

October-December

2009

# Zone 4 News



Resident Beat Officer Robert Primak / 708.305.9780 / [primak@oak-park.us](mailto:primak@oak-park.us)

## Personal Safety: Protect Yourself From Street Crime

With the holiday season quickly approaching there will be increased activity on the streets of Oak Park. As always we must all take our personal safety seriously and be diligent in our efforts to protect ourselves from street crime.

I am occasionally asked how best to defend against robberies or purse snatchings, so I have compiled a list of basic personal safety tips. These tips are essentially personal reminders not to take safety for granted, cultivate an awareness of our surroundings, and to minimize the behaviors that mark us as potential victims.

The most basic tip is to be **someone who is unlikely to be targeted as a victim**. Criminals want to make the minimum effort, attract the least attention possible, and will choose victims they believe will make easy targets. Your behavior, attitude, and choices are evaluated by criminals searching for a victim. You want to appear alert, confident, in control of your possessions, and choose safe paths. Remember that the police can provide an escort in circumstances where you are concerned about your safety, and you should always report suspicious persons and activity to the police. Trust your instincts.

Finally, take a little time to think about how you will react if you are the victim of a crime. Imagine a scenario, and visualize your response. This kind of preparation can help you keep your head and react safely and appropriately if a crime actually occurs. Focus on keeping yourself safe, getting away from attackers, and once you are safe, giving information (descriptions, actions, last direction) to the police.

### ZONE 4 BORDERS:

Austin, Oak Park, Madison, and South Blvd.

### ZONE 4 MEETINGS

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month at 7:00pm at Percy Julian Middle School, 416 S. Ridgeland.

### MCGRUFF HOMES

McGruff Houses provide safe locations in neighborhoods where children can seek nearby assistance if they feel threatened or scared. Please consider making your home a McGruff House. For more information, please contact Officer Primak.

## Holiday Safety Tips

- Be alert when shopping. Place your wallet in a pocket that cannot be reached by strangers. Carry purses close to your body, with the strap across your shoulders and the bag underneath your arm.
- When shopping bring only the credit cards you need. Don't carry excessive amounts of cash.
- Don't leave packages in your vehicle in plain view, place them in the trunk.
- If you leave town for the holidays put your lights on timers and ask trusted friends or a family member to pick up the mail and shovel the sidewalk. Notify the police department that you are away.
- Before you pull into your garage or parking lot after shopping, take special notice of anyone loitering in the area, particularly in an alley.
- Carry a cell phone in case of emergencies.
- If you observe any suspicious activity call 9-1-1 immediately.

Oak Park Police  
123 Madison Street,  
Oak Park, IL 60302

**IMPORTANT  
TELEPHONE  
NUMBERS**

**9-1-1 Emergency**

**708.386.2131  
to have an officer  
dispatched in a non-  
emergency situation**

**708.386.3800  
to talk with a police  
supervisor**

**708.434.1636  
Crime Tip Hotline**

**708.358.5445  
Excessive debris /  
litter in alleys &  
private property-John  
Ross**

**708.358.5708  
Excessive litter on  
public property-Vince  
Bryant**

**708.358.5429  
Graffiti Hotline**

**708.358.5700  
Street light outages  
Public Works**

**708.358.5405  
Community Relations**

## Online Crime Maps

Keep up to date with what is going on in our zone by checking the crime reports posted by the Oak Park Police Department. Go to <http://www.oak-park.us/Police/index.html> and click on the crime reports tab. For those without access to the internet or if anyone has a question about the reports please give me a call.

## Block Captains

The Oak Park Police Department is currently looking for persons interested in being Block Captains. The Block Captain might aid in the dissemination of important information to their neighbors, perhaps by maintaining an e-mail

## School Bus Safety

All too often people disregard school buses while they load and unload children. Illinois law requires that vehicles travelling in either direction must stop before reaching a school bus that has its flashing lights and stop signal arm extended. You must remain stopped until the stop signal arm is no longer extended and the flashing lights are turned off, or the driver

signals you to pass. An exception is on a roadway with four or more lanes, at least two lanes of traffic in each direction and you are travelling in the opposite direction of the bus, but you should still drive cautiously.

*Your driving privileges will be suspended for three months if you are convicted of illegally passing a stopped school bus.*

distribution list or possibly hosting a neighborhood watch meeting from time to time. Anyone in Zone 4 who is interested should contact Resident Beat Officer Robert Primak at 708.305.9780 or e-mail [primak@oak-park.us](mailto:primak@oak-park.us). Or, if you know of someone

on your block that you think might be a good choice, speak to them about giving me a call.

## Halloween 2009

The Oak Park Police Department recommends hosting a Halloween party for youngsters as a safe alternative to "trick or treat" activities. However, if children go "trick or treating", they should do so between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Saturday October 31<sup>st</sup>. Here are a few safety tips for safer "trick or treating". Parents should accompany young children, especially after dark, and inspect all treats. Additional safety tips include:

- Non-toxic face paints are better than face masks.
- Use flame-retardant costumes.
- Light colored costumes and reflective strips are safer because they make trick or treaters more visible to motorists.
- Give and accept only wrapped and packaged candy.
- Go out in daylight and carry a flashlight in case of delay.
- Stay within your neighborhood and visit only homes you know.
- Cross streets at the corner, do not cross between parked cars.

Anyone who observes suspicious treats or activities should call the Oak Park Police Department (9-1-1) immediately.