



Sheriff
Dan Altena
Sioux County Sheriff's Office
4363 Ironwood Ave., Ste. 1
Orange City, IA 51041

Office (712) 737-2280 Fax (712) 737-8185

CRIME PREVENTION TIPS

Please remember to report crime and suspicious activity immediately.

The ultimate goal of Crime Prevention is to reduce the risk of being a victim. In order to do this effectively, it is important to remove opportunities for a criminal to take advantage of you or your property.

FEBRUARY 2012 TIP

Some video games contain content that is not age appropriate for all kids. Some games simulate actual conditions and are very violent in nature. These violent games can have lasting effects on kids such as aggression, social behavior, and distraction issues. Other games have sexual content, vulgar language, and crude humor in them. It is important to look at the game rating; not all games are appropriate for all kids.

JANUARY 2012 TIP

With the growing number of middle and high school kids playing video games online, it's necessary that we're aware of potential dangers. Online games can be played against other people anywhere in the world. We do a good job of teaching our kids to avoid people they don't know on social networking sites; however, many kids play these online games against unknown people. Internet predators are now targeting kids playing these online games. Predators will build relationships with kids by losing on purpose and complimenting the skills of their target. Predators will also pretend to be another kid and ask their target to be a teammate. The next few months will have additional information and tips regarding online gaming.

DECEMBER 2011 TIP

Scams in which criminals prey on senior citizens, manipulating their fears and stealing their savings, are among the most malicious in our society. This month's tip is about a Grandparent scam. In this scam perpetrators will go through phone books looking for names that appear to be elderly. The perpetrators will then call the numbers and pretend to be a grandchild. In the phone conversation the perpetrators claim they have been injured in a car accident or arrested; they will say they need money and ask the grandparent to wire the money to them. ALWAYS check with a family member to find out whether the emergency caller really needs help. NEVER wire money without independently making sure the story is true; even if it is the truth, that extra time won't hurt.

NOVEMBER 2011 TIP

This month's tip relates to preventing agricultural crime. Your property should be fenced, gated and well lighted. Secure gas pumps, gas tanks, storage bins and grain elevators with strong sturdy locks or deadbolts. Try to brand, mark, tattoo, or identify your livestock in some manner. Finding a reliable alarm system to install on outbuildings will help in preventing illegal entry or theft.

OCTOBER 2011 TIP

The more "connected" a child is, the more availability for that child to experience or engage in negative online experiences. Cyber bullying can be referred to online harassment that is repetitive and also has an "offline" connection; usually in school. Preventing cyber bullying can be done by educating kids about the consequences of cyber bullying and also by teaching them to respect others and take a stand against bullying of any kind.

SEPTEMBER 2011 TIP

With kids back in school this month's tip is concerning school bullying. Bullying in schools is not just a problem for its victims; it makes all students feel unsafe. Our children should be taught to respect others, walk away from bullies, and to report it every time they are bullied. It is also a good idea to document every encounter with a bully. A bullying prevention program can also be very effective. Contact the Sheriff's Office to have an officer talk to your school about bullying and its consequences.

AUGUST 2011 TIP

This month's tip deals with ATM card safety. The most important key to using your ATM card safely is to be observant and look around for any suspicious persons or activity near the ATM machine. Never write your PIN number on any ATM, credit, or debit card. If you lose any of your card, call your bank or card provider immediately. Be sure to take your receipt or transaction records with you when your ATM transaction is complete.

JULY 2011 TIP

More than five thousand people in the US, mostly young people, start using illegal drugs every day. Using illegal drugs stops the development of the person using them until the day they stop. It is important to watch for any significant changes in your child's physical appearance, personality, attitude or behavior; these may be signs of drug use. The war on drugs will only be won by educating our children about the dangers of drugs. Please report suspected illegal activity to the Sheriff's Office.

JUNE 2011 TIP

In America, on average, nearly 12,000 people die every year in alcohol-related accidents. 1.4 million are arrested each year for Operating While Intoxicated and one third of those are repeat offenders. The law is extremely clear no matter where you live. If you are driving intoxicated – you're going to jail. Using a designated driver is a safe responsible alternative to drinking and driving.

MAY 2011 TIP

When you purchase items on the internet make sure to use web sites that have a valid Secured Socket Layer (SSL) certification on the web page. You can also look for web sites that start with "https"; these web sites are generally secure and safe to purchase from. You should also install virus protection software and run online scans occasionally. And always remember, NEVER respond to unsolicited requests for personal information.

APRIL 2011 TIP

This month's tip deals with cell phones. DO NOT text and drive; it is now against the law to text and drive in the state of Iowa. Using cell phones to send sexual messages, pictures, or videos (nude or partially nude) is referred to as "Sexting". Studies show that 20% of teenagers have engaged in sexting. When these photos or videos are of a person under the age of 18 this constitutes child pornography. Offenders that are prosecuted could be listed as on the sex offender registry.

MARCH 2011 TIP

Smartphones have really changed the way we consume information with over 2.4 billion mobile phones being used worldwide. Pay special attention to the "Apps" your children are downloading. Some of these "Apps" are inappropriate and sexually based. If teens feel that their parents are at least "aware" of new technology and trends, they are less inclined to engage in behavior that might get them in trouble. Many smartphones are equipped with parental controls and can be enabled to prohibit apps or restrict what type of apps their children can see.

FEBRUARY 2011 TIP

Keep your computer in a common area and make sure young children know the dangers of the internet. Password protect your computers; children should ask you to use the computer. Monitor children when they are online and limit the time spent on the computer. It is a good idea to "spot-check" profiles to ensure proper online safety. Children should be told that if anything makes them feel uncomfortable online that they should tell a trusted adult immediately.

JANUARY 2011 TIP

When it comes to technology there are several prevention measures that can be taken. The tips for the next few months will be about technology awareness issues. Be careful how much personal information is shared on the internet to deter potential internet predators and identity thieves. Also remember that photos can be copied or changed once they are posted; care should be used whenever and wherever you post them.

DECEMBER 2010 TIP

Proper interior and exterior lighting is also very important in deterring Home Burglary. Use interior light timers to establish a pattern of occupancy. Exterior lighting should allow 100 feet of visibility. Use good lighting along the pathway and at your door. Use infra-red motion sensor lights on the rear of single family homes. Alarm systems are also effective deterrents with visible signage.

NOVEMBER 2010 TIP

Windows are left unlocked and open at a much higher rate than doors. An open window, visible from the street or alley, may be the sole reason for your home to be selected by a burglar. Secure all accessible windows with secondary blocking devices. Block accessible windows open no more than six inches for ventilation. Make sure someone cannot reach through an open window and unlock the door. Make sure someone cannot reach inside the window and remove the blocking device

OCTOBER 2010 TIP

The tips for the next few months will deal with the prevention of Home Burglaries. The first step is to *harden the target*, or make your home more difficult to enter. Remember, the burglar will simply bypass your home if it requires too much effort or requires more skill and tools than they possess. Use a solid core or metal door for all entrance points. Use quality, heavy duty dead bolt locks and use secondary blocking devices on all sliding glass doors.

SEPTEMBER 2010 TIP

Prevent Identity Theft by using the following tips: Do not share personal information on the internet. Do not respond to e-mails that request personal information; this is known as "Phishing" and is commonly used by identity thieves. Shred all items with personal information before you throw them away; identity thieves commonly "dumpster dive" to find identities. Do not keep your social security card in your purse or wallet; keep it in a safe at home.

AUGUST 2010 TIP

Keep this in mind when it comes to summer vacations. Don't advertise your vacation on social networking websites. Only let trusted family members and friends know you will be gone and have them watch your residence while you're gone. Keep a close eye on your entire family and everyone around you while you are on vacation; predators commonly target vacationing spots where there are large public gatherings. Protect your loved ones and personal items carefully.

JULY 2010 TIP

In warm weather months we see an increase in theft of personal property; there is a tendency to leave items, such as bicycles, gardening tools, lawnmowers, weed eaters, and other yard tools lying around in the open. Make sure you lock up your personal property in your garage or yard shed; it doesn't take long for someone to ride by and quickly take your property. An open garage door or yard shed can also be inviting, keep them closed even when you're at home.

JUNE 2010 TIP

Always keep your vehicle locked when it is unattended. Don't keep valuables such as cell phones, lap top computers, purses or wallets inside your vehicle in plain sight; even an empty back pack or bag can be inviting to a thief, they won't know its empty. If your vehicle is equipped with an alarm, use it. If you are a victim of theft/burglary to your vehicle report it as soon as possible.

MAY 2010 TIP

Be careful not to get scammed on the internet. Do not reply to emails from people or businesses you are not

familiar with. Do not cash checks or money orders received through an internet transaction without first confirming its legitimacy. If you only follow one rule about avoiding online scams then you should probably make that rule the one that says, "If it sounds too good to be true then it probably is".

APRIL 2010 TIP

With Spring finally here, children will be spending more time outdoors. Always know where your children are at all times and make sure they return home promptly at appointed times. Never leave your children alone in a vehicle, restroom, store, playground, or other public place. Make certain children know their full name, parent's names, address, and telephone number including area code. Talk with children about strangers and the potential dangers associated with them.

MARCH 2010 TIP

The crime prevention tip for March is to never give your credit card number, checking account number, Social Security number, or any personal information to an unknown caller. Just say "no" and hang up on anyone who asks for personal information. Don't ever assume a friendly voice belongs to a friend. Only give your personal information when you have initiated the call and are sure the other party is legitimate.

FEBRUARY 2010 TIP

Lock all doors that access your home or other property while you are gone or sleeping. Set timers for lights if you are gone for an extended period of time. Having lights on when you are gone can give potential criminals the appearance that the home is occupied.