



Ramsey County Sheriff's Office

Bob Fletcher, Sheriff

Neighborhood Watch

Public Safety Services Division – Crime Prevention Unit

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www.RamseyCountySheriff.us

Neighbors and Deputies working together for safer communities



Block Captain News – July 2023

Next Event Tuesday, August 1 – Night to Unite

Your neighborhood or one near you
Usually conducted sometime between 5-9pm
Deputies, Firefighters, others visit registered events

In this issue:

Night to Unite registration reminder
CERT training opportunity
MnDOT vehicle breakdown info
Pop-Up scams hit locally
Online gaming privacy settlements
Summer Community Events

Next Block Captain Meeting – in July in each contract community

There will be a combined Block Captains meeting and Night to Unite event material distribution in each of the seven communities that will happen sometime between July 17 and July 27 at your city hall. Look for the date and time information with your email confirmation notice of event registration. We will be sending a reminder email prior to each local event.

Night to Unite – Tuesday, August 1, 2023

Mark your calendars, get together with your neighbors to make plans for participating in this annual public safety event. Register your event online with the Sheriff's office at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NTU2023>

Registration helps the Sheriff's Office and Fire Departments with scheduling visits to your event! **Registration deadline is Friday, July 14, 2023.**

Event planning tools are available on the Ramsey County Sheriff's [website](#). Materials and items for distribution at block parties will be distributed in mid/late-July to Event Hosts at meetings at local city halls. More details and rsvp information will be sent when you register your event.



CERT Academy – Community Emergency Response Training

The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office will be conducting a CERT Academy this Fall for **NEW** students.

The 2023 CERT Academy training sessions will be held starting September 13, 2023, through November 8, 2023. The sessions are held on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-9:30 pm for nine consecutive weeks.

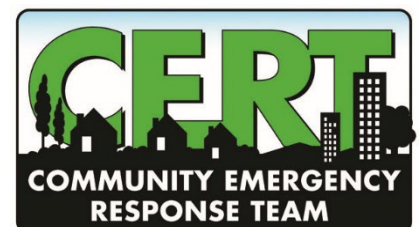
Applications will be accepted through Friday, July 14, 2023, on first-come-first-served basis.

[2023 Application](#) (pdf)

Classes are limited to 25 students. The CERT Program is available to all residents of the State of Minnesota who are 18 years and older.

Participants must pass a criminal background check. Participants must commit to the entire nine-week session.

Questions may be directed to the CERT mailbox: cert@co.ramsey.mn.us



FIRST - Freeway Incident Response Safety Team

The primary purpose of the FIRST program, formerly known as Highway Helper program, is to minimize congestion and prevent secondary crashes through the quick response and removal of incidents. About half of the traffic congestion on Twin Cities freeways is caused by incidents such as crashes, stalled vehicles, or debris in the roadway. These incidents also cause about 15 percent of freeway crashes.



What does FIRST do?

- **Reduce congestion** by locating, assisting, and removing stalled vehicles, crashes, and debris from freeway lanes.
- **Assist State Patrol with traffic control and scene security at crash scenes-** FIRST trucks are outfitted with portable message boards as seen in the picture.
- **Support State Patrol with first aid at crash scenes-** FIRST personnel are trained as EMS First Responders.
- **Push disabled vehicles out of the traffic lanes and assists in removing debris-** all FIRST trucks have push-bumpers to remove vehicles from the traffic lanes. FIRST trucks do not provide towing services.
- **Help with emergency vehicle repairs by:**
 - Providing enough gas to get to the nearest service station
 - Using an air compressor, floor-jack and tire iron for flats. Floor jacks lessen the time to change a flat tire (quicker than it would take an average motorist to set up a scissor-type jack).
 - Supplying coolant, water, and duct tape for radiator hose repairs

When are FIRST trucks on the road?

[FIRST trucks patrol eleven routes, covering 220 miles of metro area freeways.](#) They are on the roads from 3:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, with limited coverage on the weekends.

How do they know when to respond to an incident?

FIRST are dispatched by the MnDOT's Regional Transportation Management Center (RTMC). The dispatcher uses a Global Positioning System to track FIRST vehicles and can find the closest vehicle to an incident so they can respond as quickly as possible.

What To Do If Your Car Breaks Down

Be prepared for the unexpected vehicle breakdown. Here are suggestions to keep yourself safe:

1. Turn on your **emergency flashers**.
2. Gently **slow down** and work your vehicle toward the breakdown lane or side of the road. If you are on an interstate, try to reach an exit. Don't forget to signal when changing lanes.
3. When stopped, turn your wheels away from the road and put on the emergency brake.
4. **Stay in your vehicle.** Keep your seatbelt on and fastened. If you need to get out of the car, get your vehicle to a safe place and make sure the road around you is completely clear. If you're stopped on the right-hand side of the road, get out through the passenger-side door.
5. Once off the road, make your **vehicle visible**. Once you're safely out of the vehicle, prop up your hood, place flares or triangles with reflectors behind your car to alert other drivers
6. **Get professional help.** Call a tow truck or roadside assistance, **call 911**. If someone stops and offers to help, open the window slightly and ask them to call the police. Watch for a uniformed police officer or other emergency personnel. All major roads are patrolled regularly.
7. Have a flat tire? Only change it if it can be done safely without being close to traffic. Personal safety first!

8. **Don't walk on an interstate**, especially during inclement weather. However, if you can reach a source of help on foot, without jeopardizing your physical or personal safety, try the direct approach by walking. Keep as far from traffic as possible and walk on the right side of the roadway. Never attempt to cross a multi-lane, high speed roadway.

Make sure your vehicle has the necessary equipment and supplies for emergencies, especially during the winter months. Consider a roadside assistance membership plan, often available from your car insurance company or an independent provider.

Web browsing Pop-Ups steal thousands from local residents

Deputies took five reports within seven days in mid-June from residents who responded to “pop-ups” on their computer claiming problems with either their banking account, computer virus, or account security breach. Upon calling the suggested phone number our local friends were soon drawn into to the scammer’s scare tactics to convince the victims to give up tens of thousands of their hard-earned money.

Fortunately, in two cases the victims were advised by bank tellers that they were being scammed and they avoided loss. Scammer tactics to look out for include using bitcoin, gift cards, cash transfers, granting access to computer, and other means where the money cannot be traced or recovered.

So, before you click the link in the pop-up or call that number, stop. Talk to someone you trust. And remember:

- Never share your bank account, credit card, or Social Security number with anyone who contacts you.
- Somebody who tells you to pay with a gift card, money transfer, or Bitcoin is a scammer. Always.

When faced with a scammer, you can regain control of the situation. Hang up. Turn off your computer. Take a deep breath and report it.



Current alerts in the world of scams and consumer worries

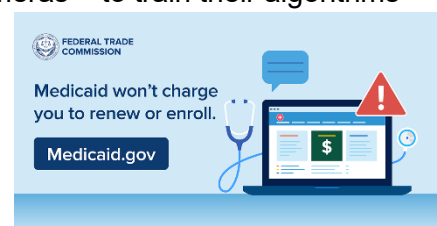
The Federal Trade Commission and the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) issue regular alerts and articles on current issues. Topics with links to details follow:

Fortnite Refunds. Epic Games, the company responsible for the popular online video game Fortnite, has agreed to pay \$245 million to settle FTC allegations related to in-game purchases. According to the FTC, the company charged parents and gamers of all ages for unwanted items and locked the accounts of customers who disputed wrongful charges with their credit card companies. [FTC plans to use settlement money to refund Fortnite gamers.](#)

Xbox Settlement. Used by millions of gamers – many of whom are under 13 – Microsoft’s Xbox Live is an online gaming network that allows people to play through their Xbox Consoles. The FTC’s action focuses on three ways in which Microsoft allegedly violated COPPA. [\\$20 million settlement.](#)

Hey, Alexa! What are you doing with my data? What you say in your home, what you *do* in your home. It doesn’t get more private than that. But, according to two recent FTC complaints, [Amazon](#) and [Ring](#) used this highly private data – voice recordings collected by Amazon’s Alexa voice assistant and videos collected by Ring’s internet-connected home security cameras – to train their algorithms while giving short shrift to customers’ privacy.

Medicaid: Spotting the scams. Now that the health emergency declaration is over, people eligible for Medicaid have to re-enroll in their state’s program or find new insurance, if they’re not eligible. [So, where do the scams come in?](#) There is no charge to renew or enroll in Medicaid. The article has more tips too.



Community events this summer season

There are many events happening in our local communities throughout the year. This summer season offers fun events for the whole family. Here's a few that might be worth checking out:

Arden Hills – Penny Carnival on Friday July 21 from 1 - 3 pm, Perry Park, 3700 New Brighton Road, Arden Hills info: <https://www.cityofardenhills.org/Calendar.aspx?EID=3806> Team Scavenger Hunt on Wednesday August 9 register by August 2, info: <https://www.cityofardenhills.org/Calendar.aspx?EID=3805>

Falcon Heights - Ice Cream Social on Thursday July 20 from 5 - 7 pm, Community Park, 2050 Roselawn Ave info: <https://www.falconheights.org/residents/city-events/ice-cream-social>

Little Canada - Canadian Days August 4 - 6 <https://www.littlecanadamn.org/399/About-Canadian-Days> Ice Cream Social and Movies in the Park on Thursday August 3 from 6 – 8 pm, Spooner Park Amphitheater info: <https://www.littlecanadamn.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=263>

North Oaks - Rummage Sale September 16 - 17 <http://www.northoaksrummagesale.org/>

Shoreview - Slice of Shoreview Days July 21 - 23 @ Island Lake County Park <https://www.sliceofshoreview.com/> Kidz Concert in the Commons 10-10:45 am / Concert in the Commons 7-8:30 pm Wednesdays through August 9 [Shoreview calendar](#)

Vadnais Heights - Heritage Days August 19 - 20 <http://www.cityvadnaisheights.com/459/Heritage-Days> Music in the Park Series Wednesdays 6-8pm info: <http://cityvadnaisheights.com/264/Music-in-the-Park-Series>

White Bear Township - Township Day Saturday, September 16 from 2:00-8:00 pm, Polar Lakes Park <http://www.whitebear township.org/239/Township-Day-Celebration>

Neighborhood Watch is about Neighbors and Deputies working together

Involved neighbors are more likely to have open communication lines with each other, deputies, and the whole community. When neighbors know each other's names, normal patterns, and look out for each other, it is likely that they will report any activity that doesn't fit with regular schedules. Involved neighbors look out for each other.

Information sharing on crime prevention, crime trends, and law enforcement issues is a key element to the Neighborhood Watch program of the Sheriff's Office.

Neighborhood Watch program [information and forms](#) to help your block organization are available on the county [website](#). Please complete and return the [Block Captain registration form](#) to ensure the Sheriff's Office has your most current contact information. THANKS!

Online information of activity in your neighborhood – CommunityCrimeMap.com



Mark your calendars for 2023 events:

Tuesday, August 1 –between 5pm to 9pm dependent upon neighborhood – **Night to Unite**
Details for 3rd & 4th quarter meetings and distribution of Night to Unite materials will be emailed

Thank you for working for safer neighborhoods!



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Remember – when you See Something, Say Something, Call 9-1-1