



Resident Beat Officer

ANTHONY COLEMAN

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Community Oriented Policing

Boundaries: Austin Blvd. to Ridgeland Ave. & Chicago Ave. to North Ave. *Zone meetings held every third Tuesday of the month at Hatch School @7pm.*

January-March 2010

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The Oak Park Police Department really appreciates all the assistance that many of you have provided in 2009 which resulted in numerous arrests. Fighting crime is a partnership between the community and the police. Please continue to be vigilant and take precautions. Do not hesitate to call 911 when you encounter suspicious people or activity. Also know that you are not bothering us when you call the police. It's our job to respond and we are open 24/7.

Did you know?

It is illegal for anyone to solicit money in Oak Park without a permit from the Village Clerk's Office. If you have a "No Solicitor" sign posted on your residence even a licensed individual is prohibited. Don't encourage solicitors or panhandlers by giving them money on the street or at home.

Anyone doing work in the Village needs a license; if you don't know who you're hiring, make sure you get a referral from somebody you trust. Otherwise you may get a substandard job or an inflated bill. You might even become a victim of a crime.

Stop Means Stop (Not Slow Down) 

While conducting traffic stops for stop sign violations, I'm often told by the motorist, "I did stop." Well I'm going to give you a visual of the perfect stop. Imagine what your car is doing at the exact time an officer is explaining to you why he stopped you. Can you see it yet? Well that's the perfect example of a stop. Seriously though, stop signs are there for a reason so let's be mindful of them.

Q & A with Officer Coleman

Q. It seems like more people are running red lights today. How can I protect myself from them?

A. By *never* assuming a green light means all is okay. There's little consolation in knowing an accident isn't your fault just because you had the right of way. Your car is still damaged and someone may be hurt. Even though you were in the right, perhaps you could have actually avoided the collision simply by looking before you leap. If your light is green, make sure other drivers, at or near the intersection, aren't trying to beat the yellow, or red. If you're at an intersection without a light, look left, right and left *again* before moving out.

FAILING TO REPORT A CRIME

There are many reasons people don't report crimes. The crime might seem too minor to bother the police, reporting it might expose illegal or embarrassing activities on the part of the victim or the criminal might be a friend or relative of the victim.

Example: Susan had her wallet stolen but she didn't bother to report the theft. There were only a few dollars in the wallet at the time and she thought she knew who had taken it. She didn't want to get the police involved in what she considered a personal matter. It turns out that Susan was wrong about who had stolen her wallet. Two years later, the police knocked on her door with a warrant for her arrest for writing bad checks. The thief had used her ID to open a checking account in a different country. Since the wallet had never been reported stolen, it was difficult for Susan to establish her innocence.

Self-defense: Always report a crime, no matter how minor it seems. Failing to report even a minor car accident can lead to problems. Sometimes two parties agree not to call the police to avoid damaging their driving records and raising their insurance rates. But if one of these drivers changes his/her mind, he could call the police and claim that the other party fled the scene of the accident, a serious offense.

How to Beat a Traffic Ticket

Apparently these methods are known only to a select few:

- STOP at all red lights and stop signs.
- Don't use your horn as a door bell.
- Drive at a safe speed and at the posted limit.
- Look around for traffic control signs: one-way streets, turning restrictions.
- Make sure your vehicle meets standards for proper registration and safe equipment. Wear seat belts and have your passengers do the same.
- Park legally and don't leave your car running and unattended.

If you have any questions, check the traffic fatality count or ask your insurance agent to quote you a new rate after an accident or moving violation conviction.

NUMBERS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Extended parking passes: 358-5750
- Day Parking Passes: 358-3197
- Night Parking Passes: 358-6483
- Police non-emergency dispatch: **386-2131**
- Crime Tip Hotline: 434-1636
- Animal Control: 358-5680
- Property complaints/violations: 358-5443
- Village Manager's Office: 358-5770
- Public Works: 358-5700