

October 2023

A Safer Naper --- Crime Prevention

Naperville's reputation as a safe city is due in part to the community's commitment to crime prevention. This month, in celebration of that commitment, NPD's Safer Naper campaign will join the National Crime Prevention Council in recognizing October as "Crime Prevention Month."

Even though crime trends and tactics may change over the years, preventing crime often comes down to the simple task of "removing the opportunity" for a crime to occur. In our community, that means remembering to lock your vehicle, even if parked in the garage, closing your garage door, and making sure your home is secure by locking your doors and windows. In the first six months of 2023, 80 percent of Naperville's residential motor vehicle burglaries and 87 percent of residential burglaries were no-force, meaning they were to unlocked cars and residences. Using locks takes away the "opportunity."

Other simple daily habits can also remove the opportunity for a crime to occur. Some of these habits include practicing situational awareness, following the 9pm Routine, trusting your instincts, and learning to recognize the red flags associated with common frauds and scams.

SECTION 1 – Remove the Opportunity

Ways to take away the "Opportunity" for a Burglary to Motor Vehicle to be committed include:

- Don't leave personal or valuable items in plain view where they might be a temptation. Take all your personal belongings with you. If you must leave personal items, be sure you lock them in the trunk and out of sight before you arrive at your destination.
- Keep your car visible. Try to park in busy, well-lit areas.
- Trust your instincts. If you see suspicious activity, find somewhere else to park. And report the suspicious activity to your local police department.
- When you park your vehicle, be sure to lock your doors, close the sun roof, and roll up your windows; even in your own driveway or garage. Additionally, activate your car's security system.



Find more residential and motor vehicle burglary prevention tips here.

[\[https://www.naperville.il.us/services/naperville-police-department/community-education-and-crime-prevention/burglary-prevention\]](https://www.naperville.il.us/services/naperville-police-department/community-education-and-crime-prevention/burglary-prevention)

SECTION 2 – Practice the 9 PM Routine Every Night

The 9PM Routine encourages residents to get into a nightly routine of making your residence and

vehicle(s) tougher targets for crime by taking proactive steps to combat thefts and break-ins. It helps you develop your own personal security routines by having a designated time to perform these tasks every night. Set a reminder for 9 p.m. to go through the following checklist to make sure your property is secure:

- Remove any valuables from vehicles left outside overnight. Remember, NEVER leave your keys or garage door opener in your vehicle.
- Lock vehicle doors.
- Close the overhead garage door.
- Close and lock all exterior doors and windows. Don't forget to lock the service door from your garage to your house.
- Turn on exterior lights and leave them on until dawn.



SECTION 3 – Practice Situational Awareness

Situational awareness is staying alert, avoiding distractions and being aware of your surroundings. By practicing situational awareness, you can avoid being in dangerous situations and even identify criminal behavior. Here are a few tips to help you hone this personal safety skillset:

- **Identify Your Surroundings:** The first step in achieving situational awareness is to become aware of what is around you. Identify the type of environment are you in (i.e., large crowd compared to a secluded area). Observe other people and their actions.
- **Avoid Complacency:** Actively keep yourself in the right mindset. Never assume that because you've done something safely before that nothing will happen this time. Continue to challenge yourself and those around you to be prepared for contingencies. Do a mental check every now and then.
- **Have a Plan:** Talking with your family about what to do in different situations will prepare them for when it happens. Knowing what to do beforehand will allow you to stay calm and better handle the situation. Create preparedness and response plans with your family to address likely risks.
- **Trust Your Feelings:** Listen to your gut. When you have a feeling that something is wrong, trust it. It is better to be wrong and safe than ignore the feeling and expose you or your family to danger.

Call 911 for crimes in progress and Crime Stoppers to provide anonymous tips about a crime.
[enter "Crime Stoppers How It Works" video here]

SECTION 4 – Learn the Signs of a Scam

Frauds and Scams continue to be big business for criminals. From Jan 2023 thru August 2023, NPD took 83 scam reports for a loss of \$922,214. The most frequently reported scams were those through online marketplaces, home repair fraud, and job posting/employment scams. The employment scams consisted of a 'company' mailing the 'new hire' a check to purchase supplies for the new job, but the 'new hire' also had to withdraw the money from their personal account to purchase gift cards for the company. Visit www.naperville.il.us/fraudscam to learn more about common scams and how to avoid them.

Although there are many ways in which one can be a victim of a fraud or scam, and criminals are always finding new ways in which to commit fraud, there are some red flags and common denominators to look for.

Here are some red flags of frauds and scams:

- Scammers use the tactic of making you think the matter is urgent and you need to act immediately
- Payment is demanded by gift cards or through money transfers like MoneyGram and Western Union
- Callers use intimidation to make you think you have done something wrong
- Emails and texts often contain misspellings and grammatical errors
- The offer seems too good to be true
- You have been asked to give out personal secure information such as passwords or pins

Here are the FTC's tips for avoiding scams:

- **Block unwanted calls and text messages.** Take steps to block unwanted calls and to filter unwanted text messages.
- **Don't give your personal or financial information in response to a request that you didn't expect.** Legitimate organizations won't call, email, or text to ask for your personal information, like your Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers. If you get an email or text message from a company you do business with and you think it's real, it's still best not to click on any links. Instead, contact them using a website you know is trustworthy. Or look up their phone number. Don't call a number they gave you or the number from your caller ID.
- **Resist the pressure to act immediately.** Legitimate businesses will give you time to make a decision. Anyone who pressures you to pay or give them your personal information is a scammer.
- **Know how scammers tell you to pay.** Never pay someone who insists you pay with a gift card or by using a money transfer service. And never deposit a check and send money back to someone.
- **Stop and talk to someone you trust.** Before you do anything else, tell someone — a friend, a family member, a neighbor — what happened. Talking about it could help you realize it's a scam.

If you are a victim of fraud or are scammed, report it immediately to your local Police Department and also [report it to the Federal Trade Commission](#).

SECTION 5 – Know What’s Going On in the Community

It is often stated that our number one defense against crime is a well-educated and aware citizenry, and the Naperville Police Department is dedicated to this goal. That’s why it places a high value on transparency and regularly shares, communicates, and collaborates with the citizens of Naperville.

Here are a few ways residents can stay up to date on crime trends and receive information from the department:

- [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) – The police department maintains active accounts on these popular social media platforms to provide the public with crime updates, crime prevention information, and department news.
- [Press Releases](#) – Anyone can sign up to receive press releases from the City of Naperville, including dozens sent annually by the Naperville Police Department on topics such as recent crimes, arrests, and enforcement campaigns, among others.
- [Public Safety Incident Map](#) – See Naperville’s crime and police incidents plotted out visually on an interactive map that allows users to customize their desired time frame and location, as well as the types of incidents they’re interested in seeing. The map is updated throughout the day as new reports are approved.
- [Open Data Portal](#) – Incidents reported to or by the Naperville Police Department are available as raw datasets on the City of Naperville’s Open Data Portal, which is updated daily.
- [Crime stats](#) – Twice each year, the Naperville Police Department releases an overview of local crime statistics to the public. These reports are posted on the department’s website and include raw numbers in addition to analysis of current trends.