

# STAFFORD STAR

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November 2011

## STAFFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

### Message from Sheriff Jett

With the coming holiday season comes an excitement that is for people of all ages. One of the joys of this season is getting a gift or two for a family member or friend. Unfortunately, one of the elements of society that also enjoys the "season" is the segment of the population that steals from law abiding citizens in a number of creative ways. I have listed in this letter some shopping safety tips that will help ensure that your holiday season is one that you will remember in a positive way! I hope these suggestions will help.

Sheriff Charles Jett

- Stay alert and be aware of what is going on around you.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with check or credit card.
- Park in well-lighted space and be sure to lock your car. Place all shopping bags and gifts in the trunk.
- Carry a purse close to your body and make sure your wallet is in an inside coat or front pants pocket.
- Shopping with kids? Teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.



If you are shopping online remember these tips:

- Shop with companies that you know.
- Keep your password private.
- Use a secure browser.
- Keep personal information private.
- Save all transaction information.

### Building the Foundation of Community and Law Enforcement Partnerships

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#### Upcoming Events

- **Cover the Car-Special Olympics**  
Saturday November 19th. Brooke Point HS. Stafford Fire Department Craft Show 9:30-3:00pm.
- **Food Drive-** The Sheriff's Office will be collecting food for Serve between 9:00am and 1:00pm at Brooke Point HS.
- **Thanksgiving Holiday-**  
Thursday November 24 and Friday November 25, 2011. County Offices Closed.
- **Scam Buster's (Business Watch)**  
2nd Tuesday of each month  
Tuesday, December 13 (2PM at PSC)

### Ask Crime Prevention

The Crime Prevention Unit would like to answer questions you may have about various law enforcement subjects (such as terminology, D.A.R.E. Program, upcoming events, etc.). If you have any questions, call us at 540-658-4030, fax us at 540-658-4039, or email us [crimeprevention@co.stafford.va.us](mailto:crimeprevention@co.stafford.va.us).

## SHOULD I LOCK MY CAR?

**Yes!!!!**

The Sheriff's Office receives calls of vehicle larcenies on a regular basis! And the majority of these larcenies occur with vehicles that have been left unlocked!

PLEASE lock your vehicle no matter where it is parked. Many times thieves will stroll neighborhood streets late at night while most are asleep, looking for vehicles that they do not have to work to break into. Do not help a thief! Lock your car!

So you may lock your car, but does your son or daughter? Aunt or uncle? Mom or dad? Grandparents? Cousins? Neighbors? Coworkers? Friends? Spread the word, encourage everyone you know to lock their vehicles whenever they are unoccupied!

It would also help to keep valuables out of the car and secured inside your home. Do not leave things of value in plain view (either take out of the vehicle or secure in the trunk, though it is best to remove anything of value from the car).

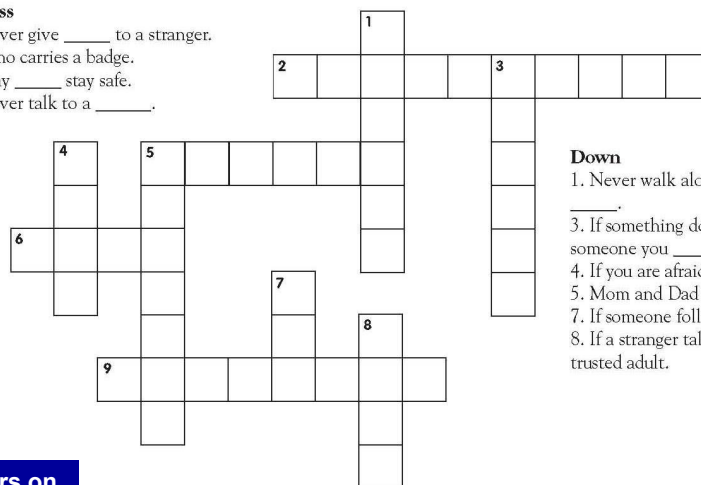
Though locking your vehicle may not guarantee it will be "safe" from crime, it is less likely to happen to you! **LOCK YOUR VEHICLE!!**



### Stranger Danger

**Across**

- 2. Never give \_\_\_\_\_ to a stranger.
- 5. Who carries a badge.
- 6. Stay \_\_\_\_\_ stay safe.
- 9. Never talk to a \_\_\_\_\_.



**Down**

- 1. Never walk alone, always go with a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3. If something does not feel right, tell someone you \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4. If you are afraid yell for \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5. Mom and Dad
- 7. If someone follows you \_\_\_\_\_ away.
- 8. If a stranger talks to you, \_\_\_\_\_ a trusted adult.

Visit McGruff online at:

[www.McGruff.org](http://www.McGruff.org)

**Child Safety Info**

More information about child safety can be found on our website

[www.staffordsheriff.com/content/childsafety/](http://www.staffordsheriff.com/content/childsafety/)

and

[www.staffordsheriff.com/content/safkids/](http://www.staffordsheriff.com/content/safkids/)

**Answers on Page 5**

## Stranger Danger

**With the recent events that occurred in Spotsylvania & Stafford Countys the crime prevention unit would like to offer a few safety tips to pass on to your children while walking or waiting for the school bus.**

### Being careful with strangers

Do not talk to strangers. Talking to them makes it easier for them to trick you. Say "go ask an adult". This is not being rude, it is being safe.

Keep your distance from a stranger. You do not want them to get close enough to grab you. At least two arms lengths is a good rule of thumb. No one has the right to touch you or make you feel uncomfortable. Yell "No!" It is your right. Tell your parents as soon as possible if this happens.

Never accept a gift, candy, or anything from a stranger. Tell your parents if a stranger offers you something.

Never help a stranger if they ask you to find a lost dog, cat, or anything. This is likely to be a trick. Grown-ups who need help should ask other grown-ups.

Never help a grown-up with directions. Again, grown-ups should ask grown-ups for help.

Never go near a car with a stranger in it. Don't get in any car without your parents permission. If a car stops near you, do not go near it.

Never go anywhere with a stranger, even if they say they know your parents. Your parents would never ask a stranger to pick you up.

### Being careful outside

Don't walk around alone, try to stay with friends, parents, or other relatives.

When you are out in public, make sure your parents can always see you.

Do not take short cuts through bush/park lands or down dark alleys. Stay on the heavily traveled streets, where there is lots of activity. Stay away from places where there are no people around.

Be alert to your surroundings. If you have your music blasting away on the iPod, it is hard to stay alert.

People who look friendly are not always nice. **Keep safe** with these tips:

Never go with a stranger to help look for a lost pet or play a game.

Never get into a car with anyone you don't know.

If a stranger bothers you, run away and ask an adult for help.

Know safe places you can go. Try a police or fire station, the library, a store or a friend's house.

Tell your parents about places or people that make you feel unsafe.

Talk to your parents and come up with a secret code word for emergencies. Never go with anyone unless they know the secret code word.

Know how and when to call **9-1-1**.

Never open the door to a stranger.

Never tell anyone on the phone you are alone.

Do not tell a stranger your name, phone number or address.



## LOCK UP to LOCK OUT CRIME!



*Criminals are equal opportunity thieves*

**IF YOU HAVE LOCKS, USE THEM! If you DON'T have locks, GET SOME!**

Protect yourself against crime by using these tips to help prevent crime from happening to you!

<b>LOCK</b> your home	Do NOT leave items in plain view (such as wallets/purses in the passenger seat, or keys in the cup holder, or computer in the passenger seat, etc.)
<b>LOCK</b> your garage	
<b>LOCK</b> your car	Do NOT leave windows down if you're away from your car for a period of time
<b>LOCK</b> your windows	Do NOT leave items unattended in a public place
<b>LOCK</b> your locker	Do NOT leave personal identification in an open area
<b>LOCK</b> your shed	Do NOT leave your keys in your vehicle (especially in plain view)
<b>LOCK</b> your doors	Do NOT leave items of value unsecured (i.e. ATVs, motorcycles, lawn equipment)

## Business Corner

The Crime Prevention Unit Business Watch lead Deputy Jim Hamilton notes a few of the current trends:

- With Holidays fast approaching cashiers should be aware of security features of US cash, particularly \$20.00 and \$100.00
- The use of cloned credit cards are also on the rise. Check photo ID with credit card purchase and match credit card number on card with cashier screen.
- Organized groups are targeting lap tops, TV;s, game systems, watches, knife sets, jewelry and other electronics.
- Other trends are alcohol thefts as well as high dollar grocery items.

Be aware and have a safe holiday season.



**Crime Prevention tip:** Be safe and keep the eyes open!

### SCAM BUSTERS WORKS!

You either work for a business or visit a business almost every day. It is important to be aware of the various crime trends that are occurring in and around Stafford County!

At the **Scam Busters** meetings, area businesses share and learn what the crime trends are in the area. There can be pictures, videos, descriptions, and specific incidents shared! Criminal cases have been solved because of the information shared at this meeting!

**Tuesday, December 13**

2-3 PM

Stafford Public Safety Center (1225 Courthouse Rd.)

Come to a Scam Busters meeting to learn ...  
what is happening, what could happen, and how to help prevent loss for you company!

For more information, contact Deputy Jim Hamilton 540-658-4112 or [jhamilton@co.stafford.va.us](mailto:jhamilton@co.stafford.va.us)

# SMISHING?



## How it works

"Phishing" is when you get an e-mail from a supposedly trustworthy source, such as your bank or PayPal, claiming a problem with your account and asking for your user name and password. When you respond, your information is stolen and your account is siphoned. "Smishing" is the latest twist on that scam—instead of getting an e-mail, you get a text message. (The word is a combination of "SMS," for short message service, aka text messaging, and "phishing.") You're told to call a toll-free number, which is answered by a bogus interactive voice-response system that tries to fool you into providing your account number and password.

"It works because people don't give their cell-phone numbers out," Krebs says. "If someone has my cell number, I figure it's someone I know." Thieves can use random-dialing telemarketing services to hit on your number, says Rod Rasmussen, president and CTO of IID, an Internet security firm. If you belong to a credit union, be especially wary—members are targets because often the call-back number has a local area code, not an 800 number, which makes victims less likely to suspect a hoax, Rasmussen says.

## Prevent it

If you get a text alert about an account, don't respond before you verify that it's legitimate. You can do a Google search on the number to see whether it matches your financial institution. Even better, call the customer-service number at your bank or other service provider to give any needed information to a representative.

The above article is from ConsumerReports.org November.

The Better Business Bureau advises consumers to do the following if they suspect they have fallen victim to a "smishing" scam:

**NEVER REPLY TO THE TEXT MESSAGE.** Schemers are preying on victims who text back and ultimately verify that the text has been sent to an active cellphone. If the message has a link in it, never click it. Many schemers use this as way to spread a viral attack on your phone.

**CALL YOUR CELLPHONE PROVIDER.** Your cellphone provider should be able to block the number, as well as any premium text messages.

**REPORT THE TEXT IMMEDIATELY.** If you believe you have fallen victim to a "smishing" bank scam, call your bank. They'll be able to tell you for certain if the text is legitimate.

Answer to puzzle from page 2

1. Friend, 3. Trust, 4. Help, 5. Parents, 7. Run, 8. Tell

Down:

1. Directions, 5. Police, 6. Alert, 9. Stranger

Across:

**STAFFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Crime Prevention Unit  
Physical Address: 1225 Courthouse Road  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 189  
Stafford, VA 22555

Phone: 540-658-4450  
Fax: 540-658-4039  
E-mail: [crimeprevention@co.stafford.va.us](mailto:crimeprevention@co.stafford.va.us)



**MISSION STATEMENT**

We, the men and women of the Stafford County Sheriff's Office, in partnership with the community, are dedicated to enhancing the quality of life by maintaining order, protecting life and property, and reducing the fear of crime.

We will ensure the peace and safety of all citizens by upholding the Constitution of the United States and of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

As leaders of the community,  
we will embrace our core beliefs:

***Integrity, Compassion, Fairness, and Professionalism***

**STAFFORD**

**CRIME  
SOLVERS**



**Crime Doesn't Pay - Crime Solvers Does!**

**659-2020**

**TEXT-A-TIP to CRIMES (274637) keyword STAFFORD**

**WEB-TIP online at [www.staffordercrimesolvers.com](http://www.staffordercrimesolvers.com)**

**FOOD DRIVE**

Stafford County Sheriff's Office  
will be collecting food to help  
fight hunger.

**Where:** Brooke Point High  
School

**When:** Saturday November  
19th, from 9am-1pm.

