

Neighborhood News

EL PASO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE | December 2022

Quick Tip:

If you shop or bank online, use websites that protect your financial information with encryption. An encrypted site has "https" at the beginning of the web address; "s" is for secure.



Avoid Becoming a Victim of Internet and Other Scams

This time of year should be a time of celebration and festivity. Unfortunately, during this time, criminals are constantly looking for opportunities to steal your identity or steal your money in a variety of different ways. This newsletter will highlight some common scams occurring in the United States and, more importantly, provide you with common tips of how to avoid becoming a victim.

Despite the economic environment we live in, Internet shopping has hit record levels this holiday season, opening the door to a host of new and well-practiced scams. Scammers are also busy in the places that you shop, at the airport, and even at your front door. The following are scams you might likely encounter not only during the Holiday Season, but year-round.



Internet scams:

Internet scams are probably one of the main scams you might experience year-round. By far, one of the largest and fastest-growing scams are bogus websites offering almost any item you are interested in. Hard to find gifts are often hosted on these sites at low bargain prices. These sites often focus on gift searches, for example, offering unbelievable low pricing. The website looks

professional, often posting false testimonials from supposedly satisfied customers and logos suggesting top-line security.

These sites are very easy to setup and the number has grown in past years. These sites are also hosted all over the world. These scammers will take your money for an item they won't send you. They will also use your credit card information to buy other items for themselves and your personal identity will be greatly compromised.

Prevention tips:

1. Do not trust a site or name you don't know, conduct research, and check the site out.
2. Don't get sucked into falling for unbelievably low prices. If it does not seem right, it probably is "too good to be true".
3. Watch for phony ads on auction sites and counterfeit designer label products.

Charity related scams:

When you give to a charity, you're giving because you care and want to help. You want to be sure your money gets to those you are trying to help. But scammers who pretend to be a charity try to get to your wallet. Scammers may use all kinds of props to fool you such as seasonal clothing, pets, children, wearing of official looking badges, or some type of fake authorization. Don't fall victim to these types of tactics.

Prevention tips:

1. If you do not have the opportunity to check out the genuineness of the solicitor, simply don't donate.
2. Find the exact name of the charity they are donating to and then donate directly to that charity.
3. Rule out anyone who asks you to send cash,



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pay with a gift card, or wire money.

4. Be weary of telephone scams. If you don't know the number that is calling you, let them leave a message.
5. Avoid charities that seem to pop up overnight in connection with a natural disaster or other tragedy.

Gas pump scams (Skimming):

This type of scam has become very popular across the United States at a variety of different gas station and convenience store locations. Briefly, the scammer places a device within the gas pump that will download your debit card information to their website. Once they have that information, all your personal identity and financial information becomes readily accessible simply by using your debit/credit card to pay at a gas pump.



Prevention tips:

1. Don't pay with your debit card at the pumps. Never put your PIN number in, always pay with the credit option.
2. Pay at the pumps that are closer to the store and are well lit. Experience shows that most of the skimmers are placed on pumps that are further away from the store in not as well-lit areas.
3. Pay inside with the clerk. Usually the most inconvenient way, however, it is much more secure.
4. Make sure the tamper resistant seal on the gas pump face/door is not altered. The seal is usually red, blue or yellow tape and is located on the front of the pump.

Telephone scams:

Another type of scam is happening daily on both mobile devices and home landline telephones. This scam involves someone calling stating you owe money to a certain organization or that you have a warrant from a local law enforcement agency, and you have to pay a monetary fine or get arrested. There are numerous other scams that are occurring and the target victim they focus on is primarily the elderly. These types of scams have become very popular and common over recent years.

Prevention tips:

1. NEVER give personal information over the phone to someone you do not know. As mentioned earlier, if you don't know the number that is calling you, do not answer. If it is that important, they will leave a message.
2. Never donate money over the phone to a particular organization or cause. This is the prime way criminals can get your information simply over the phone.
3. Government agencies and local law enforcement agencies will not call soliciting money or warn you that you are past due on payments or have warrants. All of those interactions are done by mail, or they will leave you a message to contact someone in their agencies for further information.



The goal of the El Paso County Sheriff's Office is for our citizens to be well informed of the scams currently operating within not only El Paso County or the City of Colorado Springs, but across the Nation. A large part of this process is being personally aware of these threats and furthermore being educated on these always evolving scams and criminals. Please pass these tips not only on to your neighbors, but also your family members and work associates. There are numerous resources that can be provided to you by Mr. Brent Ambuehl, the Crime Prevention Coordinator for the El Paso County Sheriff's Office. Enjoy the holiday season and have a safe, healthy, and prosperous 2023!!! Be safe.

Community Service Specialists

The El Paso County Sheriff's Office enhanced our level of service to the approximately 200,000 citizens who reside and work in unincorporated El Paso County and the countless others who commute through our jurisdiction each day, recently launched the Community Service Specialist (CSS) Unit.

The CSS Unit is comprised of uniformed civilian personnel who respond to calls for service that are not in-progress and do not involve

injuries to involved persons. Examples include Motor Vehicle Theft, Burglary, Trespass into a vehicle or onto property, Theft, Identify Theft/Fraud, Criminal Mischief, Lost/Found Property, Abandoned Vehicles, and Traffic Control for accident scenes or other hazards. CSS Unit personnel do not have arrest authority, but will file criminal investigation reports, collect evidence, and support our sworn personnel in a variety of other ways.

The unit was launched with 2 initial members who began their training in June of 2022. This training consisted of over 140 hours and covered Colorado state statutes, EPSO policies and procedures, report writing, interviewing, and criminal investigations. Additionally, they were certified to carry pepper spray and received self-defense training. Furthermore, they were certified in the 40-hour Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). Their initial 140 hours of training was then enhanced with 6 weeks of field training during which they were taught and coached by a sworn Patrol Division deputy.

The El Paso County Sheriff's Office believes the CSS Unit will be a valuable force multiplier for our Patrol Division, allowing our deputies to spend more time engaged in proactive community policing by being mobile and visible in and around the state's most populated county and by easing the burden non-emergent calls for service place on our sworn deputies' ability to provide timely response to emergency situations.

The unit is expected to grow next year, although a time frame for that expansion has not been identified.



Neighborhood Watch

A neighborhood watch system 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 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 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.

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."

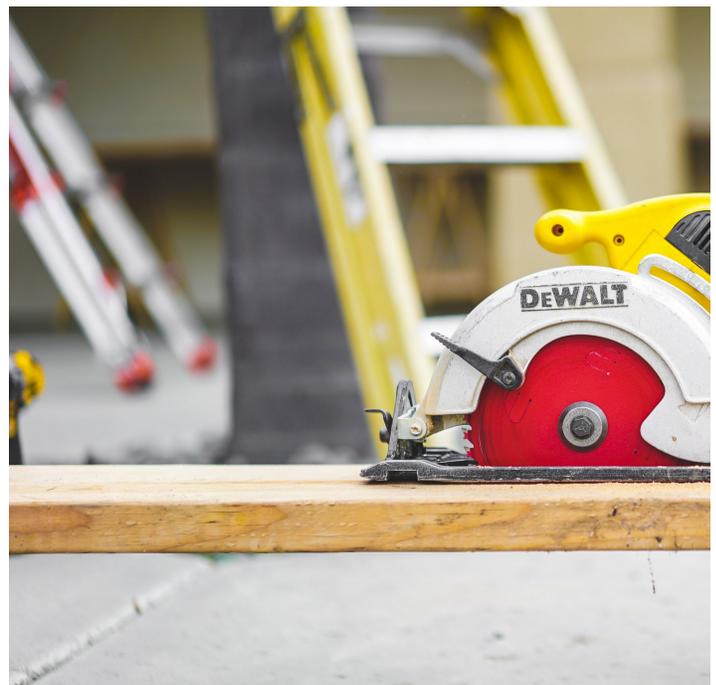
Register for the El Paso-Teller County Emergency Notification System (or Reverse 911). This system is used to advise residents of any situation that threatens harm to life and/or property or is deemed dangerous by officials. This could be man-made disasters, crime, pandemics and hazardous materials incidents,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

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**

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 and under Services select Vacation Check Request Form.



Crimes in Your Neighborhood: Highlights From *Oct 1 - Dec 1*

District 1

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	2
Burglaries	4
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	14
Thefts	20
Criminal Mischief	12
Fraud/Forgery	6
Traffic Incidents	188

District 2

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	5
Burglaries	2
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	1
Thefts	8
Criminal Mischief	6
Fraud/Forgery	3
Traffic Incidents	96

District 3

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	16
Burglaries	5
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	10
Thefts	46
Criminal Mischief	27
Fraud/Forgery	10
Traffic Incidents	301

District 4

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	7
Burglaries	5
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	7
Thefts	22
Criminal Mischief	9
Fraud/Forgery	7
Traffic Incidents	80

District 5

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	7
Burglaries	4
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	8
Thefts	33
Criminal Mischief	21
Fraud/Forgery	11
Traffic Incidents	33

District 6

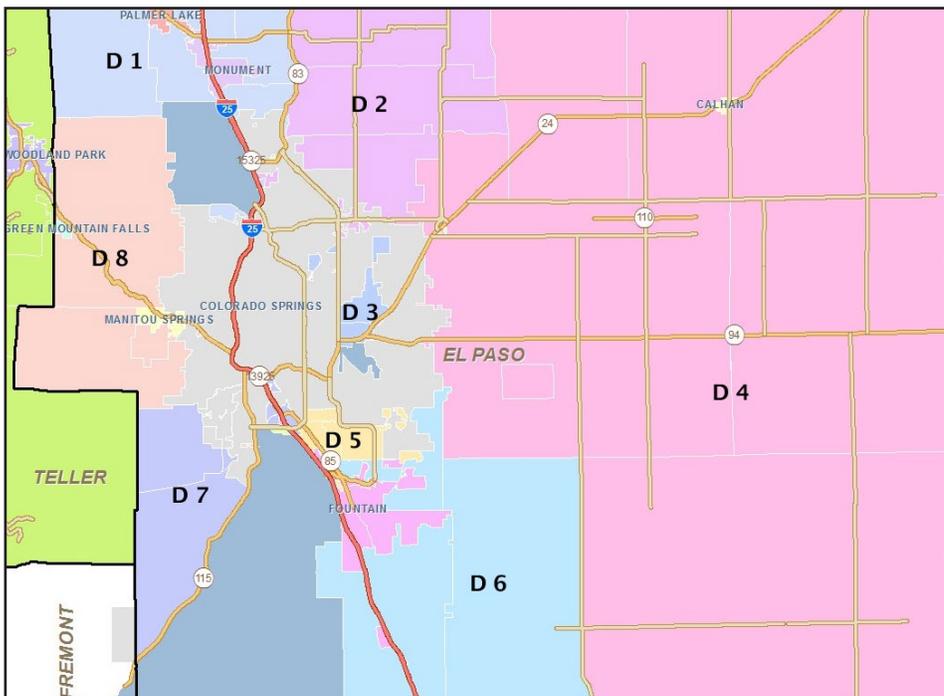
Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	5
Burglaries	1
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	2
Thefts	14
Criminal Mischief	12
Fraud/Forgery	6
Traffic Incidents	36

District 7

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	10
Burglaries	8
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	3
Thefts	26
Criminal Mischief	21
Fraud/Forgery	4
Traffic Incidents	23

District 8

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	2
Burglaries	1
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	5
Thefts	8
Criminal Mischief	8
Fraud/Forgery	5
Traffic Incidents	5



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 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****