houses on a block that are nearly identical and have generally the same value of items inside. One house is dark with windows left open because the residents left on a vacation and forgot to check all their windows. The other house is also owned by a family on vacation. However their house is illuminated with lights on timers and they've locked all their doors and windows. What would be the logical choice for a burglar? Easy enough, they would go for the target with the least resistance and the lowest potential for someone being home! This can translate into just about every aspect of our life. From parking our car and leaving it full of enticing items or going for a walk late at night in an area we know is unsafe. There are countless examples of not acting with a prevention mindset that sets us up for being a victim or easy target.

While you may not be the target of a criminal act, you may be a witness to one of their deeds, and by getting involved you can help make our community safer by helping us locate and prosecute those who commit criminal acts. No, we're not talking about becoming the "hero" of the day and rushing in to capture a criminal. That could be dangerous and may actually cause more of a problem than the original criminal act. What we're talking about is being an OBSERVER. Paying attention to what is happening to you or others will help us identify who committed the crime and quite possibly help us in prosecuting them for their crime.

Whether you are the victim or merely the person witnessing what is or has just occurred, you can make a positive impact. It begins with remembering what you saw. Here are some tips to keep in mind and practice with the family on how to describe persons and vehicles:

**People:** Practice describing someone with the family, especially younger people that may not normally be observant to what has or is occurring.

- **Step 1:** Begin with the overall basics of a person: their gender, ethnicity, approximate age, height and weight, hair color and style.
- **Step 2:** Then work from the top down, inside out. Begin with the shirt they are wearing and move out to the jacket. Continue down to their belt, pants, socks and shoes.
- **Step 3:** Fill in the blanks! There are many minor parts to a person's description that can help law enforcement narrow down who it is. Again, start from the top and work your way down. Begin with their head. Do they have anything special about their hair (style), jewelry on the face/ears, glasses, facial hair and did they say anything that may reveal their identity? Continuing down, did they have other jewelry, watches, rings or a special belt buckle? Think of everything that makes the person unique and stand out from another person.

**Vehicles:** This can also be a fun game to play on those, long, long road trips! Can you describe a vehicle's make, model and color? How about the approximate year of the vehicle and a description of the *type* of vehicle (i.e. pickup, SUV, sedan, etc.)?

The very best descriptor is the license plate. How fast and from how far can you read a license plate? Give it a try and figure out who in the family has the best eyesight!

Finally, is there anything else that stands out about the vehicle? Description of the occupants, a bumper sticker, damage, specialty equipment? Anything that sets the vehicle apart from other similar vehicles will help us find them and take appropriate action. Being observant, preventive and prepared is the recipe for safety and security!

**Get help!** For a crime in progress or one that just occurred dial 9-1-1. Once we get the word and can begin responding there's a better chance of apprehending the person who committed the crime, as well as providing assistance to you or the victim.

## Turkey Travel... drive (fly) safe



The holidays bring out the best, and (unfortunately) sometimes the worst in people. It's one thing to be a less than enthusiastic holiday fan, but when you let excessive or unsafe alcohol get in the way, it can be more than just a bad day for you, it can be a dangerous day for others.

Each year the horror stories of driving under the influence begin to emerge around the holidays. When it should be time for family, fun and get-togethers it becomes a time of sadness because someone had too much to drink and got behind one of the most deadliest *unintended* weapons in society: the automobile.

Selecting a family member or friend to be the designated driver is still the way to go, but make sure they are fully committed to this responsibility; they must consume NO alcohol. **Even Better...** How about eliminating the possibility of driving under the influence by just using public transportation such as taxis, buses, light rail or trains?

Many people who are arrested for driving under the influence of an intoxicant claim they had no idea their driving was impaired as much as it was. In fact, many drunk drivers are the first to claim "I can handle my alcohol!" The monetary cost of drunk driving is steep; however, there is no comparison to the cost of a collision in which someone was injured or killed...how would the injury of a loved one affect you?

Not everyone is getting behind the wheel for a Thanksgiving trip to grandma's, but rather jumping on a plane to bypass the holiday road traffic. When getting ready for your plane trip, keep these tips in mind to make sure your holiday, isn't for the birds (sorry, no pun intended!).



- ➔ Label ALL luggage, including carry-on's, with your name, address and phone.
- ➔ Don't take things you don't need! That's certainly easier said than done but taking
- ➔ expensive small items (fine jewelry, excessive cash, small electronics) is taking a needless risk.
- ➔ Follow the guidelines established by the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) and confirm that everything you have in your carry-on AND your checked luggage complies with current safety requirements.
- ➔ You've heard it on the overhead speakers...but they really do mean it! Don't leave ANYTHING unattended. You don't want to be the person left holding the bag...the wrong bag!
- ➔ Most importantly, HAVE A GREAT THANKSGIVING.

What can I bring on a plane in my carry-on and checked luggage?  
Find out by visiting the Transportation Safety Administration at: [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

## Winter Driving Challenges

The weather is a changing. As the winter season approaches, driving becomes a little more of a challenge and certainly creates conditions that can be hazardous to other motorists and pedestrians.

Check out your vehicle now to be sure you are ready for winter driving conditions. Make sure that you vehicle is in good operating order and that you have the equipment



necessary to change a tire, make a minor repair or worse-case scenario; have to wait in your vehicle in cold weather for help to arrive.

It's also time to check your speed. While it's never a good time to push a little too hard on the accelerator, winter is the worst time to push your speed beyond what's safe and legal. Your stopping distance increases with wet or slippery road conditions and while you may feel you have good control over your vehicle, your tires, brakes and the roadway may have a different idea.

Slow down and keep the distance between you and the vehicle in front far enough to not only allow for a slow, smooth, stopping or slowing motion, but still have enough room for those emergency fast stops. A little extra room and a little less speed go a long way.

And watch those school zones! Keep a sharp lookout for little pedestrians, crossing guards and traffic signage, as conditions this time of year may make visibility more difficult.

### The Monthly 2do List



Telephones can at times feel like one of life's great annoyances; when the telemarketer calls or the creditor is bugging you for a payment, it can be almost a feeling of dread. But for young people the phone can look like the world's best toy. You pick it up, push a few numbers and *surprise* there's some talking to you! How fun, but not funny!

As much as it's important for everyone to know how to get help fast by calling 9-1-1, it can also be the perfect invitation for young kids to "see what happens." Take some time today to talk about dialing 9-1-1, when it's appropriate and when it's not.

*Imagine someone calling in with a life threatening emergency only to find that all the phone lines to emergency services are clogged with false alarms and calls that aren't emergencies. It can happen, so it's important to educate our young phone users that for every call they make to **emergency services**, it's a call that takes away their time from helping someone really in need.*

If you feel your child is old enough to make a 9-1-1 call in an emergency, begin talking about what they will do when an emergency occurs:

- ✓ Know your address! Although emergency services can in most cases tell where the call is coming from it's important be able to verify that help is being sent to the right location.
- ✓ Be a good listener! Listening to the questions of the emergency services dispatcher and answering them quickly and accurately.
- ✓ Can't talk? If you're unable to talk but need emergency help, dial 9-1-1 and leave the phone off the hook so emergency services can hear what is going on.

Make sure to discuss the most important part of safety... **their safety!** If there is a fire or other emergency in the house that is putting them at risk they need to get out and go to a safe place.

Speaking of a safe place... have you discussed with your young family members where they should go if there is a household emergency such as a fire? Talk about it today and show them where to go and safely wait outside or at a trusted neighbor's house.



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