



## ***VAN NUYS SENIOR LEAD OFFICERS' NEWS***

Senior Lead Officers Unit  
6240 Sylmar Avenue, Van Nuys, CA 91401

December 2024

# GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**If you are interested in becoming a Block Captain and starting a Neighborhood Watch Program in your neighborhood, please call your Senior Lead Officer at the numbers listed below for further details.**

**Help Us PREVENT TERRORISM - "See Something, Report to iWATCH"**

iWatch is a community program and partnership between the public and Los Angeles Police Department. The program educates the community regarding possible acts of terrorism by teaching them about behaviors and activities that appear unusual and/or seem to be out of the ordinary, makes them aware of important places to watch, and informs them on key details that should be included as part of the reporting process.

There are three platforms for public reporting:

1. iWATCH mobile application
2. Online through LAPDonline.org or iWATCHLA.org
3. 1-877-A-THREAT (1-877-284-7328)

**For crimes in progress and medical emergencies dial: 911**

To report any suspicious activity or person(s), call the Los Angeles Police Department Non-Emergency phone number at 877-ASK-LAPD (877-275-5273).

Are you interested in knowing about spontaneous police activity in your neighborhood? If so, you may want to try the "Citizen app." Get real-time safety alerts and live videos of incidents happening near you.

***Crime Update***

**Basic Car 9A5**

Senior Lead Officer Brian Franco

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Happy Holidays to all. Basic Car 9A5 Officer Brian Franco here. As the holiday season is fast approaching gifts will be purchased and mailed to homes. Unfortunately, some of these gifts might be snatched from our homes. People who do this are known as porch pirates. The term porch pirate is used to refer to people who steal packages from other people's homes. Why would anyone do this? There are a number of potential explanations. For one, it's relatively easy. Many of these crimes are just crime of opportunity, meaning that a person takes advantage of a possibility that is presented to them. They also might do so because there is a chance the package contains valuable merchandise. Porch pirates likely hope that small packages contain expensive items that can be resold, such as phones, video game systems, sound systems, or computers. Here some possible solutions to help prevent this type of crime from happening to you.

**Home Security System**

The best way to deal with package thieves is through preventative and security measures. If a package is stolen from your property, your best bet is to have already installed a video surveillance system so that the suspect can be identified and tracked down.

**Get a Porch Pirate Bag**

There are products you can purchase that are referred to as "porch pirate bags." These bags are fairly large and made out of durable material. You can instruct delivery people to place the package in the bag and lock it to something fixed on your porch with the combination lock that is attached.

**Pay for a Package Receiving Service**

There are services you can sign up for with major delivery companies that offer lockers you can rent. You typically pay a monthly fee in order to have access to a locker where you can have your packages delivered.

**Require a Signature**

You can often check off "signature required" when you are checking out during online shopping. This can work well if you are often home in order to sign for your packages. If you aren't, though, it can cause a goose-chase where you keep missing the delivery person and your package.

**Network with Neighbors**

If package theft has been an ongoing problem in your neighborhood rather than a one-off event, you might consider collaborating with your neighbors. You and the other property owners around you might decide to look out for strangers in the neighborhood. Additionally, you might agree to keep an eye on deliveries at each other's houses.

**Take Advantage of the "Ship to Store" Option**

Many retailers offer a "ship to store" option. This means that you can order items that they don't have in stock and have them sent to the store itself. You can then go and pick it up within a reasonably wide timeframe.

I wish you all a happy and safe holiday season.

**Basic Car 9A19**

Senior Lead Officer Mike Perez

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I would like to start my contribution to the Van Nuys Area December 2024 newsletter by wishing you and your family a very happy and safe holiday season. Looking back on the past year, it has been a pleasure working with many of you in helping reduce the fear and incidents of crime. This year I am proud to say that I have seen many improvements within my basic car. Addressing the quality of life issues such as removal of abandoned vehicles, new construction, clean-ups of existing homeless encampments, and good police work done from our dedicated Van Nuys Officers and Specialized Units, all have contributed to the reduction of crime and blight in our community. I look forward to working with you in 2025!

This month we will all be busy shopping, traveling, visiting with family and friends and spending time with loved ones. Please keep in mind these following tips to keep your money, data and purchases safe.

1. **Save your receipts and monitor your credit activity.** Monitoring your credit activity and comparing them with your receipts will allow you to detect fraudulent activity and can report it sooner rather than later.
2. **Credit cards are safer than debit cards.** Credit cards offer better protection against fraud because thieves don't have direct access to your checking account. Using one credit card for all holiday purchases also minimalizes the number of accounts criminals can compromise.
3. **Don't leave gifts or other valuables in your car.** Avoid leaving purchases or other valuables visible in your car. If you must place valuables in the trunk out of view of thieves. Remember, "Lock it. Hide it. Keep it."
4. **Beware of bogus charitable causes.** Criminals prey on the goodness of giving to charitable causes during the holiday season. Never provide any personal information such as names, dates of birth, social security numbers, or banking information to solicitors. Ask to see official documentation for those appearing to work for reputable charities and trust your gut. If it's too good to be true, it probably is.
5. **Protect your home.** Keep your home protected with smart home gadgets designed to keep everything safe and secure when you're away. Various home security apps work with indoor and outdoor cameras, door locks, garage door sensors and lights you can program to turn on and off. Avoid porch piracy by having packages delivered at a secured location or with your consent, services like Amazon Key, allow drivers to deliver packages inside your garage.

Happy Holidays!

**Community Clean-ups:** Our next community clean up is scheduled for January 2025. Time and location TBD. If you are interested in participating, please email me at [35569@lapd.online](mailto:35569@lapd.online).

**Neighborhood Watch!** An involved community is an informed community. If you are interested in participating in a traditional Neighborhood Watch meeting or to restart an existing one, please email me.

**Basic Car 9A23:**

Senior Lead Officer George Lara

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Happy Holidays from your Senior Lead Officer George Lara! I hope everyone is enjoying this holiday season with your loved ones. During a review of the violent crime statistics in our area, I noticed that most of the incidents were related to people either being under the influence of alcohol, family violence or a combination thereof.

In the State of California Family Violence aka Domestic Violence is defined as *“Any person who willfully inflicts upon his or her spouse, or any person who willfully inflicts upon any person with whom he or she is cohabiting, or any person who willfully inflicts upon any person who is the mother or father of his or her child, corporal injury resulting in a traumatic condition is guilty of a felony.”*

Domestic Violence includes, but is not limited, to the following circumstances:

- Physical – hitting or burning.
- Sexual – rape or incest.
- Emotional – threatening, insulting or harassing.
- Neglect – poor physical or emotional care.

Incidents of domestic violence often go unreported by victims for the following reasons:

- Victims do not realize they are in a dangerous and violent situation.
- Victims do not recognize the domestic violence signals.
- Victims feel ashamed, hopeless and are in denial.
- Victims sense they have no alternatives.
- Victims sense no one can protect them.
- Victims do not know what victim services are available or how they can obtain the services needed.

Many people still believe in the myth that men are the only people capable of being abusive and women are the only people who suffer abuse this is not true and sometimes abuse can also come from a parent, sibling or close relative. An abuser can be anybody from any walk of life.

Some abusers have the following traits:

- Does not change.
- Low self-esteem.
- Work related problems.
- Legal problems, fines or prior jail convictions for domestic violence.
- Has witnessed, or may have suffered abuse as children, causing abuse to be taught or a learned behavior.
- Desires power and to be in control.
- Low self-esteem.
- Violence against their victim gives them a sense of importance.
- Drug and/or alcohol problems.
- Mental or emotional problems.
- Abusers make excuses, such as “blaming” the abuse on other people or situations.

This abuse cycle has four phases and it can be helpful to understand them, to help you recognize the pattern of abuse and violence that can occur. This pattern can happen over a day, weeks, months or years. Below is an example of how family and domestic violence may occur.

The **first** step of the cycle is the actual act of abuse, where the abuser metes out some form of violence.

The **second** step is the remorse period, where the abuser is sorry the incident occurred and apologizes for everything that occurred.

The *third* step is the dating period, where the couple is once again happy, and everything seems wonderful. In actuality, the abusers tension level is building.

The *fourth* step is a repeat of the *first* step of the abuse. The cycle continues to repeat itself growing in ferocity each time.

#### Domestic Violence Prevention Tips:

- Watch for personality changes such as more aggressive, violent, moody or accusing behavior.
- Develop a plan of action and instruct your children about the plan.
- Locate a safe house such as the home of a trusted friend, trusted neighbor or family member.
- Locate a safe shelter that is suitable to your needs and accepts children.
- Begin counseling sessions.

If you or suspect someone you know is a victim of Domestic Violence you contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-SAFE (7233) or at [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org). Local resources are also available at the Los Angeles County Domestic Violence Hotline (800) 978-3600 or our very own Van Nuys Division Domestic Abuse Response Team at 818-374-0050.

Some Domestic Violence programs can assist you in determining if you are eligible to receive financial compensation for losses or expenses that result from the crime, such as wages, relocation, medical and therapy.

As a reminder, I am available via e-mail, text and phone calls, however please consider that I am not always on duty. If you have an emergency or in need of immediate police assistance, please call 911 or the LAPD Non-emergency number at (877) 275-5273.

#### **Basic Car 9A37**

Senior Lead Officer Kristan Delatori

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Happy Holidays Basic Car A37, the following Holiday Safety Tips were compiled, in cooperation with the LAPD Crime Prevention Section, to contribute to the safety and security of people during the holiday season. The holiday season is always a special time of year. It is also a time when busy people become careless and vulnerable to theft and other holiday crime. We can never be too careful, too prepared or too aware. Please share this information with family, friends and neighbors.

#### **Shopping**

- Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. Shopping at night, go with friends or family.
- Dress casually and comfortably. **Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.**
- **You may be rushed and thinking about a thousand things, stay alert to your surroundings.**
- Pay for purchases with a credit card when possible.
- Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your credit card is lost, stolen or misused.
- Keep a record of all your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Be extra careful if you do carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, bus stops, on buses and other rapid transit.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages.
- **Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, “con-artists” may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.**

#### **At Home**

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house.

- When leaving home for an extended time, have a neighbor or family member watch your house and pick up your newspapers and mail.
- **Indoor and outdoor lights should be on an automatic timer.**
- Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.
- Holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- When setting up a Christmas tree or other holiday display, make sure doors and passageways are clear inside your home.
- If you use lights on your Christmas tree, ensure the wiring is not damaged. Frayed or damaged wiring can cause a fire. Place your Christmas tree in water or wet sand to keep it green.

### **Hosting / Attending a Party**

- Have non-alcoholic beverages available for party guests.
- Find alternative transportation for intoxicated guests.
- Arrange for an official designated driver for your party who will not drink at all.
- Have something to eat before consuming alcoholic beverages.
- Eat high protein foods that will stay in your stomach longer and slow the absorption of alcohol into your system. Remember only time will eliminate the alcohol from your body.
- Know your safe limit. **Never drink and drive.**

If you are interested in starting or joining a neighborhood watch group, please email me with your contact information. Thank you for your continued support of the Officers here at Van Nuys Division!

*For more information and safety tips please visit [LAPD.ORG](http://LAPD.ORG)*

### **Basic Car 9A41**

Senior Lead Officer Joel Gutierrez

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Hello basic car 9A41, Greetings and Happy Holidays! I would first like to extend to you and your family a happy, and healthy holiday season. As the holidays draw near we will all be spending our hard earned money on gifts and presents for our family and loved ones. Keep these tips in mind to prevent holiday thefts.

### **Holiday Theft Prevention:**

- Have packages that are shipped to your home delivered to an area out of plain view of your porch.
- Have packages delivered at secure location (Amazon lockers) rather than your home.
- Pay attention to your surroundings while shopping. Thieves monitor the parking lots of malls and stores for people placing newly bought items in their vehicles.
- Remember to always, **“Lock it, Hide it, Keep it!”**

Please stay vigilant and properly secure your homes as it relates to closing and locking windows at night. With this said, please continue to stay alert and report suspicious activity as it relates to residential burglary. If possible, the utilization of a ring type video surveillance system for your residence is always a good deterrent. The more layers of deterrent towards hardening the target of your residence, helps to reduce your chances of being victimized. Please continue to stay involved with a Neighborhood Watch Program and get to know your neighbors.

Lastly, we continue into the new year, I like to take a moment to speak about our unhoused neighbors in our basic car area. I make a daily effort to reach out to People Experiencing Homelessness by conducting foot beats and discussing their needs. I provide specific resources to fit each one's individual needs through

LAHSA, Urban Alchemy CIRCLE Teams. I am actively involved in the CARE plus clean-ups and also conduct enforcement when needed.

**Basic Car 9A63**

Senior Lead Officer Mariana Romo

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Greetings and Happy Holidays!

The holidays are here and would like to remind you of a few crime prevention tips.

If you are shopping at the mall or any retailer:

- Do not leave valuable items in plain view inside of your vehicle. Place them in your trunk or carry along some type of covering (such as a blanket) to cover your packages.
- Be alert and aware of your surroundings. Do not walk and text at the same time.
- Walk with a “purpose”. Have your keys ready in your hand before you get to your car.
- Shop with others. Safety in numbers is a deterrent.
- Park your car in a well-lit area and remember where you parked. I always take a picture of the level/section of where I parked. This way I can remind myself of where I left my car.
- Keep your purses and wallets secure on your person and make sure you are always aware of your location.
- Keep your cash at a minimum or separate it into different pockets or locations. This way it is not all in one place.
- Ask for an escort to your car.
- Shopping with kids? Teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if separated. Have a plan!

Looking for an opportunity to work with the police? Become a volunteer! For information, contact Officer Jimenez from the Community Relations Office at 818-375-5420 or email at [38903@lapd.online](mailto:38903@lapd.online).

Please remember these important phone numbers for Non-Emergency police response: 1-877-275-5273 (1-877-ASK-LAPD) or 9-1-1 for police, fire or medical emergency.

**Basic Car 9A89**

Senior Lead Officer Jose Saldana

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Basic Car 9A89 covers the southern portion of Sherman Oaks and a small portion of Studio City.

**Remember:** Electronics' docking stations, GPS and GPS docking stations are prime targets for thieves. If you want to keep them, lock them out of sight. Do not leave them out. Do not leave phone or computer chargers in plain view. Prior to leaving your vehicle, place the chargers in the glove box or any other enclosed compartment.

- **When shopping:**

Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.

Park in a well-lit area.

Do not park in remote locations. When returning to your car, stop, listen, and look around. Stay alert to your surroundings.

If you see or hear something suspicious, Stop! Ask security or store personnel to escort you to your vehicle.

Have your car keys readily available before you get to your vehicle.

Crime deterrence begins with you, so if you see something suspicious, say something, call the police.

- **At home:**

Be extra cautious! Lock your doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes. When leaving home for an extended period, have a neighbor or family member watch your house and pick up your newspapers and mail.

Indoor and outdoor lights should be on an automatic timer.

Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.

Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.

When setting up a Christmas tree or other holiday display, make sure doorways and passageways are clear inside your home.

Make sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy base so children, elderly persons or family pets cannot pull it over on themselves.

If you use lights on your Christmas tree, ensure the wiring is not damaged or frayed. Frayed or damaged wiring can cause a fire.

- **Also:** Drive defensively and remember, traffic is heavier during the holidays. Look out for drunk drivers!
- If you see anything that you feel is suspicious, but not an emergency, go to [www.alertcommunity.com](http://www.alertcommunity.com). It allows citizens to document suspicious activity quickly, easily, and anonymously.

### **Crime Prevention Tips**

- ***IF YOU'RE HOME AND SOMEONE KNOCKS OR RINGS YOUR DOORBELL, DO NOT IGNORE IT.*** Would be burglars like to knock to determine if someone is home before attempting to break in. So, please make sure you verbally acknowledge the person without opening the door. If you have not invited someone to your home, you should not open the door for them.
- ***SECURITY AND/OR DOOR BELL SYSTEMS WITH VIDEO*** are becoming an affordable option to help reduce your chances of becoming a victim. Please consider these options to protect your home.
- ***DON'T LEAVE YOUR KEYS IN YOUR VEHICLES.*** Whether you are tandem parked, parked in a garage, or just going inside for a moment (i.e. gas station, your home, etc.), do not leave your keys in your vehicles.
- ***STEERING WHEEL LOCKS.*** 1990's Toyota's and Honda's are some of the most common vehicles stolen. These vehicles have door locks and ignitions that are easily compromised. Steering wheel locks are good tools to assist in deterring criminals from taking these vehicles.
- ***LOCK YOUR CAR AND PARK IT IN A GARAGE OR LIGHTED AREA.*** Make it difficult to get into your car. If it is outside, make your car as visible as possible. Do not leave anything valuable or visible in your vehicles.
- ***LOCK YOUR WINDOWS AND DOORS*** when you leave the house. Close your blinds/drapes so no one can see into your house. Keep every part of your residence locked and secured, including your garage. Strategic lighting can also assist with crime prevention.



- ***DON'T LEAVE EXPENSIVE ITEMS OUT***, place them in a drawer, safe, or somewhere else out of sight.
- ***TAKE YOUR ELECTRONIC ITEMS OUT OF YOUR CAR***, this includes your cell phones, computer tablets, other portable electronics, and chargers.
- ***SHOPPING CART***. Do not leave your purses in the shopping cart while loading your vehicles.