

# Mount Vernon Police Ledger May 2009

## A Bicyclist “Rules of the Road”

Although young bicyclists should learn the “rules of the road,” it is important for drivers to remember that as the weather warms up, they should watch out for bicyclists, especially in residential areas. The most important thing drivers can do to avoid striking a bicyclist is to obey the speed limit, stay focused on the road and anticipate young ones riding or running across your path.

Bicycling is a great opportunity for children to have fun, but let’s ensure they stay safe as well. Make sure your children are aware of the following “rules of the road”,

- When riding in the street, travel in the same direction as vehicle traffic.
- Children under 15 years of age are required to wear a helmet.
- A bicyclist in the street has all the rights and responsibilities of any other driver.
- Bicyclists should know all the hand signals to indicate direction of travel.
- When coming out of a driveway or crossing a street, bicyclists must make sure there is no other traffic before proceeding. Rules are the same as when crossing any street, “look both ways before entering the street.”
- Bicyclists must obey highway signs such as stop signs or red lights.
- Remember: many times drivers do not see bicyclists, so bicyclists should use bike flags and bright colored clothing to help drivers see them.
- Young bicyclists should not bike after dark.
- Bicyclists should look out for other cars, other bicyclists, pedestrians, skate boarders, animals or any other potential obstacle in their path, and they should also be careful when passing parked cars to make sure a driver is not about to pull out from the space or open a car door.



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### Dates to Remember

- May 10 - Mother’s Day
- May 12 - CAC Meeting
- May 25 - Memorial Day



# Be Alert or Be Flim-Flammed

By Lieutenant Michael Proffitt

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## *Diversion Burglary, Handkerchief Switch, Latin Lotto and Home Improvement Scam.*

The above terms describe scams or schemes used by certain groups of criminals to steal your money. This type of criminal, known as the bunco or flim-flam artist, spends years perfecting his particular craft and takes great pride in his work. **His goal is simple:** get as much money as possible and quickly. **His attitude is equally as simple:** you are a sucker, too trusting and maybe a little greedy. These con artists are persistent, persuasive and normally prey on senior citizens because many live alone or may have large amounts of available cash. However, victims can be found in every age group and generally fall for a deal that is “**too good to be true.**”

The key to prevention is to be alert when contacted by a stranger, whether in person, over the phone or through an e-mail or letter. In order to avoid becoming a victim, you must understand the numerous schemes and how they work.

- **Diversion Burglary – Strangers** appear at your door. They may claim they need to use your phone to call in an emergency or they may be in a uniform claiming to be from a local utility company. While you are being distracted by one of the people, the other searches your house for valuables. **Prevention Tip** – Offer to place the emergency call for them. Ask for work identification if they claim to be from a local utility company. Never let them inside if you are suspicious of their purpose.

**Handkerchief Switch** – The victim is approached by a **stranger** who shows a large amount of money. The **stranger** states he is returning to his country, but due to the political unrest it's too dangerous to take the money with him. The **stranger** seeks help in donating the money to a church or local charity. If the victim shows an interest, then a second person approaches and the story is repeated. This second person is working with the first person to gain your trust. Eventually, the victim is offered a portion of the money for helping out. But first, the victim is asked to withdraw a large sum of “good faith” money from their bank and the victim is accompanied into the bank by one of the **strangers**. Once the money is obtained, the victim's money is placed in a large handkerchief with the strangers money, given to the victim and the two **strangers** depart. When the victim opens the handkerchief it contains only blank paper. **Note:** The average dollar amount obtained in cases that have occurred in our area is \$4000.

**Prevention Tip:** Don't trust **strangers** who offer you a large sum of easy money.

- **Latin Lotto** – Both victims and suspects are normally Hispanic. A **stranger** approaches his victim claiming to have won the local lottery, but says he's afraid to claim the prize due to being in this country illegally. A second **stranger** approaches and the first stranger tells his story again. Then he offers to sell the ticket to the victim and the second suspect at a bargain price. The victim is normally driven to the bank to withdraw funds. Once the victim hands over the money, the suspects create a reason for the victim to leave the vehicle. Once the victim gets out, the suspects drive off with the victim's hard earned money. **Prevention Tip:** Don't be lured into fast, easy money by a **stranger**.
- **Home Improvement Scam** – Each year when the weather turns nice, itinerant crews of roofers, pavers and landscapers drive into neighborhoods looking for victims. Most of the victims are elderly and live alone. The scam often involves workers who offer to replace and repair the roof, fix cracked walkways and pave your driveway. Normally, the victim is asked to pay up front and the work is done quickly, the quality is poor or the work is not completed at all, the suspect's next stop is to cash the check and look for the next victim, do not hire him. Continue Page 3

# Be Alert or Be Flim-Flammed

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- **Prevention Tips :** Ask to see their solicitor's license, ask for a written estimate/contract outlining the work to be done, to include a start and end date. Never pay before the job is completed. If the worker refuses or is unable to agree to your requests, do not hire him.

These are just a few of the numerous scams being committed everyday all over the country. To learn more, you can go to [www.nabihq.org](http://www.nabihq.org). This is the web site for *The National Association of Bunco Investigators*.

Remember, the key word is **stranger**. If you educate yourself concerning these criminals and their scams, you will decrease your chance of becoming a victim dramatically.

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## Solicitor Laws and Regulations

### Solicitors:

- May only solicit 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM
- May not solicit where "no soliciting" signs are posted.
- Must provide, on request, their name, business information and what they are selling.
- Must leave the premises if asked to do so.
- May not misrepresent the nature of their business
- Must provide a receipt on request
- Must show license to any customer
- May not use their licensure as an endorsement by Fairfax County.

## Example of a Fairfax County Solicitors License

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**FRONT**

**BACK**

# Resolve to Participate in Your Neighborhood Watch

The Fairfax County Police Department would like every community in Mount Vernon to have a Neighborhood Watch and we encourage an increase in the number of participants in communities where a Watch already exists. We resolve to do all we can to help communities start and sustain the Watch program. We have found that many shy away from participating in, or organizing, a Watch for many reasons. The excuses range from, I have no time to spare, to there is no crime in our community, to a fear of being retaliated against by the neighborhood predator. Neighborhood Watch does not require anyone to walk, drive, confront, contact or do anything they would be uncomfortable with. In fact, during Neighborhood Watch training, we explicitly tell Watchers NOT to contact or confront those seen acting criminally or suspiciously.



A priority for the Watch program is to establish a means of communication between: 1) neighbors 2) neighboring communities and 3) the police department. The more accurate and timely information we can get out to an organized Watch group, the better they can help us protect their communities. With more people “in the know” we have a greater likelihood of having someone call the police for suspicious activity.

Neighborhood Watch is not an instant fix, nor is it a panacea, but when neighbors care about and participate in the program, we have a better chance at solving problems that occur or those that may crop up in the future. Time constraints affect everyone and we understand that it is hard to find the time for another project; however, what could be more important than looking out for the safety of our families, property and community?

Fear of reprisals or retaliation is a problem we understand, which is why, as I stated earlier, the program strongly dissuades against any contact or confrontation between Watcher/Resident and potential suspects. We want hundreds of pairs of eyes looking out for suspicious/criminal activity and then calling us with timely, accurate and detailed information. This simple act greatly increases the police department's ability to investigate, arrest and deter crime.

No matter where we live, at some point our community will be touched by crime. Be it property, violent or nuisance crimes, quality of life issues or proximity to a serious event, all are possible and require awareness and preparedness. It is better to lay the foundation and be prepared than to wait and be caught flat-footed after an incident occurs. Starting and maintaining a Watch program can be a challenge because of the issues mentioned in this article and other considerations specific to your community. It will require a core group of dedicated persons to establish a program, but after the initial struggle, the time involvement generally decreases. The activity or the passivity of the Watch is totally up to the community and its needs. As we said before, the most important part is the communications network.



Please consider making a resolution to join or create a Neighborhood Watch for your community.

For more information on Neighborhood Watch please contact MPO Robbie Clift at 703-360-8400 ext 2259 or email [Robert.clift@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Robert.clift@fairfaxcounty.gov).

# Laws of the Month: Trespassing

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## § 18.2-119. Trespass after having been forbidden to do so; penalties.

If any person without authority of law goes upon or remains upon the lands, buildings or premises of another, or any portion or area thereof, after having been forbidden to do so, either orally or in writing, by the owner, lessee, custodian or other person lawfully in charge thereof, or after having been forbidden to do so by a sign or signs posted by such persons or by the holder of any easement or other right-of-way authorized by the instrument creating such interest to post such signs on such lands, structures, premises or portion or area thereof at a place or places where it or they may be reasonably seen, or if any person, whether he is the owner, tenant or otherwise entitled to the use of such land, building or premises, goes upon, or remains upon such land, building or premises after having been prohibited from doing so by a court of competent jurisdiction by an order issued pursuant to §§ 16.1-253, 16.1-253.1, 16.1-253.4, 16.1-278.2 through 16.1-278.6, 16.1-278.8, 16.1-278.14, 16.1-278.15, 16.1-279.1, 19.2-152.8, 19.2-152.9 or § 19.2-152.10 or an ex parte order issued pursuant to § 20-103, and after having been served with such order, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. This section shall not be construed to affect in any way the provisions of §§ 18.2-132 through 18.2-136.



## § 18.2-128. Trespass upon church or school property.

A. Any person who, without the consent of some person authorized to give such consent, goes or enters upon, in the nighttime, the premises or property of any church or upon any school property for any purpose other than to attend a meeting or service held or conducted in such church or school property, shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor.

B. It shall be unlawful for any person, whether or not a church member or student, to enter upon or remain upon any church or school property in violation of (i) any direction to vacate the property by a person authorized to give such direction or (ii) any posted notice which contains such information, posted at a place where it reasonably may be seen. Each time such person enters upon or remains on the posted premises or after such direction that person refuses to vacate such property, it shall constitute a separate offense. A violation of this subsection shall be punishable as a Class 1 misdemeanor, except that any person, other than a parent, who violates this subsection on school property with the intent to abduct a student shall be guilty of a Class 6 felony.

C. For purposes of this section: (i) "school property" includes a school bus as defined in § 46.2-100 and (ii) "church" means any place of worship and includes any educational building or community center owned or leased by a church.

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**HELP REDUCE  
INJURIES RESULTING  
FROM CRASHES.  
WEAR YOUR SAFETY  
BELTS!**





# FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Mount Vernon District

### Crime Prevention Unit



**Special Attention!**

## *Navigate away from being a victim*



- Satellite navigation systems can be pre-installed units fitted into vehicles during the manufacturing process or small, portable units that can be purchased separately and added to vehicles.
- The portable units are easily installed with no complicated wiring procedures. Generally, all that is required is to install a cradle which attaches to the front windshield by a suction cup.
- These units are small, portable and frequently reported stolen.

### Tips for deterring thefts:

- Do not leave valuables visible from the outside. Remove portable GPS units from the dashboard, including the cradle. Do not simply place them in the glove box or under the seat.
- Keep a supply of moist towelettes to clean the area of the windshield marked by the suction cup.
- Do not leave other valuables inside the vehicle, including laptop computers, cameras, satellite radios or cellular telephones.
- Lock all doors and close windows when leaving the car, even if it is only for a minute.
- When possible, park in a well-lit, busy area.

For more information regarding this or other important crime prevention initiatives, please contact the Mount Vernon Crime Prevention Unit at 703-360-8928.

To request this information in an alternate format, call:

703-360-8928. TTY 703-204-2264



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# FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT STATION



**ATTENTION!**

## PREVENT CRIME

Are you doing everything you can to secure your property and protect your family? The Mount Vernon District Station is asking for the public's assistance in reducing criminal activity. There are many things that individuals can do to help reduce thefts, deter burglary and prevent or reduce auto theft, just to name a few!

- **Do not start your vehicle and leave it unattended**
- **Lock vehicle doors at all times.**
- **Lock all of your doors and windows at home.**
- **Do not leave valuables in vehicles.**
- **Keep garage doors closed and locked.**
- **Do not leave keys in vehicles.**
- **Lock sheds and secure all outdoor property.**
- **Park in well- lit areas.**
- **Participate in Neighborhood Watch.**

**Mount Vernon District Station  
Crime Prevention Unit  
703-360-8928**



# Crossing Guards Needed

Being a crossing guard is a very important job. A crossing guard makes sure students cross the street safely and keeps an eye on strangers in the area. In essence, you are our extended eyes and ears for the community. When there is not a crossing guard to work a mandated crossing location, a police officer has to handle the crossing. There can be “four” to “five” crossings a day that the police have to handle. This means there are fewer officers to handle calls, which increases the response time to critical incidents.

Please call the Mount Vernon station if you are interested in becoming a crossing guard. This is another great opportunity for you to help out in the community and get paid doing it.

## What do Crossing Guards Do?

- Work 10 hours per week.
- Control traffic to ensure the safe and orderly movement of student pedestrians to and from school.
- Monitor operation of wink-o-matic school flashing lights during opening and closing times and report any malfunctions.
- Report hazardous traffic conditions at student crossing locations.

## What qualifications do you need?

- High school diploma or a G.E.D. issued by a state department of education.
- Knowledge of traffic regulations.
- Ability and willingness to work in inclement weather.
- Ability to work with children, ability to follow written and oral instructions, tact and courtesy.

Applicants should be able to pass a medical exam provided by the Occupational Health Center. They must satisfactorily complete a criminal background check.

**Benefits:** Uniforms and training are provided. Employees are able to participate in a retirement program; they earn annual and sick leave according to hours worked (minimum of 1 hour per pay period); they are reimbursed for mileage and afforded the option of enrolling in a health plan if they have more than two crossings.

**How do you apply?** You can get an application at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police) or from the Mount Vernon District Police Station. You can also contact Sgt. John Stern at the Mount Vernon station at 703-360-8400 ext 2298 or email [Jonathan.Stern@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Stern@fairfaxcounty.gov).

**Pay:** \$12.80 to \$21.34/hour

## COME JOIN OUR TEAM



## CROSSING GUARDS NEEDED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**THE FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT  
IS SEEKING QUALIFIED APPLICANTS FOR THE  
POSITION OF SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD**



**Mount Vernon Citizens  
Advisory Committee**

**Fairfax County Police  
Department**

Mount Vernon District Station  
2511 Parkers Lane  
Alexandria, Virginia 22306  
Station Phone Number: 703-360-8400  
Crime Prevention: 703-360-8928  
Email: [mtvcpo@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:mtvcpo@fairfaxcounty.gov)

**Non-Emergency—703-691-2131**  
**EMERGENCY—911**

***Making Our Community Safer  
Through Crime Prevention***

**Mount Vernon Citizens Advisory Committee**

Chairman - Judy Schultheis

Vice Chairman - Ginger Krup

Treasurer - Marianne Baltimore

Secretary - Mary Alvarado

**Mount Vernon District Station**

Station Commander - Captain David Moyer

Assistant Commander - Lieutenant David Russell

Crime Prevention Officer - MPO Robbie Clift

Crime Prevention Officer- PFC Daryl Davis



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. Call 703-691-2131, TTY 703-204-2664

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**Remember, for non-emergency events or reports, call  
703-691-2131**

The Mount Vernon Citizen's Advisory Committee's monthly meeting will be on 5-12-2009 at 7:30 PM at the Mount Vernon District Police Station.

