

## **Fairfax County Police Department Adds Convenience to Reporting Non-violent Crimes**

Fairfax County residents who are victims or witnesses of certain misdemeanor crimes can file police reports by telephone or online. The “Citizen Reporting System” or CRS operates seven days a week and includes evening hours. Although the CRS system has been in place since 2003, and telephone reporting was available before then, the Police Department has recently introduced some enhancements to improve accessibility. The system has been centralized at police headquarters, and a cadre of officers is assigned to the system full time.

Not all crimes can be reported using the Citizen Reporting System. The following criteria must be present to use the system:

- The crime or incident must have occurred within Fairfax County;
- The identity of the suspect must not be known, or the citizen must not want to pursue criminal prosecution;
- The report is being made for informational and/or insurance purposes only and the citizen understands and agrees that the Police Department will take no further action;
- The suspect information is so general in nature that it provides no real investigative leads (i.e., blue van or white man).

An example of a crime that could be reported using CRS would be a missing bicycle. A young boy leaves his bicycle in the front yard one night and doesn’t realize it’s missing for a few days. No one knows when the crime happened and there aren’t any suspects or leads. The parents are able to go online, fill out the required information and within 24 hours receive a case number. The case number can be used for insurance claims.

The following types of crimes or incidents can be reported using CRS (keeping in mind the criteria mentioned above):

- Alcohol violation
- Counterfeit prescription
- Check/credit card case

- Civil dispute
- Destruction of property, littering
- Disorderly conduct
- Drunk in public
- DWI
- Forgery
- Fraud
- Larceny under \$5,000
- Loitering
- Lost property
- Parking violation
- Solicitor violation
- Suspicious vehicles, persons or events
- Telephone violation
- Traffic violation
- Trespassing
- Vehicle tampering

Reports cannot be handled using CRS if any of the following criteria apply:

- The offender is still on the scene or the incident occurred within the last 30 minutes;
- The crime was perpetrated based upon race, religion or national origin;
- The report is for a lost or stolen passport or firearm.

One convenient option for those with access to a computer is through the Department's online reporting system. Citizens can visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police) and click on the link to "file a police report." They follow the directions, providing all the information required about the crime, and receive a case number within 24 hours. The second method for filing certain reports is through the Department's non-emergency phone number at 703-691-2131. Citizens tell the call taker they would like to use the Citizen's Reporting System (CRS) to report a crime (or incident). If citizens choose this option, their names and contact numbers will be taken by the call taker and a CRS officer will call them back to take the report over the phone. This process typically takes less than 24 hours to complete.

The advantage to using CRS is convenience. Instead of having an officer respond to take a report, citizens can file the report at a time and location convenient to them. Waiting for an officer to free up from more urgent calls is eliminated. When the reports are filed online, officers can e-mail a case number, for documentation or for insurance purposes, usually within 24 hours.

When citizens use CRS, patrol officers are able to use their time to conduct proactive and preventive patrols, such as traffic enforcement, community policing, high visibility patrols in residential and business districts and criminal/drug interdiction.

Information obtained by CRS officers assists the Police Department in preventing crimes by allowing the Department to analyze trends, locations and times of incidents. The report may also assist in the identification and return of stolen property recovered as a result of other investigations.

For more information on CRS visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police).