

# Neighborhood News

EL PASO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE | 1st Quarter 2023

## Quick Tip:

A well-groomed home may be less susceptible to crime. Make it a habit to care for the exterior of your house and to secure your valuables in a garage or outside storage area. Exterior maintenance, both of your house and yard areas, illustrates residents care for and take pride in their personal property. Keep your porch and patio lights on during evening hours as another deterrent to burglaries.



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Neighborhood Watch Program



## 40th Annual National Night Out Event

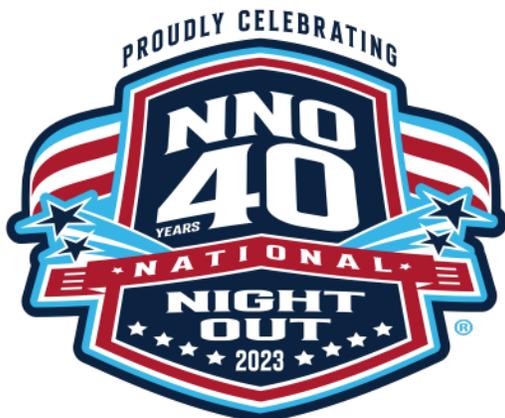
It's that time of year again!! The National Night Out season is underway, and this year's date is set for Tuesday August 1st, 2023 from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM. National Night Out (NNO) is an annual event which promotes crime prevention and drug prevention in communities across the country. The event's recurring theme is: "Give neighborhood crime and drugs a going away party." The El Paso County Sheriff's Office and the National Association of Town Watch is excited to support this nationwide event in a visible presence promoting the prevention of crime within residential neighborhoods.

The concept is simple. Turn on your porch and patio lights and come outside to join your neighbors to demonstrate a show of solidarity and strength. This event is an effective way for citizens to send the message to criminals that they will not tolerate crime in their neighborhoods. It is also a great way to welcome new residents to the area and help them get to know their neighbors.

In addition to the symbolic act of turning on porch and patio lights, residents can hold a block party, barbecue, neighborhood walk or other activity to show their participation. The Sheriff's Office encourages all residents of unincorporated El Paso County to plan an event and let us know about it. On Tuesday August 1st between 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, Sheriff's Office employees will be traveling around El Paso County to attend neighborhood celebrations. If you are having an event, please notify the Crime Prevention Coordinator at 719-520-7151 or [neighborhoodwatch@elpasoco.com](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@elpasoco.com) by Monday July 3rd so we can schedule a representative to attend your event. Numerous emails and Nextdoor postings will also be sent as a reminder.

As previously mentioned, this event is supported by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW). NATW is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the communities in which we live. National Association of Town Watch introduced National Night Out in August of 1984. At that time, over two million neighbors in 400 communities across 23 states participated. The following is an excerpt from National Association of Town Watch explaining the National Night Out philosophy:

"National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live. National Night Out enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement while bringing back a true sense of community. Furthermore, it provides a great opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances. Neighborhoods across the nation host block parties, festivals,



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parades, cookouts and various other community events with safety demonstrations, seminars, youth events, visits from emergency personnel, exhibits and much, much more.” National Night Out has shown tremendous growth and support since its inception in 1984. Currently, National Night Out is celebrated by over 38 million neighbors across 16 thousand communities from all 50 states, U.S. territories and military bases worldwide.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### Do we have to be involved with Neighborhood Watch to participate in National Night Out (NNO)?

- No – anyone in unincorporated El Paso County can participate. (Residents within the city limits of Colorado Springs should contact the Colorado Springs Police Department Crime Prevention Officers for information about their programs).

#### How can we request to close a road during our National Night Out event?

- You can apply to temporarily close your road through the El Paso County Department of Transportation. The application paperwork is included in the packet. If you need additional information, please call the El Paso County Department of Transportation (719) 520-6460.



### Tips and Suggestions:

- Start planning early!
- Contact your neighbors in person – ask them to get involved in any way they can.
- Contact your local fire department and/or paramedics to see if they can visit your celebration and bring a fire truck or ambulance for the kids to explore and learn about.
- Keep meal and refreshment ideas simple – suggest dishes that are easy to transport and serve.
- Plan safe activities for kids of all ages so they will be kept busy and entertained.
- Encourage attendance and participation from local businesses.

If you have further questions about National Night Out or want to schedule a Sheriff's Office representative to attend a function, please contact Mr. Brent Ambuehl, the Crime Prevention Coordinator for the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, at [brentambuehl@elpasoco.com](mailto:brentambuehl@elpasoco.com) or 719-520-7151. You can also send a message to [neighborhoodwatch@elpasoco.com](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@elpasoco.com).

## Catalytic Converter Thefts

The following article was written by Becky Sullivan from NPR radio in Kansas City. El Paso County, and the Nation, is currently experiencing a huge rise in catalytic converter thefts. The below article briefly discusses how these thefts occur, how to prevent yourself from becoming a victim, and furthermore, possible replacement/insurance options:

How can car owners protect themselves from the wave of catalytic converter theft that has swept the country? Claims for stolen catalytic converters doubled in the year ending June 2022, according to State Farm, the largest auto insurer in the U.S., whose customers reported more than 43,200 stolen converters that year.

And since 2019, converter theft has risen 1,215%, according to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, an industry group that tracks insurance-related crimes. On Wednesday, the Department of Justice announced the arrest of 21 people in connection with a crime ring accused of making \$545 million by trafficking stolen catalytic converters.

Catalytic converters – which helps a car clean its exhaust – have become a target for theft in large part because of the price of precious metals, like palladium and platinum, that are used in the parts. And,

crucially, their location on the exterior of a car's underside makes them easy to steal, David Glawe of the NCIB told NPR earlier this year. Stealing a converter takes just a few minutes and a battery-operated saw. "You slide under the car, slice through your exhaust system, and you're in and out usually within 30 seconds to a minute," Glawe said. Especially at risk are cars with enough tire clearance for a thief to easily slide underneath, like SUVs and pickup trucks. Hybrids are also attractive targets because their converters contain even more precious metals.



Replacing a stolen converter can cost thousands. Here are some precautions you can take:

#### **How can I protect my car from catalytic converter theft?**

Insurance companies, mechanics and police departments have recommended a wide range of anti-theft measures designed to deter a would-be thief. “It’s a holistic approach,” said Glawe. The simplest solution is to keep your car away from public access when you’re not using it. If you have access to a garage, keep your car there. Those without a garage should try to park their car in a well-lit area, or somewhere you can install a security camera. But even a garage might not be enough to protect your car. Public parking spots of all kinds have become a target for daytime theft, the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, a recycling industry trade group, has warned. “[At] hospitals, it’s happening because people go to the hospital and either park and visit, or they’re in the hospital for a long period of time, and their car sits there,” said Todd Foreman, the group’s director of law enforcement outreach. “It’s happening to big trucks, to churches.” Some cities have hosted workshops in which car owners can get their vehicle identification numbers engraved on their catalytic converter for free – an indication to would-be buyers that the converter has been stolen. Foreman also recommends painting your converter with brightly colored, high-temperature

paint, which can put off a thief who’d have to scrape it all off before selling. “If they climb under a car and see it’s spray-painted,” he said, “they know they’re more likely to be caught stealing those catalytic converters.” Other solutions might cost a bit of money: Owners can attach alarm systems that are triggered by the vibration of a thief’s saw. Other, more expensive anti-theft devices are designed to make a converter make more cumbersome to remove. Mechanics can also weld on metal plates or rebar to shield the converter.

#### **What should I do if it’s been stolen?**

If your converter has been stolen, you’re likely to notice right away: Without the converter, your car will be much noisier than usual. Most cars will run without a catalytic converter, though it’s inadvisable to do so for longer than necessary. Because the purpose of a catalytic converter is to reduce harmful emissions, cars without one will pollute much more heavily than an intact car, and you could fail an emissions inspection in states that require them. When thieves use a saw to remove a catalytic converter, they can also cause damage to nearby parts of your car, like the alternator or fuel lines. It’s best to get your car checked out by a mechanic as soon as possible. And check your car insurance. Comprehensive coverage on an auto insurance policy will cover damage to your car that occurs outside of a collision – including theft.

## **Neighborhood Watch**

A neighborhood watch program is easy to establish, simply by getting to know your neighbors within your neighborhood. In a Neighborhood Watch community, neighbors keep watch on each other’s homes/property’s and are encouraged to report any suspicious activity to either the Sheriff’s Office, Crime Prevention Coordinator or the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office dispatch center. As one of the most successful community/law enforcement partnerships in the United States, this program aids law enforcement by creating a closer sense of community among citizens and furthermore builds a strong relationship with Sheriff’s Office deputies. Neighbors who know each other become the Sheriff’s Office “eyes and ears” within that community and develop an awareness of unusual circumstances and suspicious behaviors. To learn more about the program, please contact the Crime Prevention Coordinator at 719-520-7151 to schedule a meeting or go to [www.epcsheriffsoffice.com](http://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com) under the Community tab for further details.

## **Crime Prevention**

The El Paso County Sheriff’s Office is committed to helping our citizens keep themselves, their families, and their communities safe from crime, the fear of crime and neighborhood decay. Working collaboratively with other local law enforcement officials, the Sheriff’s Office assists to establish networking systems, provide educational materials, programs, training, and safety tutorials to promote pro-active crime prevention in our community. Through an active Community Oriented Policing philosophy, we believe that individual citizens should be empowered to work with law enforcement to help keep themselves and their families safe. Many programs we offer will provide tools that you can use to learn crime prevention strategies, engage other community members, and coordinate with local law enforcement to aid in crime prevention.

## **Interested in learning more about the Sheriff’s Office?**

Are you interested in learning more about what the Sheriff’s Office has to offer residents of Unincorporated El Paso County? Request a representative from one of our numerous units to come and speak with your group.

To participate please go to [www.epcsheriffsoffice.com](http://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com) and under **Community** select **Speakers Bureau** and submit the Speaker Request.

# Crime Prevention Tips

## Child Safety:

- Advise your children to never give out personal information to strangers and to tell you immediately if somebody asks.
- Educate your children on the importance of knowing how and when to use 911.
- Any time a situation has made a child uncomfortable they should tell a parent immediately.
- **\*See something, Say Something**

## Home:

- Place a metal or wooden rod in the track of sliding glass doors/windows.
- Have sufficient lighting at all household entrances.
- Do not hide keys; have a trusted person keep a spare.
- Explore the options for video doorbells and exterior cameras. These technologies are priceless when it comes to your safety and are extremely beneficial to law enforcement agencies when establishing suspect information or vehicle information involved in criminal activity.
- If you install a security system, make sure you are aware of the company's response policy and register your exterior cameras with the Sheriff's Office at [www.epcsheriffsoffice.com](http://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com).

## Vehicle Safety:

- Keep your car in good working condition.
- ALWAYS lock your car door even if you are only away from the vehicle for a few minutes.
- Park in well-lit areas. There is a huge increase in catalytic converter thefts across the county. Please be aware of this crime and park in lit areas or a garage, if possible.
- Check the back seat when entering your vehicle.
- Remove all weapons from your unoccupied vehicle.

## Personal Safety:

- When walking, stay in well-lit areas; avoid bushes, alleys, unmarked trails, etc.
- Walk in groups or pairs, if possible.
- Be aware of your surroundings; look around to see if there are other people in the area.
- If something or someone doesn't seem right, "See something, Say something."

Register for the El Paso-Teller County Emergency Notification System (or Reverse 911). This system is used to advise residents of any situation that threatens harm to life and/or property or is deemed dangerous by officials. This could be man-made disasters, crime, pandemics and hazardous materials incidents, missing persons, evacuation notifications, neighborhood emergencies and similar important issues. To register for this service or for more information go to [www.elpasoteller911.org](http://www.elpasoteller911.org).

Schedule the Crime Prevention Coordinator to come to your residence and conduct a CPTED evaluation (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design). This evaluation is a free service and takes about 30 minutes to complete. A few of the items evaluated are lights, locks, landscape, and security areas. This evaluation will give you **"options to consider"** to make your residence more secure.

**\*\*You can now go to the Community Crime Map which is a Lexis Nexis product to check the crime activity in your neighborhood or community. It will show the same numbers that I present at meetings with some limitations such as names, addresses, etc. for privacy reasons but it is a great snapshot of activity in your areas. You can also utilize the map in your travels if you plan on traveling out of state. This product is an excellent means of showing crime activity across the nation. \*\***

**HELP US HELP YOU BY CHOOSING NOT TO BECOME A VICTIM OF CRIME AND MAKING IT TOUGH FOR CRIMINALS TO COMMIT THEIR CRIMES.**

**\*\*ADDITIONAL NOTE/REQUEST – The residential and commercial building industry is ever increasing. With that, home builders and commercial builders are experiencing huge losses in lumber and associated lumber products at their jobsites. Residential home builders' hours are typically 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM. If you witness a vehicle at a jobsite after those hours loading lumber or other materials, please contact the Sheriff's Office or Colorado Springs Police Department IMMEDIATELY to report your viewings. A good vehicle description or license plate is extremely helpful if you can acquire one SAFELY!! If not, at a minimum, please report the incident\*\***



## FOR EMERGENCIES: DIAL 9-1-1

El Paso County Sheriff's Office Dispatch (non-emergency crime reporting): **390-5555**

EPSO Telephone Reporting System (for minor crimes without suspect information): **520-7111**

EPSO Traffic Hotline (for reporting problem areas or traffic violations): **520-7192**

EPSO Tip Line (for reporting suspicious activity or the location of wanted persons): **520-7777**

*Always remember to report criminal activity or suspicious behavior promptly.*

For more information, contact the Crime Prevention Coordinator: **520-7151**

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## Going on Vacation?

Going on vacation can sometimes be stressful. Let us help you relax a bit. The El Paso County Sheriff's Office provides a service in unincorporated El Paso County when Patrol Deputies or Citizen's Patrol volunteers are available. During these times, they will conduct directed patrol checks at your properties while you are away.

To participate please go to [www.epcsheriffsoffice.com](http://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com) and under Services select Vacation Check Request Form.



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## Upcoming Events

- Annual National Night Out – August 1, 2023

## Crimes in Your Neighborhood: Highlights From *Jan 1 - Mar 8*

### District 1

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	3
Burglaries	1
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	5
Thefts	15
Criminal Mischief	11
Fraud/Forgery	10
Traffic Incidents	203

### District 2

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	2
Burglaries	0
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	2
Thefts	16
Criminal Mischief	5
Fraud/Forgery	7
Traffic Incidents	89

### District 3

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	20
Burglaries	7
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	14
Thefts	59
Criminal Mischief	48
Fraud/Forgery	13
Traffic Incidents	234

### District 4

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	9
Burglaries	7
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	8
Thefts	45
Criminal Mischief	27
Fraud/Forgery	8
Traffic Incidents	193

### District 5

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	12
Burglaries	9
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	9
Thefts	36
Criminal Mischief	32
Fraud/Forgery	13
Traffic Incidents	76

### District 6

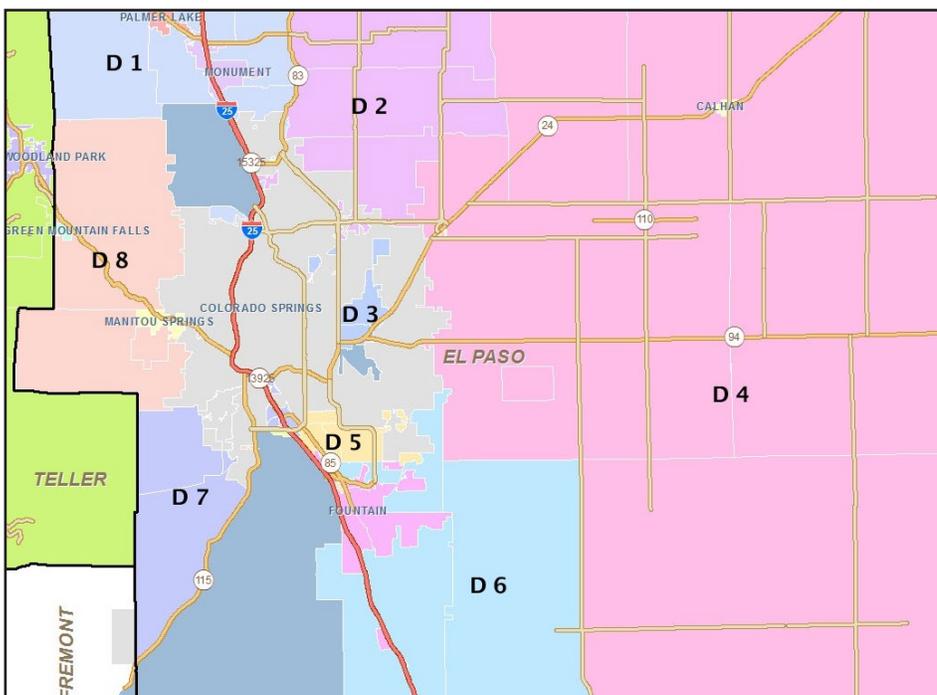
Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	6
Burglaries	1
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	4
Thefts	20
Criminal Mischief	18
Fraud/Forgery	4
Traffic Incidents	22

### District 7

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	17
Burglaries	6
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	4
Thefts	24
Criminal Mischief	13
Fraud/Forgery	4
Traffic Incidents	31

### District 8

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	2
Burglaries	1
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	3
Thefts	2
Criminal Mischief	2
Fraud/Forgery	1
Traffic Incidents	3



**District 1**—Woodmoor/Canterbury, Gleneagle, Kings Deer, Club Villas, Palmer Lake, Monument

**District 2**—Black Forest, Wissler Ranch, Hawk Ridge

**District 3**—Cimarron Hills, Constitution Hills, Claremont Ranch, Park Vista & Siefert

**District 4**—Woodmen Hills, Falcon, areas east of Meridian Road

**District 5**—Security, Fountain Valley, Colorado Centre, Clearview Estates, Southmoor

**District 6**—Widefield and Little Ranches area

**District 7**—Stratmoor Valley, Stratmoor Hills, B Street, Hwy 115

**District 8**—West Colorado Avenue, Ute Pass, Green Mountain Falls, Cascade, Rampart Range

\*\*The above statistics reflect the various assigned Sheriff's Office districts and furthermore illustrate a "snapshot" into what the Sheriff's Office is experiencing across El Paso County. If you are interested in individual neighborhoods or areas, please contact Mr. Brent Ambuehl, Criminal Intelligence Unit, Crime Prevention Coordinator for the Sheriff's Office at (719) 520-7151 or email at [brentambuehl@elpasoco.com](mailto:brentambuehl@elpasoco.com) for more specific information. You can also utilize the Community Crime Map from Lexis Nexis to provide a snapshot of the criminal activity in your neighborhood or community. The map can be accessed at [www.communitycrimemap.com](http://www.communitycrimemap.com)\*\*