

Neighborhood News

EL PASO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE | 3rd Quarter 2023

Quick Tip:

El Paso County Sheriff's Office crime statistics can be found online at:

www.epcsheriffsoffice.com

community crime map tab



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Neighborhood Watch Program



El Paso County School Resource Officers

The El Paso County Sheriff's Office offers and supports numerous services throughout the Sheriff's Office ranging from Patrol, Traffic, School Resource Deputies, and Tactical/K9 to name a few. The Office, furthermore, is supported by numerous Professional Staff support positions and volunteers. In future editions of the Neighborhood Newsletter, many of these positions will be highlighted to provide a brief snapshot of the Sheriff's Office. This edition will briefly focus on the School Resource Deputy Program.

The El Paso County Sheriff's Office School Resource Officer Unit provides service to schools within unincorporated El Paso County; the combined student population of those schools is approximately 30,000. The Sheriff's Office currently has 10 School Resource Officers (SRO's) primarily assigned to 16 high schools and middle schools, respectively.

The Sheriff's Office understands the need for SRO's and the important roles they play in the area schools. Our goal is to provide a safe learning environment in our county schools, providing valuable resources to school staff members, fostering positive relationships with youth, developing strategies to resolve problems affecting youth, and protecting all students so that they can reach their fullest potentials. The four main roles of our school resource officers include law enforcement officer, informal counselor/mentor, mental health evaluator, and educator. The SROs are also involved in activities outside the scopes of their normal duties such as the Annual Teen Academy, Books and Badges, Student 2 Student, and dancing with their school's dance squad for viral TIKTOK videos as recently seen at a local Lewis Palmer High School assembly (many thanks go out to Deputy Wheat!!).

The SRO's job is much more complex than what most people perceive it as. They teach classes in their schools that have some relationship to their job in Civics and Constitutional Rights, which helps build trust with the students and, more importantly, helps "bridge the gap" between law enforcement and the teenage community. SRO's also assist and deal with illegal activities, such as drugs, sexting, assaults or bullying at the schools. Schools are their own community, per se, and have the same criminal events that we see in the daily community occurring on a daily and weekly basis. School Resource Officers can use other options, in certain cases, other than an arrest to deal with a juvenile's mistake, such as restorative justice using Forge Evolution or diversion. The SRO at school is identified as the most "Trusted Adult" that students feel they could turn to at their schools, which makes the School Resource Officer an important asset, not only to the Sheriff's Office, but also to our community and its youth.



Halloween Safety Tips For Kids

Costume considerations

Help your child pick out or make a costume that will be safe. Ensure it is:

- Fireproof
- Eye holes are large enough for good peripheral vision
- Choose bright colors or possibly add reflective tape
- Make sure the costume does not present a tripping hazard
- If it's cold outside, wear warm clothes under the costume



Residential Safety Options

Help your child pick out or make a costume that will be safe. Ensure it is:

- If you set jack-o-lanterns on your porch with candles in them, make sure that they are far enough out of the way so that kids' costumes won't accidentally be set on fire.
- Better still, use pumpkin lights to light pumpkins. They make a light that looks like a flickering candle flame.
- Going door to door is the stuff of childhood memories. It should be a fun time, without trouble and worry, so following these easy safety tips can keep your child safe every Halloween.
- Be careful when crossing streets.
- Walk on sidewalks, not in the street.
- Walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic if there are no sidewalks
- Walk, do not run, from house to house.
- Do not cross yards and lawns where unseen objects or uneven terrain can present tripping hazards.
- Small children should never be allowed to go out alone on Halloween. Make sure an older sibling or an adult is with them.
- Children should go out during daylight hours only unless accompanied by a responsible adult.
- Plan a safe route so parents know where their older kids will be at all times. Set a time for their return home. Make sure that your child is old enough and responsible enough to go out by themselves.
- Let your children know not to cut through back alleys and fields. Make sure they know to stay in populated places.

As a reminder, school is back in session. Please remember to slow down in school zones. Traffic enforcement deputies are monitoring school zones.



- Explain to children the difference between tricks and vandalism. Throwing eggs at a house may seem like fun but they need to know how to clean up and damages can ruin Halloween.
- Explain to your kids that animal cruelty is not acceptable. Kids may know this on their own, but peer pressure can be a bad thing. Make sure they know that harming animals is not only morally wrong but punishable by law.

Having a Halloween party, either one for adults or for children, is great fun. In order to have things run smoothly with no accident follow these tips:

- If using dry ice in a punch bowl, make sure the person serving keeps any dry ice chips out of drinks. It can cause severe injury if ingested.
- If you are holding your party in your house, make sure that you move any breakable pieces of furniture to another room where they can't be broken.
- To keep homes safe for trick-or-treaters, parents should remove from the porch and front yard, anything a child could trip over such as garden hoses, toys, bikes, and lawn decorations.
- Parents should check outdoor lights and replace burned out bulbs.
- Wet leaves or other hazards should be swept from sidewalks and steps.
- Restrain pets so they do not inadvertently jump on or bite a trick-or-treater.
- The National Safety Council urges motorists to be especially alert on Halloween.
- Watch for children darting out from between parked cars.
- Watch for children walking on roadways, medians, and curbs.
- At twilight and later in the evening watch for children in dark clothing.

Catalytic Converter Thefts

This is an article from a previous newsletter, however, it is important to reiterate this topic as the Sheriff's Office is continuing to experience a large volume of catalytic converter thefts.

The following article was written by Becky Sullivan from NPR radio in Kansas City. El Paso County, and the Nation, is currently experiencing a huge rise in catalytic converter thefts. The below article briefly discusses how these thefts occur, how to prevent yourself from becoming a victim, and furthermore, possible replacement/insurance options.

Claims for stolen catalytic converters doubled in the year ending June 2022, according to State Farm, the largest auto insurer in the U.S., whose customers reported more than 43,200 stolen converters that year. And since 2019, converter theft has risen 1,215%, according to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, an industry group that tracks insurance-related crimes.

On Wednesday, the Department of Justice announced the arrest of 21 people in connection with a crime ring accused of making \$545 million by trafficking stolen catalytic converters.

Catalytic converters – which helps a car clean its exhaust – have become a target for theft in large part because of the price of precious metals, like palladium and platinum, that are used in the parts. And, crucially, their location on the exterior of a car's underside makes them easy to steal, David Glawe of the NCIB told NPR earlier this year. Stealing a converter takes just a few minutes and a battery-operated saw. "You slide under the car, slice through your exhaust system, and you're in and out usually within 30 seconds to a minute," Glawe said. Especially at risk are cars with enough tire clearance for a thief to easily slide underneath, like SUVs and pickup trucks. Hybrids are also attractive targets because their converters contain even more precious metals.

How can I protect my car from catalytic converter theft?

Insurance companies, mechanics and police departments have recommended a wide range of anti-theft measures designed to deter a would-be thief. "It's a holistic approach," said Glawe. The simplest solution is to keep your car away from public access when you're not using it. If you have access to a garage, keep your car there. Those without a garage should try to park their car in a well-lit area, or somewhere you can install a security camera. But even a garage might not be enough to protect your car. Public parking spots of all kinds have become a target for daytime theft, the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, a recycling industry trade group, has warned. "[At] hospitals, it's happening because people go to the hospital and either park and visit, or they're in the hospital for a long period of time, and their car sits there," said Todd Foreman, the group's director of law enforcement outreach. "It's happening to big trucks, to churches." Some cities have hosted workshops in which car owners can get their vehicle identification numbers engraved on their catalytic converter for free – an indication to would-be buyers that the converter has been stolen. Foreman also recommends painting your converter with brightly colored, high-temperature paint, which can put off a thief who'd have to scrape it all off before selling. "If they climb under a car and see it's spray-painted," he said, "they know they're more likely to be caught stealing those catalytic converters."

Other solutions might cost a bit of money: Owners can attach alarm systems that are triggered by the vibration of a thief's saw. Other,

more expensive anti-theft devices are designed to make a converter make more cumbersome to remove. Mechanics can also weld on metal plates or rebar to shield the converter.

What should I do if it's been stolen?

If your converter has been stolen, you're likely to notice right away: Without the converter, your car will be much noisier than usual. Most cars will run without a catalytic converter, though it's inadvisable to do so for longer than necessary. Because the purpose of a catalytic converter is to reduce harmful emissions, cars without one will pollute much more heavily than an intact car, and you could fail an emissions inspection in states that require them. When thieves use a saw to remove a catalytic converter, they can also cause damage to nearby parts of your car, like the alternator or fuel lines. It's best to get your car checked out by a mechanic as soon as possible. And check your car insurance. Comprehensive coverage on an auto insurance policy will cover damage to your car that occurs outside of a collision – including theft.



Crime Prevention Tips

Package Delivery:

- Bring all packages inside once they are delivered. Unattended packages and mail will encourage thieves to steal your property. Avoid becoming a victim of “opportunistic and preventable crime”.
- Know when deliveries will be arriving. You can request notification when a package is delivered and furthermore request a delivery time during the day or evening when someone will be home to accept delivery.
- Request that a signature be provided for some larger deliveries. Most companies will take a photo of your package being delivered and where it was placed and send that photo to your email or phone text messaging notifying you of the delivery.
- Report suspicious vehicles you might see following delivery vehicles such as UPS, Amazon, FedEx, etc. If possible, provide a vehicle description, license plate or other identifying features such as stickers or vehicle damage to the Sheriff's Office. Do this safely and please don't approach or contact the vehicle. If possible, get a picture of the vehicle from a SAFE DISTANCE!!

Home:

- Have sufficient lighting at all household entrances. Keep your porch and patio lights illuminated during evening hours and when you are on vacation.
- Do not hide keys; have a trusted person keep a spare.
- Research video doorbells and exterior cameras options. These technologies are priceless when it comes to home safety/security and are extremely beneficial to law enforcement agencies when establishing suspect information, vehicle information and timelines involving criminal activity.
- If you install a home security system, make sure you are aware of the company's law enforcement response policy. You can also register your exterior cameras with the Sheriff's Office Community Video Program at www.epcsheriffsoffice.com, click the Community Video Program tab.
- Make sure your home address numbers are visible and well-lit during evening hours. Make sure there are no missing numbers.

Vehicle Safety:

- Keep your car in good working condition, especially during the winter months.
- ALWAYS lock your car door even if you are only away from the vehicle for a few minutes.
- Have a “GO Bag” in your trunk in the event you get stranded or have vehicle maintenance issues while on the road. Some items to include are blankets, water, chargers, and medical items.
- Park in well-lit areas. There is a huge increase in catalytic converter thefts across the county. Please be aware of this crime and park in lit areas or a garage, if possible. Try to not leave your car unattended for long periods of time in public parking areas or storage

facilities, if possible.

- Check around your vehicle when approaching for possible suspicious people.
- Remove all weapons from your unoccupied vehicle. They are more secure in your residence.

Personal Safety:

- When walking, stay in well-lit areas; avoid bushes, alleys, unmarked trails, etc.
- Walk in groups or pairs, if possible.
- Be aware of your surroundings; look around to see if there are other people in the area.
- If something or someone doesn't seem right, “See something, Say something.”
- Try to stay off your cellphone and pay attention to your surroundings when walking to your car from the store or other locations. You can make that hands free call once you are in your vehicle.

Register for the El Paso-Teller County Emergency Notification System (or Reverse 911). This system is used to advise residents of any situation that threatens harm to life and/or property or is deemed dangerous by officials. This could be man-made disasters, crime, pandemics and hazardous materials incidents, missing persons, evacuation notifications, neighborhood emergencies and similar important issues. To register for this service or for more information go to www.elpasoteller911.org.

Schedule the Crime Prevention Coordinator to come to your residence and conduct a CPTED evaluation (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design). This evaluation is a free service and takes about 30 minutes to complete. A few of the items evaluated are lights, locks, landscape, and security areas. This evaluation will give you “**options to consider**” to make your residence more secure.

**You can now go to the Community Crime Map which is a Lexis Nexis product to check the crime activity in your neighborhood or community. It will show the same numbers that I present at meetings with some limitations such as names, addresses, etc. for privacy reasons but it is a great snapshot of activity in your areas. You can also utilize the map in your travels if you plan on traveling out of state. This product is an excellent means of showing crime activity across the nation. **

****ADDITIONAL NOTE/REQUEST – The residential and commercial building industry is ever increasing. With that, home builders and commercial builders are experiencing huge losses in lumber and associated lumber products at their jobsites. Residential home builders' hours are typically 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM. If you witness a vehicle at a jobsite after those hours loading lumber or other materials, please contact the Sheriff's Office or Colorado Springs Police Department IMMEDIATELY to report your viewings. A good vehicle description or license plate is extremely helpful if you can acquire one SAFELY!! If not, at a minimum, please report the incident****

FOR EMERGENCIES: DIAL 9-1-1

El Paso County Sheriff's Office Dispatch (non-emergency crime reporting):	390-5555
EPSO Telephone Reporting System (for minor crimes without suspect information):	520-7111
EPSO Traffic Hotline (for reporting problem areas or traffic violations):	520-7192
EPSO Tip Line (for reporting suspicious activity or the location of wanted persons):	520-7777
<i>Always remember to report criminal activity or suspicious behavior promptly.</i>	
For more information, contact the Crime Prevention Coordinator:	520-7151

Going on Vacation?

Going on vacation can sometimes be stressful. Let us help you relax a bit. The El Paso County Sheriff's Office provides a service in unincorporated El Paso County when Patrol Deputies or Citizen's Patrol volunteers are available. During these times, they will conduct directed patrol checks at your properties while you are away.

To participate please go to www.epcsheriffsoffice.com and under Services select Vacation Check Request Form.

Neighborhood Watch

A neighborhood watch program is easy to establish, simply by getting to know your neighbors within your neighborhood. In a Neighborhood Watch community, neighbors keep watch on each other's homes/property's and are encouraged to report any suspicious activity to either the Sheriff's Office, Crime Prevention Coordinator or the El Paso County Sheriff's Office dispatch center. As one of the most successful community/law enforcement partnerships in the United States, this program aids law enforcement by creating a closer sense of community among citizens and furthermore builds a strong relationship with Sheriff's Office deputies. Neighbors who know each other become the Sheriff's Office "eyes and ears" within that community and develop an awareness of unusual circumstances and suspicious behaviors. To learn more about the program, please contact the Crime Prevention Coordinator at 719-520-7151 to schedule a meeting or go to www.epcsheriffsoffice.com under the Community tab for further details.

Crime Prevention

The El Paso County Sheriff's Office is committed to helping our citizens keep themselves, their families, and their communities safe from crime, the fear of crime and neighborhood decay. Working collaboratively with other local law enforcement officials, the Sheriff's Office assists to establish networking systems, provide educational materials, programs, training, and safety tutorials to promote pro-active crime prevention in our community. Through an active Community Oriented Policing philosophy, we believe that individual citizens should be empowered to work with law enforcement to help keep themselves and their families safe. Many programs we offer will provide tools that you can use to learn crime prevention strategies, engage other community members, and coordinate with local law enforcement to aid in crime prevention.

Interested in learning more about the Sheriff's Office?

Are you interested in learning more about what the Sheriff's Office has to offer residents of Unincorporated El Paso County? Request a representative from one of our numerous units to come and speak with your group.

To participate please go to www.epcsheriffsoffice.com and under **Community** select **Speakers Bureau** and submit the Speaker Request.

Crimes in Your Neighborhood: Highlights From *Jun 1 - Oct 1*

District 1

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	5
Burglaries	7
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	17
Thefts	46
Criminal Mischief	14
Fraud/Forgery	41
Traffic Incidents	123

District 2

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	5
Burglaries	6
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	7
Thefts	35
Criminal Mischief	19
Fraud/Forgery	18
Traffic Incidents	90

District 3

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	70
Burglaries	22
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	71
Thefts	146
Criminal Mischief	131
Fraud/Forgery	37
Traffic Incidents	164

District 4

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	12
Burglaries	9
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	18
Thefts	76
Criminal Mischief	47
Fraud/Forgery	30
Traffic Incidents	205

District 5

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	43
Burglaries	22
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	54
Thefts	98
Criminal Mischief	94
Fraud/Forgery	19
Traffic Incidents	89

District 6

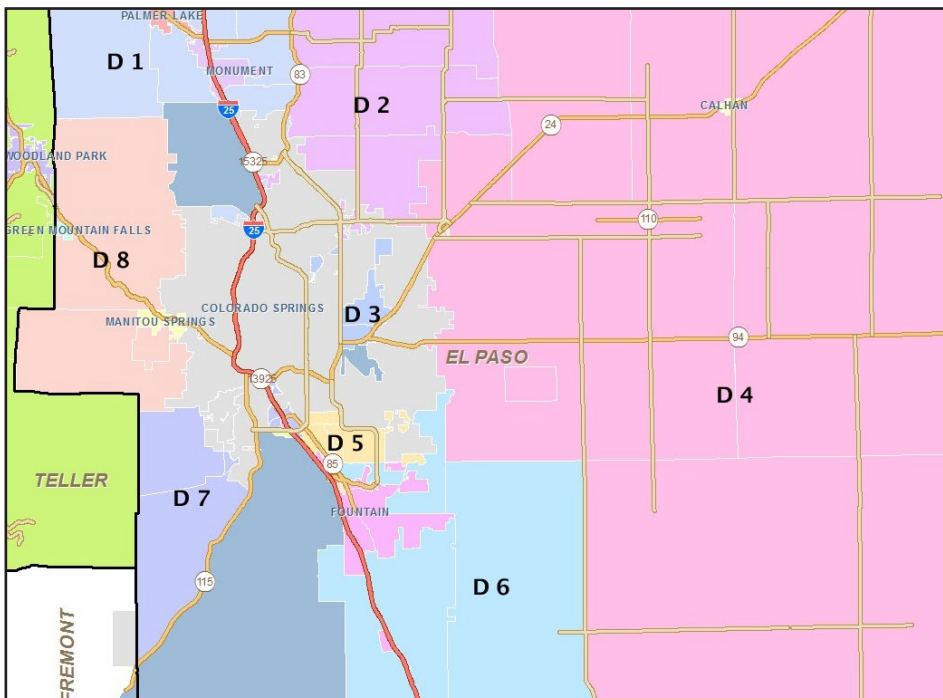
Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	17
Burglaries	9
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	27
Thefts	53
Criminal Mischief	41
Fraud/Forgery	15
Traffic Incidents	30

District 7

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	33
Burglaries	10
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	22
Thefts	51
Criminal Mischief	46
Fraud/Forgery	16
Traffic Incidents	65

District 8

Motor Vehicle Thefts (MVT)	1
Burglaries	1
Criminal Trespass Auto (CTA)	1
Thefts	10
Criminal Mischief	4
Fraud/Forgery	1
Traffic Incidents	1



District 1—Woodmoor/Canterbury, Gleneagle, Kings Deer, Club Villas, Palmer Lake, Monument

District 2—Black Forest, Wissler Ranch, Hawk Ridge

District 3—Cimarron Hills, Constitution Hills, Claremont Ranch, Park Vista & Siefert

District 4—Woodmen Hills, Falcon, areas east of Meridian Road

District 5—Security, Fountain Valley, Colorado Centre, Clearview Estates, Southmoor

District 6—Widefield and Little Ranches area

District 7—Stratmoor Valley, Stratmoor Hills, B Street, Hwy 115

District 8—West Colorado Avenue, Ute Pass, Green Mountain Falls, Cascade, Rampart Range

****The above statistics reflect the various assigned Sheriff's Office districts and furthermore illustrate a "snapshot" into what the Sheriff's Office is experiencing across El Paso County. If you are interested in individual neighborhoods or areas, please contact Mr. Brent Ambuehl, Criminal Intelligence Unit, Crime Prevention Coordinator for the Sheriff's Office at (719) 520-7151 or email at brentambuehl@elpasoco.com for more specific information. You can also utilize the Community Crime Map from Lexis Nexis to provide a snapshot of the criminal activity in your neighborhood or community. The map can be accessed at www.communitycrimemap.com****