



The Community BUZZ

November 2024



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Dear Neighbourhood Watch Members,

As the cold season settles in, we at Neighbourhood Watch Scotland are here to support you with resources and guidance to keep our communities safe, connected, and resilient. In this edition, we cover winter essentials to help you prepare your home, vehicle, and personal safety measures for the months ahead. Let's work together to stay secure, keep warm, and support one another through the winter.

Personal safety when 'out and about'



Darker evenings can cause increased anxieties for those who may feel unsafe or vulnerable within their own neighbourhoods, particularly when having to walk. The ONS recorded that 50% of women felt 'very or fairly unsafe' both in the quiet streets near their home, as well as 48% when using public transport alone, whilst a staggering 82% felt unsafe in public parks or open spaces after dark. Alongside feeling more at risk in public places, this can lead to isolation as many people limit their normal activities such as meeting friends or exercising outside in the evenings.

If you would like some additional reassurance

there are a range of personal safety smart phone apps on the market that you might like to explore including:

- **Auggie Personal Safety** (designed for those with low levels of vision)
- **Hollie Guard** (developed by the Hollie Gazzard Trust)
- **WalkSafe+**
- **Life 360: Family Tracking App**
- **Family Locator** - track family members wherever they are
- **Railway Guardian** (British Transport Police)
- **bSafe**

Protecting Your Home from Theft and Break-Ins



Winter brings longer nights, which can make homes more vulnerable. Here's how to safeguard your property:

Alarms and CCTV:

Check that these are fully functioning. Think about a camera doorbell to keep track of people approaching your home.

Secure All Entrances:

Check locks and sensors on doors and windows and repair any weakened entry points. Remember to include any garage, shed or other outbuilding on your property.

For peace of mind, trust the Master Locksmiths Association (MLA) **Find your local MLA Approved Company.**

Lighting:

Program indoor timer lights to turn on at dusk, giving your home a "lived-in" look. Motion-detecting floodlights are great for deterring intruders and increasing visibility. Solar lights are

eco-friendly and can brighten up your walkways, improving safety as you come and go.

Keep Valuables Out of Sight:

Make sure valuables are not visible from windows and keep blinds drawn when it gets dark.

Keep Exterior tidy:

Trim hedges that may be overgrown. Keep recycling from expensive packages hidden from view. Think about what is lying around and remove anything that could be used to gain entry e.g. ladders, garden equipment, loose bricks and rubble.

Look out for your neighbours:

Be vigilant and look out for each another. If you won't be home for a time – let a neighbour know. Check-in on any vulnerable neighbours who may be in need of a hand to get winter ready.

Seasonal advice



PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR COLD WEATHER

Cold temperatures can impact the integrity of your home. Be proactive:

Insulate Pipes: Prevent burst pipes by insulating those that are exposed to freezing temperatures.

Service Your Heating System: Get your boiler serviced to avoid winter breakdowns.

Emergency Supplies: Stock up on blankets, non-perishable food, and water to be prepared in case of power cuts.

Candles: Candles add warmth and comfort, but be cautious:

Place Candles on Stable Surfaces: Ensure they are away from curtains, paper, and other flammable items.

Blow Them Out Before Sleeping: Never leave a candle burning overnight.

Consider Battery-Powered Alternatives: Safe and long-lasting, LED candles create the same cozy effect.



GETTING YOUR CAR WINTER-READY

Safe winter travel starts with a well-prepared vehicle:

Winter Tyres and Antifreeze: Ensure your car has suitable winter tyres and that antifreeze levels are topped up.

Check Battery Health: Cold weather can be hard on car batteries, so make sure yours is fully charged.

Emergency Kit: Carry a kit with warm clothes, water, snacks, a flashlight, and a scraper. Be cautious:



TRAVELLING

Travelling safely in winter requires extra preparation:

Monitor Weather Updates: Keep an eye on weather forecasts and only travel when conditions are safe.

Plan Your Route: Stick to main roads and inform someone of your plans when travelling long distances.

Drive Slowly and Carefully: Allow extra time for journeys and keep a safe distance from other vehicles. Long-lasting, LED candles create the same cozy effect.

Stay ahead / Be prepared:

There are simple ways you can help others, either by supporting some of the work already happening in your area or by starting something new. This doesn't mean doing the job of the emergency services. It's about making sensible preparations so that all the skills, knowledge and commitment in your community can make as much difference as possible when needed.

See the Ready Scotland website for information and advice about the ways that individuals, groups and local businesses can support their communities through challenging situations.

Ready Scotland website



Cybersecurity for Black Friday - November 29, 2024



Online shopping increases during the festive season, and so does cyber fraud. Stay protected:

Shop from Trusted Websites: Only use reputable sites and beware of deals that seem too good to be true.

Update Your Passwords: Strong, unique passwords are essential. Use multi-factor authentication wherever possible.

Monitor Financial Accounts: Regularly check bank statements for unusual activity, and set alerts for large transactions.

Festive Activity 2024

Our festive campaign 2024, incorporating general seasonal safety advice, will see us out with our partners at various locations across Scotland and the beginning of December will see the return of our festive 'Communi-Tree.'

Visit our website and Facebook page to keep up to date with our activities and on top of advice to keep you, your friends, family, neighbours and wider community, safe and well this festive season.

Stay Connected with Neighbourhood Watch Scotland!

Share your stories – Remember: we love to hear from you and share your ideas and successes with our members to help inspire others to try new ways of bringing people together.

Let's continue to protect and support each other. Have questions? Need resources? Reach out anytime at info@neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk. Share this newsletter and spread awareness—safety is a team effort!

Getting in touch



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NWS Website



Sign-up for alerts



Thank you for your commitment to community safety, and let's make this winter season safe, warm, and neighbourly.