



YORKVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER

April 2010

Enjoying Our Parks

With warmer weather here, many people are taking advantage of the numerous parks the city offers. We would like to remind everyone about a few rules to follow to keep everyone safe and our parks in good condition.

Our parks are open from 6am to 9pm, unless otherwise posted. Nature trails and the Bicentennial Riverfront Park are open from dawn until dusk.

As with anywhere, willfully damaging park property, including graffiti, cutting trees and plants, and driving in prohibited areas, is illegal. Roller skates, rollerblades and skateboards are not allowed on park equipment for this reason also.

Please remember that no motorized vehicles, including ATV's and dirt bikes, may be operated in the city parks. Additionally, firearms (including BB guns) and fireworks are not allowed in city parks. Alcoholic beverages are also prohibited, except as otherwise designated for special events.

If you bring your pets with you, make sure they are on a leash no longer than 6'. Animals are not allowed in the playground areas or playing fields, except for service animals.

Please be respectful of our parks so that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy them.

Online Account Security

As more and more people use the Internet to access financial accounts, pay bills, and do other business, concerns about the security of those accounts have grown. While identity theft is a wide-spread problem, there are many things you can do to help protect your information.

One of the easiest things you can do is make sure you keep your operating system and Internet browser up to date. As security vulnerabilities are identified, companies release patches and updates to correct these problems. Make sure to keep your anti-virus software updated also.

Financial institutions have many things in place to help prevent unauthorized access to accounts. In addition, you should choose passwords that include numbers, letters and special characters (referred to as strong passwords), avoiding common words or personal information. Avoid using the same password for all of your accounts and change your passwords regularly.

With so many logins and passwords to keep track of, many people write down this information. While this practice is discouraged, if you do have a password list, keep it in a secure location where only you have access to it.

Small things like these can go a long way to protecting your identity online.

Home Inventory

If someone broke into your home or vehicle and stole your valuables, would you be able to provide police with a descriptive list of items taken, including serial numbers and approximate values? For many people, the answer is no. If you are able to provide this information to officers, information about these items can be entered into a database that allows other police departments to find out if property they have recovered was stolen.

As you look around your home, you may be a little overwhelmed at the idea of cataloging your belongings. There are several computer programs available for free to help you, including Know Your Stuff, available from the Insurance Information Institute online at www.knowyourstuff.org, and the What You Own Home Inventory, online at www.whatyouown.org. Programs like these will help you inventory your valuables one room at a time. Many provide ways to include photographs and receipts as well. You may choose to start by inventorying your more valuable items, such as electronics and jewelry and adding on from there.

Remember that this information will also be useful when filing insurance claims, not only for theft, but also in case of fire or water damage.

Driving As a Privilege

While most of us probably take for granted getting into our vehicles and driving to our chosen destination, driving is a privilege, not a right. With most vehicles weighing more than two tons, the inherent dangers of operating them on the roadway are numerous. Only persons who show an understanding of traffic laws and demonstrate the ability to safely operate these machines are extended the privilege of holding a driver's license. Just as you would not want a pilot flying who is not familiar with handling emergencies, so too would you not want a driver on the road with you who is not able to handle their vehicle in difficult road and traffic conditions.

Driving is also a responsibility, and one that we should all take seriously. For young drivers, Illinois' graduated driver's license program helps to ease them to these responsibilities. By limiting the number of passengers, restricting nighttime driving and prohibiting the use of cell phones while operating a vehicle, drivers under the age of 18 can focus on their driving skills without being distracted.

For all drivers, demonstrating irresponsible driving can result in the Secretary of State suspending or revoking driving privileges. This may be the result of driving while under the influence, violating traffic laws too many times within a certain time period, failing to maintain vehicle insurance or having too many unpaid parking tickets. If this happens, the Secretary of State has certain requirements that must be met, including the payment of reinstatement fees, before they will allow you to hold a valid driver's license again.

So, next time you get behind the wheel, think about the privilege and responsibility that driving really is.

What Is Bond?

When you are issued a citation for minor traffic violations, the officer will tell you that you must provide bond in the form of your driver's license, a bond card or cash. This bond is to guarantee that you will pay the citation or appear in court. After the officer issues the citation, it is forwarded to the Kendall County Circuit Clerk's Office where it is processed. If you posted your driver's license as bond, the Circuit Clerk will return it to you after the citation has been paid or otherwise adjudicated.

If you need your driver's license, but posted it as bond for a citation, you can exchange your driver's license for cash bond. If it is the same day the citation was issued, contact our administrative office at 630-553-4340 to find out what cash bond is needed. If it is after that time period, the citation may have already been forwarded to the Circuit Clerk and you will have to contact their office at 630-553-4185 and inquire about exchanging bond.

911 Hang-Ups

When someone dials 911 by accident and then hangs up, our dispatch center still receives the call. The dispatcher will attempt to call the number back to find out if there is an emergency. Regardless of the situation, an officer will be dispatched to the location of the call to ensure that everything is okay.

You may be in a situation where you need police assistance, but are not able to stay on the phone or the line was disconnected. It is for this reason that an officer will always respond to a 911 hang-up.

If you dial 911 by accident, stay on the phone and let the dispatcher know what the situation is. An officer will still respond, but this way the dispatcher will be able to speak with you

immediately, instead of trying to call back and receiving a busy signal or no answer.

Illinois Vehicle Code Review

We get many questions regarding various laws in the Illinois Vehicle Code. The following is summary of a few commonly asked about laws.

Display of Registration – Illinois issues two license plates to every vehicle and requires that one be displayed on the front of your vehicle and one on the rear of your vehicle. (Motorcycles are an exception to this, where only one plate is issued for display on the rear of the motorcycle.) Plates are to be mounted at least five inches from the ground in a horizontal orientation. They must be clearly legible and free from anything that may obstruct their view, including plastic covers. A valid registration sticker must be clearly visible as required by the Secretary of State. Please see 625 ILCS 5/3-413 for more information.

Muffler Violations – Vehicles must have properly maintained exhaust systems. The exhaust system should not emit noise any greater than the muffler originally installed on the vehicle. Please see 625 ILCS 5/12-602 for more information.

Unobstructed View – The driver of the vehicle must have an unobstructed view through the windshield. This includes any cracks in the windshield or objects that may obstruct the driver's view. The windshield must also be equipped with a functioning wiper system to clear moisture and dirt from the windshield. No signs, posters, reflective or non-reflective coating or tint may be placed on the front windshield. The only exception to this is non-reflective tinted film which does not extend more than 6 inches from the top of the windshield. Please see 625 ILCS 5/12-503 for more information.