

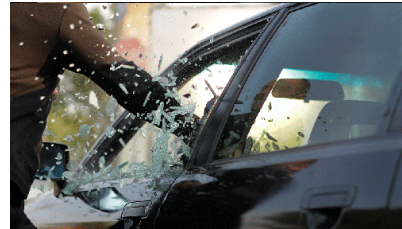


Monthly Newsletter

February 2022

Uptick in crime reports

January witnessed an unusually high number of crime reports for our neighborhood. A total of 10 reports were filed with the Sheriff's Department. Five of them were for car burglaries. Of the five home burglaries, one was a porch pirate and one a burglary from the garage of an unoccupied home undergoing renovation.



The reports highlight the following:

- Many people wisely appear to be filing online reports to keep the Sheriff's Department aware of even low-level crimes. In one of the car burglary cases, the online report led to the subsequent arrest of suspects.
- Two of the car burglaries involved the theft of catalytic converters.
- In three of the five home burglaries, the perpetrators fled due to an alarm or a confrontation with the homeowner.

Following are some lessons to be learned from the reports:

- Nearly all of the reports suggest crimes of opportunity, not careful planning.
- Most of the car burglaries involved cars parked in lots or on the street.
- Except for the porch pirate incident, all of the home burglaries indicate that the perpetrators saw signs that led them to believe no one was home. In one case, they likely noticed the absence of a travel trailer normally parked in the driveway; in another, they rang the doorbell and received no response; in a third, signs of remodeling may have suggested an unoccupied home.

No criminal activity should be taken lightly, as proven by a recent case in North Highlands in which a homeowner was killed when he confronted a burglar who had stolen a gun from his shed. However, there also are measures each of us can take to reduce our chance of becoming a victim.

Security Tips

As a member of WDDNA, you already have taken one such step by supporting the patrols that have been successful in reducing the number of hardened criminals who previously had been reported in our neighborhood. According to our deputies, the word is out among the bad guys that our streets are patrolled.

In addition, WDDNA provides an array of advice for protecting one's home and property from low-level opportunistic thieves. You may go to our website at [WilhagginNA.com](https://wilhagginna.com), log on, then go to the Members Only menu and click on our Security Tips page for a list of informative downloads.

In addition, you may visit our Videos Plus menu to view the following videos we have produced:

- Entry Door Security <https://wilhagginna.com/entry-door-security/>
- Garage Security <https://wilhagginna.com/garage-security/>
- Preventing Car Burglaries <https://wilhagginna.com/preventing-car-burglaries/>
- Porch Pirates <https://wilhagginna.com/porch-pirates/>
- Security Lighting <https://wilhagginna.com/security-lighting/>

Finally, as a WDDNA member you may request a personalized home visit by one of our deputies who will walk your property and suggest ways in which you may be able to improve your security. To request a visit, contact WDDNA's deputy liaison, Brian Smith via email at casigns28@outlook.com.

For a list of security measures that you can take to protect yourself and your home, [CLICK HERE](#).

WDDNA met with county about traffic

Speed bumps, neighborhood signage and school-related congestion were among the topics when WDDNA's traffic committee met Jan. 18 via Zoom with representatives of the Sacramento County Department of Transportation.

On hand for the meeting were Lu Li, DOT's principal civil engineer, and Sonia Hernandez, senior transportation engineer.

In preparation for the meeting, Li and Hernandez had reviewed written comments from WDDNA members about traffic issues and watched the videos of our December meeting, including the extensive question-and-answer sessions.

During the meeting, WDDNA committee members brought up the following issues:

- Congestion and unsafe traffic conditions around Rio Americano High School during morning and afternoon hours;
- The need for additional speed limit signage on our streets;
- The process for getting more speed bumps installed on busy feeder streets;
- Problems associated with cut-through traffic;
- The status of the official American River Drive speed survey;
- Problems on River Walk Way caused by drivers who congregate late at night to party or burglarize nearby parked vehicles.

Li and Hernandez said they would help us in any way possible, but they stressed that speeding and traffic congestion issues are prevalent throughout the county. They noted that signage, speed bumps and other tools can have a moderating effect on speeders to some degree. However, they said, it is all but impossible to force unwilling drivers to slow down and obey traffic laws if they choose not to.

That said, Li and Hernandez volunteered to take the following actions:

- Take a close look at adding more speed limit signs in the neighborhood, particularly on cut-through streets and long streets where speeding is more common.
- Study the intersection of American River Drive and Saverien to determine if there

- are any measures that can be taken to improve flow.
- Look at adding warning signs on American River Drive to alert drivers that a stop is ahead.
- Possibly add a “No Loitering” sign on River Walk Way.
- Alert WDDNA about any additional traffic control measures planned in our neighborhood.

In addition, Hernandez reported that a new American River Drive speed survey was completed in December. She sent us a copy of the survey, which we forwarded to the local CHP patrol officers. Speed surveys establish the appropriate speed on streets like American River Drive which are not covered by basic speed statutes. The surveys are important because, without them, it is difficult for a speeding ticket to be prosecuted in court.

As we receive progress reports on DOT efforts, we will share them in the WDDNA newsletter.



How to get a speed bump installed

In a recent meeting with officials from the Sacramento County Department of Transportation, WDDNA's traffic committee discussed the process by which speed bumps can be requested and approved for residential streets.

Sonia Hernandez, DOT's senior transportation engineer, explained that a street segment must be at least 1,000 feet long, with no stop signs, curves or other traffic control devices on it to be considered for a new speed bump. If these conditions are met and there are no other issues of concern to DOT engineers, the residents of the street can request a speed bump.

Such requests are handled as part of the Sacramento County Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP). According to the program website “The goal of the NTMP is to improve safety and the quality of life for residents by reducing the impacts from speeding vehicles and careless drivers on residential streets.” <https://sacdot.sacounty.net/Pages/NeighborhoodTrafficManagement.aspx>

In addition to speed bumps, NTMP also may respond to requests for a variety of other traffic control devices. [CLICK HERE](#) to see a list.

The website noted that the NTMP provides:

- A systematic approach to initiating citizen requests to treat neighborhood traffic issues.
- A priority system that allows staff to prioritize limited resources.

- Neighborhood involvement in developing and approving a neighborhood traffic management plan.

Hernandez said the process begins when a resident or residents of the street file a request. Although WDDNA is not part of this process, we can assist any interested member with communications and informational support.

If you and your neighbors are interested in requesting a speed bump on your street, the following is the application process:

1. Residents contact SACDOT staff to request consideration of streets for NTMP.
2. An NTMP petition is mailed to resident(s) to complete with required signatures.
3. SACDOT staff evaluates and ranks streets to present to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors for approval and funding. This typically happens once each year.
4. Once the street is reviewed for NTMP measures, a proposed traffic plan will be developed in coordination with residents.
5. Survey cards for the proposed plan are then mailed to residents and property owners to seek consensus on proposed traffic management measures. (A majority vote in favor is necessary for the proposal to proceed.)
6. Staff then presents NTMP plans to the Board of Supervisors for approval and projects are put out to bid for construction.

To begin the process, you may either call 311 or write a letter to the department describing your issue, what mitigation you are seeking and your name, address and other contact information. Address the letter to:

County of Sacramento
Department of Transportation – Traffic Engineering
4100 Traffic Way
Sacramento, CA 95827



Catalytic converters stolen

Two of the car burglaries reported in our neighborhood in January involved the theft of catalytic converters. They are among a growing number of such incidents.

Such thefts are not just a nuisance to victims. According to experts, it can cost up to \$2,000 to replace a catalytic converter and it is illegal to drive your car without one. What's more, the resulting gap in the vehicle's exhaust system makes the car run poorly until the device is replaced.

Why are thieves stealing these devices and what can we do to protect our vehicles?

According to WDDNA deputies, the converters contain very valuable metals – platinum,

rhodium and palladium. The metals are expensive and thieves sell the converters to middle men for a few hundred dollars. Those middle men then sell them to aggregators who eventually ship them to China, where the metals are harvested.

Thieves can get in and out from under a car in less than two minutes. The only tools needed are a wrench and a mechanic's creeper. They slide under the vehicle, remove the bolts holding the converter and take it.

Typically, catalytic converters are stolen from cars and trucks in driveways, on the street or in parking lots. The most commonly hit vehicles are SUVs and trucks, especially late-model Toyotas, because they sit higher off the ground (making for easier access) and the bolts that connect the converter are easily removed. Nissans also may be targeted.

Symptoms of converter theft

According to experts, you'll notice a loud rumbling or roaring sound as soon as you turn on the engine if your catalytic converter is missing. This gets louder when you hit the gas. The exhaust will not work properly, so the vehicle will drive rougher than usual, often with a sense of sputtering as you change speed.

To see if the theft has taken place, go to the back of the car and look underneath. The catalytic converter is a round canister that connects two pieces of piping in the exhaust. You will see a gaping space in the middle of your exhaust line if the converter is missing and you will likely see signs of the piping being cut away.

Preventing catalytic converter theft

The easiest way to protect your vehicle is to simply park it in your garage. Taking the time to clean out a parking space in the garage can save you a lot of frustration and expense later.

When you are away from home, park in well-lit areas when possible. Park close to a building entrance or to the nearest access road when parking in a public lot. The increased pedestrian traffic in those areas may deter thieves.

Security devices that attach to the converter making it harder to steal are available. Having the converter welded in place also makes it more difficult to remove. If you have a security system on your car, calibrate it so vibration sets it off. This ensures the alarm activates if a thief tries to saw off the converter. Video surveillance around your garage or driveway is also useful. Some mechanics suggest welding the heads on the catalytic converter bolts or simply shearing them off.

The aftermarket has designed products to deter and prevent catalytic converter theft. The idea behind such devices is that if it takes too long to make the steal, the thieves will move on to easier pickings. The [CatClamp](#), for example, which starts at \$150, is a hard-to-defeat cage installed around the catalytic converter. This product can be installed by a mechanic or at home with an included specialized tool and is backed by a money-back guarantee.

Reporting crimes helps catch bad guys

According to WDDNA deputies, many homeowners decide not to file crime reports after their cars have been burglarized or when items have been stolen from their porches. They may believe that filing low-level burglary reports is a waste of time.

Not so, said Sgt. Ray Forsyth, one of WDDNA's long-time patrol deputies. "The reports can sometimes lead to the arrest of serious criminals," he explained.

A case in point, said Forsyth, involved a car burglary that occurred Jan. 17 on Grovesnor Court just off Wilhaggin Drive. In that case, a burglar smashed the window of the victim's car sometime during the night and, among other things, stole a bag containing credit cards. Upon discovering the theft, the victim immediately filed an online crime report.

"It's a good thing he did," said Forsyth, "because just a couple of days later, a man and woman tried to use the stolen card to rent a room at a hotel in Rancho Cordova."

Forsyth said that triggered an alert to the Sheriff's Department. Deputies swooped in and arrested the couple. When they did, they found stacks of other stolen credit cards and materials that indicated the two were involved in major identity theft activities.

"We might not have gotten those guys if the crime report had not been filed right away," said Forsyth. "It is important to report these things immediately. Sometimes small bits of information can help solve major crimes."

Pedestrians be aware

According to authorities, speeding and careless driving are on the increase everywhere. One result is an increased danger for pedestrians. Three pedestrians have been killed in the Sacramento area in as many months.

A recent note from one of our patrol deputies underscores how important it is for pedestrians to be aware and take measures to protect themselves from traffic.

"I started the early morning driving the neighborhood," said Deputy Vo in a Jan. 15 report, "but extremely thick fog made visibility difficult. Luckily, I am familiar with the area, but stop signs and street signs were not clearly visible. I noticed people wearing dark clothing while they were out walking their dogs. I would like to encourage everyone to use safety reflectors when they are walking in dark and foggy conditions. It can be extremely difficult to see walkers and not everyone drives safely."

The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) also urges pedestrians to be certain that drivers see you.

"It's best to make eye contact with drivers to make sure you are seen," the NHTSA advises. "Make yourself visible by wearing brightly colored clothing during the day. At night, wear reflective materials or use a flashlight."

HOW TO CALL FOR HELP

IN AN EMERGENCY

If you have an immediate emergency - if your life or property is in immediate danger, if you feel threatened by someone on or near your property, if you have just become the victim of a crime or if you are witnessing a crime in progress:

- CALL 911 from a land line.
- Or, if calling from a cell phone within Sacramento County, call (916) 874-5111.

TO REPORT A CRIME

There are two ways to report a crime to the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department:

1. Call the Sheriff's Department NON-EMERGENCY LINE at (916) 874-5115. To bypass the recorded messaging when you call, dial 0 after the line is answered.
2. File a report online through the Sheriff's Department website. Click on this link to begin the process: https://www.sacsheriff.com/pages/crime_report.php

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY (Not an emergency)

If you see someone engaged in suspicious activity but it is not an emergency, call 916-874-5115 (Sheriff's Department non-emergency line).

GENERAL CONCERNS, REPORTS OR QUESTIONS

If you have an issue that can be addressed later, you may contact our neighborhood patrol officers about it. The best way is via [EMAIL at wilhaggin4@sacsheriff.com](mailto:wilhaggin4@sacsheriff.com).

Wilhaggin Del Dayo Neighborhood Association | 761 Cortland Drive, Sacramento, CA 95864

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