



TOSA WATCH

Wauwatosa's Neighborhood Watch Newsletter

Volume 34, Issue 1

January – March 2025

Inside This Issue

<i>Be a Good Witness</i>	1
<i>Will You Be My Valentine?</i>	2
<i>Social Media Safety for Middle and High School Age Kids</i>	2
<i>2024 Crime Stoppers Data</i>	3
<i>Crime Statistics</i>	3
<i>Avoiding and Reporting Gift Card Scams</i>	4

Happy
New Year!

TOSA WATCH - Wauwatosa's Neighborhood Watch Newsletter is sponsored by:

The Wauwatosa Police Department-
Community Support Division
1700 North 116th Street
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin 53226
Telephone: (414) 471-8430
FAX: (414) 471-8470

TOSA WATCH provides useful information for citizens who participate in the Wauwatosa Block Watch Program. Reader comments and contributions are welcome.

Be a Good Witness

Crimes are often solved or even prevented by information provided by citizen witnesses. The Wauwatosa Police Department understands how important accurate eye witness statements can be and we rely on citizens to be the eyes and ears of our community. In turn, the police department is able to respond quickly to crimes in progress or even arrive before a crime is committed.

Being a good witness means not placing yourself or others in danger. Remember, your safety comes first. If you see a crime in progress, call 911 from a safe distance. A police dispatcher will answer the phone and ask a series of questions such as:

- **Where is the emergency?** If you don't know the exact address or street name try to recall the nearest intersection or businesses. Landmarks can be relayed to responding squads who may be more familiar with the area.
- **What happened?** Was it a crime or some other call for emergency services? Dispatchers may ask questions that at the time might seem irrelevant to you but might be very important for responding officers.
- **Is anyone injured? Is medical assistance necessary?** Remember, people's safety is our priority.
- **Were any weapons involved? If so, what kind of weapon was used? Where is the weapon now?**
- **Is the suspect still there? What did they look like?** Dispatch will ask you for a general description such as age, race, gender, height, weight, hair color and clothing description.
- **If the suspect fled the scene which direction did they travel? Did they leave in a vehicle?** If a vehicle was involved try to provide a description of the color, make, model and license plate. With technological improvements police departments are now able to identify vehicles with even a partial license plate. Were there any other characteristics that were observed about the vehicle such as dents, burned out lights or bumper stickers?

Never get between a suspect and their escape route. If the crime involves property such as theft from vehicle or retail theft, ask yourself "should I risk my safety for a property crime?" The answer is "no!" Remember, don't be afraid to call the police if you observe suspicious activity even if no crime had yet been committed. You know your neighborhood better than anyone and your instincts are probably correct. The Wauwatosa Police Department encourages citizens to call at the first sign of suspicious activity. Crime Prevention is everyone's responsibility. With your help, we can keep our community safe.

Will You Be My Valentine?

Will you be my Valentine, is back for its fifth-year. The program is well received by our facilities and we'd like to make visits again this year. So, the Community Support Division is looking for help once again. We will visit Oak Park and Hart Park Square assisted living facilities on Friday, February 14th to present them with decorated Valentines. Seniors can often times be forgotten but still want to feel loved and appreciated. So, do you have a little artist in the family? Do you watch a group of kids that might be looking for something to do?

Well, we have the hearts if you have the time to work your magic. Our goal is to collect 100 valentine cards to distribute. We will supply the hearts if your little ones or those young at heart, will do the decorating. If you let us know how many you'd be interested in helping with, we can get the hearts to you, or you can stop by the Wauwatosa Police Department, at 1700 North 116th Street and ask for them at the Front Desk. When they are finished, you can bring them back to the police department or you can give us a call and we can come get them too.

For additional information please contact Laura Laurishke at 414-471-8430 at ext. 5111 or email, llaurishke@wauwatosa.net. Any help you can give would be most appreciated.

Social Media Safety for Middle and High School Age Kids

Parents, do you really know what your kids are doing online? It's important to check in and help them understand the consequences of oversharing personal information. Protect your children from unseen online predators by staying informed and proactive. Use the valuable resources below to guide meaningful conversations and help steer your kids toward a safe, happy, and successful future.

Protect Your Personal Information

- Don't share your full name, address, phone number, or school details.
- Use privacy settings to limit who sees your posts and profile.
- Avoid sharing passwords with anyone except trusted adults.
- Use strong passwords.
- Turn off location sharing on apps unless absolutely necessary.
- Be careful not to share your current location, daily routines, or vacation plans publicly.

Think Before You Post

- Once you post online, it's out there forever, even if you delete it.
- Avoid sharing inappropriate photos, videos, or messages. Colleges and employers often check social media.
- Never send or post photos or videos that you wouldn't want the world to see. Even private messages can be shared.
- Avoid sharing photos of others without their permission.

Friends and Followers

- Only accept friend or follow requests from people you know in real life.
- Block or report anyone who makes you uncomfortable, sends inappropriate messages, or pressures you for personal info.
- Be cautious of messages or links from strangers, they may be harmful.
- Never meet someone in person you only know online without telling an adult.

Digital Drama and Cyberbullying

- Be kind online. Don't share or comment on harmful content about others.
- If you see someone else being bullied, stand up for them by reporting the behavior.

Talk to Trusted Adults

- If you ever feel unsafe or unsure about something online, talk to a parent, teacher, or counselor.
- Remember, you're not alone. Adults can help you make smart choices and stay safe online.



2024 Crime Stoppers Data

The Wauwatosa Crime Stoppers has had another successful year thanks to you! Crime Stoppers received 18 anonymous tips in 2024 that lead to the arrests of 6 individuals for narcotics and disorderly conduct violations. Other crimes reported included vehicle theft, burglary, narcotics distribution and suspicious circumstances. As a result of these arrests the Wauwatosa Crime Stoppers paid out \$300 in reward money. If you have information regarding a crime that has been committed and wish to report it anonymously, please call the Wauwatosa Crime Stoppers at 771-TOSA (771-8672) or download the “P3 Tips” app to your smartphone to submit tips. As always, if you witness a crime in progress, dial “911” immediately.

**Sunday, March 9th
Daylight Savings
Begins At 2AM,
Spring Forward**

Wauwatosa Police Department

James MacGillis – Chief of Police

Community Support Division

Captain Gary Gabrish

Lieutenant Bradley Beckman

Sergeant Jim Morrill

Specialist II Mike McDermott

Specialist I Dan Kane

School Officer Farris Griffin

School Officer Cordero Finley

School Officer Maria Albiter

Community Support Specialist –

Laura Laurishke

Crime Statistics

Comparative Analysis – City Wide

Category	01-01-23 thru 11-30-23	01-01-24 thru 11-30-24	Percentage of Change 2023 - 2024
Part 1 Crimes			
Homicide	1	0	-
Sexual Assault	20	26	30.00%
Robbery	21	24	14.29%
Assault	107	121	13.08%
Burglary	76	63	-17.11%
Larceny-Theft	1,232	1,333	8.20%
Motor Vehicle Theft	179	156	-12.85%
Subtotal of Part 1 Crimes	1,718	1,634	-4.89%
Other Select Incidents			
Fraud	242	210	-13.22%
Vandalism	131	131	0.00%
Narcotic Law Violations	71	59	-16.90%
Drunken Driving	87	99	13.79%
Disorderly Conduct	1,797	1,889	5.12%
Fatal MVA	1	0	-
Personal Injury MVA	158	138	-12.66%
Property Damage MVA	929	866	- 6.78%
Total of All Calls	32,310	36,446	12.80%

Note: The above are incidents that are reported and investigated by the Police Department. Actual crime classifications usually change when the complaints are finally analyzed and dispositions are determined. This may result in different numbers reported to the NIBRS incident-based reporting system at the end of the year.

If there is something you'd like addressed in this newsletter, please contact Laura Laurishke at 414-471-8430 ext. 5111 or email llaurishke@wauwatosa.net. We will do our best to accommodate your request.

Avoiding and Reporting Gift Card Scams

While you are all probably aware of gift card scams, they are still occurring frequently in our area. Many are embarrassed once they realize that one's become a target and don't want to report their misfortune and some are losing a substantial amount of money. If one falls into this category, please review the information below to learn what you can do and how to avoid being a victim again.

How Scams Work

Scammers may call, text, email, or message you on social media to convince you to buy gift cards (like Google Play, Apple, or Amazon) and share the numbers on the back. They often claim:

- **Urgency:** They pressure you to act quickly to avoid severe consequences.
- **Specific instructions:** They direct you to purchase specific gift cards from particular stores.
- **PIN or card number requests:** Sharing these details gives scammers access to the funds.

Common Scams

1. **Government Imposters:** Claiming to be from the IRS or Social Security, demanding payment for fines or taxes.
2. **Tech Support:** Pretending to be from Microsoft or Apple to "fix" your computer.
3. **Fake Emergencies:** Posing as a relative or friend needing money.
4. **Fake Prizes:** Asking for fees or charges to claim a prize.
5. **Utility Threats:** Demanding payment to avoid service disruption.
6. **Romance Scams:** Building trust online, then requesting money via gift cards.
7. **Overpayment Scams:** Sending a fake check and asking for the difference on a gift card.

What to Do if You've Been Scammed

1. **Report It:** Contact the gift card company immediately with the card and store receipt.
2. **Ask for a Refund:** Some companies can freeze the funds and may refund the money.
3. **Notify the FTC:** File a report at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/report-fraud). (Federal Trade Commission)

Buying and Using Gift Cards Safely

- Purchase only from trusted stores, not auction sites.
- Inspect cards for tampering before buying.
- Save receipts and card details to help with fraud reports.

Suspicious Purchases?

If someone is buying gift cards in large quantities or frequently, it could signal a scam. For instance, a customer claiming to buy multiple \$250 Sephora cards weekly for different reasons may be under pressure or deceived by a scammer. Gently educate them about common scams and suggest they evaluate the situation.

Quick Tip: Real businesses and government agencies never demand payment via gift cards. Always pause and verify before acting.

