



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

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

May 2025

# 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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Basic Car 9A5, Officer Brian Franco here. Prostitution has been a persistent issue on Sepulveda Boulevard in Van Nuys for decades, with reports of street corner activity and prostitution-related arrests.

Prostitution in Los Angeles is defined under California law and involves engaging in sexual acts in exchange for money or other forms of compensation. Prostitution is defined under California Penal Code Section 647(b) as engaging in, agreeing to engage in, or offering to engage in any sexual act with another person in exchange for money or other forms of compensation. This definition includes both the act of prostitution and any agreements or offers to engage in such acts.

Solicitation involves requesting, asking, or agreeing to engage in sexual acts in exchange for money or other forms of compensation. Solicitation of prostitution is defined under California Penal Code Section 647(b) as the act of seeking or agreeing to engage in sexual activities for payment. Both parties involved—the one offering and the one requesting sexual services—can face legal consequences. Penalties for solicitation include misdemeanor charges, fines up to \$1,000, up to six months in county jail, and mandatory participation in counseling programs. Pandering and pimping involve facilitating, encouraging, or profiting from the prostitution activities of others.

Law enforcement officers often use undercover operations and surveillance tactics to identify individuals loitering with intent to commit prostitution. These tactics can include posing as potential clients or observing known areas of prostitution activity.

Our Van Nuys Vice unit and the Human Trafficking Task Force are dedicated to combatting this quality of life issue in our community. They set up under cover stings not only targeting the prostitutes but the “Jon’s” as well. These undercover operations have led to several arrests and guns being taken off our streets. Making our community safer. Your tips have been helpful as well.

I would like to thank you for your assistance, patience and support in combatting this issue. Let’s stay safe out there.

**Basic Car 9A19**

Senior Lead Officer Mike Perez

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Greetings residents and business owners in Basic Car A19! Every week the Senior Lead Officers attend the weekly Crime Control meeting with the area Commanding Officer and Van Nuys Detectives to discuss crime trend for all Part One Crimes. Last month, most of the Assault with Deadly Weapon crimes that have occurred, happened during incidents of road rage.

Road rage affects every driver on the road, whether you’re the aggressor or the victim. Incidents of road rage or aggressive driving have the potential for traffic collisions, great bodily injury and even death. Although these incidents have potential to be extremely dangerous they can often be avoided. Road Rage incidents occur when two or more drivers have aggressive responses to each other. Stopping and exiting your vehicle can quickly escalate aggression and may lead to your or your passengers being hurt. Use these tips to slow down, clam down and stay safe with aggressive drivers on the road:

- **Practice polite driving habits:** Avoid tailgating, cutting off other vehicles, speeding, weaving, leaving high beam headlights on, and erratic braking. Don’t drive in the left lane slower than the rest of traffic.

Merge politely, and always err on the side of being courteous. This is smart to do not just to avoid road rage, but to make driving easier and more pleasant for every motorist.

- **Slow down:** Simply let aggressive drivers go around you and typically, they will quickly be on their way.
- **Get away from aggressive drivers:** If you notice a driver with aggressive behavior, get some distance between you, whether you slow down and let them get ahead or change lanes so you're not right next to each other.
- **Never stop, pull over and exit your vehicle to confront the other driver.**
- **Don't make rude gestures or yell at other drivers:** Remember, you're not the police, and it's not your job to remind others how to drive, even if they're doing a terrible job. Avoid making eye contact with an aggressive driver who is trying to pick a fight.
- **Use your horn sparingly:** Horns should primarily be used in emergency situations. Tap your horn lightly if you need to get a driver's attention and give drivers ahead of you at lights a few extra seconds of grace before honking to remind them to move through the intersection.
- **Avoid making driving a competitive sport:** You're not a race car driver — you don't have to win on the road. In fact, winning as a regular driver is simply getting home safe. Getting worked up over a vehicle that's cut you off or gotten in your way somehow isn't worth it. Remember: getting home safely is more important than teaching another driver a lesson.
- **Apologize if you've done something wrong:** If you've accidentally cut off another driver, braked too fast, or made some other mistake that could be offensive, simply smile and wave as an apology. This will disarm and calm most drivers.
- **Don't drive under distress:** Avoid driving if you're angry, upset, or drowsy.
- **Adjust your driving attitude:** Give other drivers the benefit of the doubt. Many mistakes are unintentional and not meant as a personal offense. Consider whether responding aggressively is worth being injured or killed.
- **Call 911 if you're under attack:** If an aggressive driver attacks you, call 911 right away and stay on the phone with the dispatcher. Consider driving to the nearest police station, convenience store, or other public location with witnesses. Do not drive home.

### **Basic Car 9A23:**

Officer William Gutierrez (interim SLO)

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Hello residents and business owners of Basic Car 9A23. Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is William Gutierrez and I am the acting Senior Lead Officer of Basic Car 9A23. Officer Lara has promoted to the rank of Sergeant and will be starting his new position May 2025. He was instrumental in addressing quality of life issues in your community. He will be missed.

I have worked in Van Nuys Division since 2004, and have extensive knowledge of the area and unique communities that make up Van Nuys/ Sherman Oaks Area. My goal as your interim Senior Lead Officers is to address the major quality of life issues such as homelessness, communal blight, vacant properties, RVs, parking issues and crime. I plan to continue and strengthen the existing Neighborhood Watch groups by

“Community working with the Police and the Police working with the community.” I believe in education and implementation of best practices to combat crime in this community.

Recently within the Basic Car 9A23 there have been several Theft from Motor Vehicles (TFMV) and Burglary from Motor Vehicles (BFMV) that occurred in the Costco parking lot located at 6100 Sepulveda Blvd. If you frequent this Costco, please remember to lock your vehicles and do not leave valuables visible.

I look forward to working with you. Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

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

Senior Lead Officer Kristan Delatori

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Van Nuys Residents, we appreciate you are very busy these days. We want to make sure our community is aware of our Online Reporting System. Below you will find some important guidelines when discovering if you can file a police report online

#### **Crime Reports That Can Be Filed Online:**

- **Harassing Phone Calls:** Any person who repeatedly, with the intent to annoy, telephones or makes contact by means of an electronic communication. For example, immediate hang-ups, obscene language, emails, text messages with no known suspects.
- **Lost Property:** Personal property that was unintentionally left by its true owner. For example, property left behind at an unknown location or left behind with no attempt to retrieve it.
- **Vandalism:** Any person who maliciously damages, destroys or defaces the property of another person. For example, knocking over a mailbox, spray painting a wall, or throwing a rock through a window.
- **Theft:** Personal property taken from a publicly accessible location. For example, a package is taken from your porch; or, you left your wallet behind in a restaurant, but when you attempted to go back to retrieve it, the wallet was no longer there.
- **Theft from Vehicle:** Theft from an unlocked or locked vehicle.
- **Minor Traffic Collisions:** Minor injuries and you have exchanged information
- **Hit and Run:** Damage caused by another vehicle in which the driver should have left information or fled the scene without stopping to provide information.
- **VICE Tips:** Tips may be reported filer may remain anonymous.
- **Narcotics Tips:** Tips may be reported filer may remain anonymous.
- **Identity Theft:** Crime location should be reported as the filer's home residence address (regardless of where the crime is believed to have occurred) and reported to the filer's local law enforcement agency for investigation.
- **Hate Incident:** A hate incident is any non-criminal act, including words, directed against a person(s) based on that person's actual or perceived protected characteristics. Hate incidents do not violate criminal law statutes. Hate incidents are generally protected free speech under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

#### **Your incident must meet the following criteria:**

- The incident is not an emergency.

- The incident occurred within the City of Los Angeles.
- You must be at least 18 years old.
- No one was injured as a result of this incident.
- There are no known suspects.
- The incident did not occur on the state highway.
- No firearms were involved in the incident.

**Once you have submitted your report:**

- You will immediately receive a temporary report number and be able to print a copy of the report you just made. All incidents reported using the Community Online Reporting Service will be reviewed, on average once every 24 hours (possibly longer on weekends and holidays), and upon approval will become an official police report. If further investigation of your reported incident is needed, you will be contacted by email or telephone.
- Once the report has been approved, a LAPD report number will be issued, and a copy of the final report will be emailed back to you. Supplemental Reports cannot be filed online. To add any additional information, please wait until you have received your final report with a LAPD report number and call your local police station to speak with the detective assigned to your case.

**Please note:**

- **Filing a false police report is a crime.** Anyone filing a false police report may be prosecuted under California Penal Code section 148.5 PC. Filing a false police report is punishable by imprisonment in county jail not exceeding 6 months, or by fine not exceeding \$1,000, or by both.

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 <https://www.lapdonline.org>*

**Basic Car 9A41**

Senior Lead Officer Joel Gutierrez

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Hello basic car 9A41. I have been receiving several complaints from residents regarding people sleeping in their car over night or parking their vehicles in the neighborhood for extended periods of time. As a Police Officer and resident of the city, I understand how this could be a nuisance and even frustrating when some vehicle dwellers are being not so good neighbors. So, if you know of anyone living in their car and if you would like to offer some help which would include a safe place to park and sleep, you can refer them to Safe Parking LA.

Safe Parking LA is a safe and legal homelessness intervention to stabilize and connect to resources for people who are living in their vehicles. These programs include access to a restroom facility and secured parking and yes, this includes RV's. You can get in contact with the program by calling or texting (213) 793-8493, emailing [info@safeparkingla.org](mailto:info@safeparkingla.org) or visiting [www.safeparkingla.com](http://www.safeparkingla.com).

The City of Los Angeles has protocols and procedures pertaining to homeless encampments. The City no longer relies on complaint-driven model for transient encampments but instead creating a neighborhood-based comprehensive C.A.R.E (Cleaning and Rapid Engagement) teams that will provide health services to the homeless and ensure the heaviest impacted areas receive regularly scheduled clean-ups.

Lastly, I have seen several reports that victims have had their vehicle's catalytic converters stolen. catalytic converters. Thieves target catalytic converters because they contain precious metals, like platinum, palladium or rhodium, that are valuable to metal dealers. Thieves can sell them to scrap yards for up \$200 each. Thieves typically use a saw or wrench to remove it, depending on whether the catalytic converter is bolted or welded in and removal can take as little as one minute.

### **Protect Your Vehicle Against Catalytic Converter Theft:**

- When possible, park in well-lit areas and close to building entrances.
- If you have a garage at your house, park your car inside and keep the garage door shut.
- Have the catalytic converter welded to your car's frame, which may make it harder to steal.
- Consider engraving your vehicle identification number (VIN) on the catalytic converter — this may help alert a scrap dealer that it was stolen and make it easier to identify the owner.
- Calibrate your car's alarm to set off when it detects vibration.
- Install a catalytic converter cover such as Cat Security available at your local car dealer.

Understanding when your car might be a target for catalytic converter theft is the first key to preventing it. By following these protective measures, you may help deter thieves from targeting your car.

### **Basic Car 9A63**

Senior Lead Officer Mariana Romo

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Greetings Sherman Oaks,

The San Fernando Valley is being targeted with scammers targeting the elderly with sleight-of-hand jewelry scams. These scammers have targeted more than 140 victims. Suspects approach victims and start a seemingly friendly conversation. Once distracted, they use quick sleight-of-hand to slip off their jewelry and replace it with a fake one.

I encourage you to please keep an extra out for our elderly neighbors. Keep these tips in mind:

- Be aware of your surroundings and stay alert
- Be suspicious of overly friendly or persuasive people
- Avoid handing over money or valuables to strangers
- Be careful about sharing personal information
- Resist demands to act quickly
- If you feel uneasy, leave the situation

The City of LA has a new MyLA311 System! It launched on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The new MyLA311 website and mobile app has launched with a host of new features designed to streamline your service requests to improve communication with the City. Don't forget to download the app today!

Please remember these important phone numbers: for non-Emergency police response, please contact 1-877-275-5273 (1-877-ASK-LAPD) and 9-1-1 for police, fire and any life-threatening medical emergencies.



## **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.

To prevent burglary from a motor vehicle, always lock doors and roll up windows, even for brief stops. Keep valuables out of sight, preferably in the trunk or removed from the vehicle entirely. Park in well-lit areas and consider using alarms or anti-theft devices.

Please utilize MYLA311 for debris and/or bulky items that are left on the street/sidewalk.

For information on volunteer opportunities with the LAPD, email Officer Jason Jimenez in the Community Relations Office at [38903@lapd.online](mailto:38903@lapd.online), or call (818) 374-5420. Program information, the application process, and current volunteer opportunities will be provided. All applicants are required to be fingerprinted as part of LAPD background procedures.

### **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.