



# Watch Works

Charles County  
Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Rex W. Coffey  
January/February 2014

## Safe winter driving tips

### Preparing

Carry items in your vehicle to handle common winter driving-related tasks:

- Snow shovel, broom, and ice scraper.
- Abrasive material such as sand or kitty litter, in case your vehicle gets stuck in the snow.
- Jumper cables, flashlight, and warning devices such as flares and emergency markers.
- Blankets for protection from the cold.
- Cell phone with charger, water, food, and any necessary medicine (for longer trips or when driving in lightly populated areas).

### Check

- For gasoline or diesel engines, be aware that it takes more battery power to start your vehicle in cold weather than in warm weather.
- Make sure the battery cable connections are not loose.
- Have a mechanic check the battery power, charging system and belts.
- Check/add coolant.
- Check/add windshield washer fluid.
- Check windshield wipers.
- Check your tires.

### Driving in winter conditions

- Before moving your car, clean snow, ice or dirt from the windows, the forward sensors, headlights, tail lights and back-up camera.
- Drive slowly. It's harder to control or stop your vehicle on a slick or snow-covered surface. On the road, increase your following distance enough so that you'll have plenty of time to stop for vehicles ahead of you.

- Know what kind of brakes your vehicle has and how to use them properly. In general, if you have antilock brakes, apply firm, continuous pressure. If you don't have antilock brakes, pump the brakes gently.
- If you find yourself in a skid, stay calm and ease your foot

off the gas while carefully steering in the direction you want the front of your vehicle to go. This steering maneuver may require additional counter steering before you can regain full control of the vehicle. Continue to stay off the gas and brake pedals until you regain control of your vehicle.

- Stay focused; stow the phone.

### In an emergency

- Stay with your car and don't overexert yourself.
- Put bright markers on the antenna or windows and keep the interior dome light turned on.
- To avoid asphyxiation from carbon monoxide poisoning, don't run your car for long periods of time with the windows up or in an enclosed space. If you must run your vehicle, clear the exhaust pipe of any snow and run it only sporadically (just long enough to stay warm).

### Dates to Remember

**January 20:** Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**February 2:** Groundhog Day

**February 14:** Valentine's Day

**February 17:** Presidents' Day





Rex W. Coffey  
Sheriff

# Office of the Sheriff

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Dear Neighborhood Watch Friends:

Welcome to 2014. We have much to look forward to this year and important work to do, but I want to first take this opportunity to thank you for being part of the Charles County Sheriff's Office family. Our success in the fight against crime is due in great part to the caring and proactive citizens of our community. By being involved and taking a stand, you are making a difference.

Next, I want to discuss three public safety threats I feel we all need to address in the New Year: Burglaries, prescription drug abuse and cyber-crime. First, burglaries continue to be one of our greatest challenges. Commercial burglaries mostly happen at night but residential burglaries happen most frequently during the day, when brazen criminals take advantage of empty homes while families are at work and school. The best way to prevent residential burglaries is for us all to watch out for one another. In other words, be a nosy neighbor! If you see a suspicious person in your neighborhood or someone at your neighbor's house when you know they are not usually home, call us to report it. Always trust your instincts and remember our motto: See Something, Say Something. This applies to any situation that might present a public safety threat.

Secondly, prescription drug abuse is a growing challenge not only in our community but nationwide. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control listed "tackle the prescription drug overdose epidemic" as one of its five resolutions for 2014, ahead of ridding the world of polio. I cannot impress upon you enough how serious this issue is. Sometimes people are under the false and dangerous assumption that abusing prescribed medication is safe but overdosing can lead to death. Moreover, people who abuse prescription medication sometimes take advantage of people who love them by stealing their valuables (to sell them) or their prescribed medication (to use or sell). Help us spread the message that this behavior is dangerous and call us if you need help. Also, remember to use our free Medication Disposal Program if you have prescriptions to discard.

Finally, I want to discuss cyber-crime. This, too, is a growing security challenge and there are steps we all need to take to protect our personal information. For instance, never click a link in an e-mail if you are not entirely sure who sent it. Some hackers design e-mails to look like people or companies you know so be sure to check the address. If you use a smart phone, protect it with a password. Make sure your devices have the latest software updates, which sometimes address security gaps, and never make purchases from unfamiliar websites or over public Wi-Fi. Lastly, if you are not tech-savvy, enlist the help of a family member or friend and, if you *are* tech savvy, consider helping someone who needs it.

*(Over)*

In addition to reading WatchWorks, please consider visiting our website ([www.ccsso.us](http://www.ccsso.us)) and joining us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube for news and other information. You might also consider sharing this message with family and friends, thereby increasing our coalition of crime fighters.

I am truly grateful for all you do and I look forward to working together in 2014 to keep Charles County safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex W. Coffey", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sheriff Rex Coffey



## NOW HEAR THIS...NOT ALL THIEVES ARE STUPID!!

**1.** Some people left their car in the long-term parking at San Jose airport while away, and someone broke into the car. Using the information on the car's registration in the glove compartment, they drove the car to the people's home in Pebble Beach and robbed it. So I guess if we are going to leave the car in long-term parking, we should NOT leave the registration/insurance cards in it, nor your remote garage door opener. This gives us something to think about with all our new electronic technology.

**2. GPS.** Someone had their car broken into while they were at a football game. Their car was parked on the green which was adjacent to the football stadium and specially allotted to football fans. Things stolen from the car included a garage door remote control, some money and a GPS which had been prominently mounted on the dashboard. When the victims got home, they found that their house had been ransacked and just about everything worth anything had been stolen. The thieves had used the GPS to guide them to the house. They then used the garage remote control to open the garage door and gain entry to the house. The thieves knew the owners were at the football game, they knew what time the game was scheduled to finish and so they

knew how much time they had to clean out the house. It would appear that they had brought a truck to empty the house of its contents. Something to consider if you have a GPS - don't put your home address in it... Put a nearby address (like a store or gas station) so you can still find your way home if you need to, but no one else would know where you live if your GPS were stolen.

**3. CELL PHONES** I never thought of this.....

This lady has now changed her habit of how she lists her names on her cell phone after her handbag was stolen. Her handbag, which contained her cell phone, credit card, wallet, etc., was stolen. Twenty minutes later when she called her hubby, from a pay phone telling him what had happened, hubby says 'I received your text asking about our Pin number and I've replied a little while ago.' When they rushed down to the bank, the bank staff told them all the money was already withdrawn. The thief had actually used the stolen cell phone to text 'hubby' in the contact list and got hold of the pin number. Within 20 minutes he had withdrawn all the money from their bank account. Moral of the lesson:

A. Do not disclose the relationship between you and the people in your contact list. Avoid using names like Home, Honey, Hubby, Sweetheart, Dad, Mom, etc....

B. And very importantly, when sensitive info is being asked through texts, CON-

FIRM by calling back.

C. Also, when you're being texted by friends or family to meet them somewhere, be sure to call back to confirm that the message came from them. If you don't reach them, be very careful about going places to meet 'family and friends' who text you.

### 4. Purse In the Grocery-cart Scam...

A lady went grocery-shopping at a local mall and left her purse sitting in the children's seat of the cart while she reached something off a shelf...wait till you read the WHOLE story! Her wallet was stolen, and she reported it to the store personnel. After returning home, she received a phone call from the Mall Security to say that they had her wallet and that although there was no money in it, it did still hold her personal papers. She immediately went to pick up her wallet, only to be told by Mall Security that they had not called her. By the time she returned home again, her house had been broken into and burglarized. The thieves knew that by calling and saying they were Mall Security, they could lure her out of her house long enough for them to burglarize it.

**Although these stories were not local they can happen in any town or city.**



## Keep your new electronics safe.

Dad has his new GPS attached to the windshield. The kids are in the backseat playing their new DS games or watching movies on the new portable DVD player, (Grandma gave them for Christmas) as you head out to visit close friends and family members .

Mom's on her new phone making sure she has the time right for dinner at Aunt Sue's. When you reach your destination don't let a thief ruin your time away. Carry the DS and new phone along with you. Lock up the GPS in the dash. Put the DVD players in the trunk or take

them inside also. A thief walking by would think this was his lucky day. All he has to do is try the doors or break a window. Take a minute and look in the windows of your own car and see what you are offering to strangers. Really, it only takes a minute.



## Identity Theft is a serious crime.

I know you have heard this time and time again. Thieves are getting smarter with so much information out there electronically. At home we can do a few things to protect our identity.

- Shred financial documents and paperwork with personal information before you discard them.
- Protect your Social Security number. Don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet or write your Social Security number on a check. Give it out only if absolutely necessary.
- Don't give out personal information on the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you know who you are dealing with.
- Never click on links sent in unsolicited

emails.

- Don't use an obvious password like your birth date, your mother's maiden name, or the last four digits of your Social Security number.
- Keep your personal information in a secure place at home, especially if you have roommates, employ outside help, or are having work done in your house.

Be alert to signs that require immediate attention:

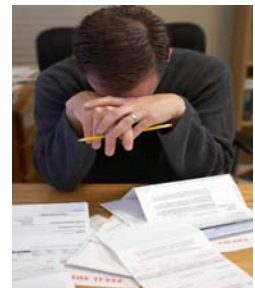
- Bills that do not arrive as expected.
- Unexpected credit cards or account statements.
- Denials of credit for no apparent reason.
- Calls or letters about purchases you did not make.

Inspect your credit report. Credit reports contain information about you, including what accounts you have and your bill paying history.

The law requires the major nationwide consumer reporting companies— Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion—give you a free copy of your credit report each year if you ask for it.

Visit [www.AnnualCreditReport.com](http://www.AnnualCreditReport.com) or call 1-877-322-8228 a service created by these three companies, to order your free credit reports each year. You also can write: Annual Credit Report Request Service P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281

Review financial accounts and billing statements regularly, looking for charges you did not make.





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