

Fall



News

2020

Block Watch



Saanich Police Block Watch Office
250-475-4365 • blockwatch@saanichpolice.ca



Block Watch Meetings during COVID

In a previous newsletter we talked about doing your meetings via video conferencing, but if you want to do a meeting and would rather do something else, there are other options.

Consider having an "end of the drive way" meeting where everyone hangs out on their front lawn, or if you're lucky enough to live in a cul-de-sac, pull some chairs in to a circle and have your meeting that way.

Do you live near a park or beach? Consider meeting there, out in the open, respecting the 2 meter distancing and have your meeting there.

If someone has a large enough backyard, you could all bring your own chairs and meet up there, ensuring everyone is safe. Circle formations work well again in this situation.

If none of these are an option for you, it's okay to skip the meeting for this year. The last thing the program wants to do is cause more stress and worry for people and if this just feels overwhelming, don't worry about it. Hopefully next year will be a great time to get everyone together. Thanks for all you do to help keep your neighbourhood safe!

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Social Distancing Outside

Spending time outdoors is good for our health. **But social responsibility is essential for ALL our health.**



Avoid
close contact
with others



Distance
yourself at least
2 metres (6 feet) away
from other people



Small group
sizes should be kept
to a minimum

Crime Prevention Workers in COVID Times

Almost every summer the Saanich Police Department brings on Crime Prevention Workers who stay very busy all summer long, participating in all the different events that Saanich has to offer. This year of course, was different. As a result we needed to bring on a very specific group of people who would be willing to forge their own way and re-invent the role. We were thrilled to discover the four people who worked tirelessly from June to August and helped increase awareness of Block Watch, Speed Watch, Cell Watch and even found times to do Ace Mascot "Drive-bys" for children in Saanich. We were very proud of them and their entrepreneurial spirit and we wish them the best of luck in their future career endeavors.



Eric Lowe: It has been a privilege to work for the Saanich Police this summer and I have been fortunate enough to experience the community engagement aspect of policing. I work with a wonderful group of summer students and uniformed officers who have made this experience a positive one. Despite social distancing restrictions, we have still been able to do meaningful work out in the community and engage with the public. Activities such as Speed Watch allowed us to be visible and promote safe driving, while allowing members of the public to approach us and either voice their concerns or show support for our promotion of safe driving. Our food drive at Uptown Shopping Centre, more so than any other activity this summer, allowed us to directly engage with the public regarding road safety and the neighborhood Block Watch program, as well as donate non-perishable food items and close to \$300 to the Shelbourne Community Kitchen. This position has allowed me to learn a lot about policing and have a greater appreciation for the role that the Saanich Police play in keeping our community safe. I had always considered going in to policing after completing my university degree, but after this experience I know that it is the right career for me.

Zoe Napier: My time as a Crime Prevention Summer Student has exceeded my expectations. Some of my highlights include education and awareness through Speed Watch, organizing a food drive, and getting involved with the Saanich Neighborhood Playground Program. I started this summer set on becoming a criminal psychologist in a correctional facility, since then I have decided to finish my Psychology degree at UVIC and move towards a career in policing. This experience has been both insightful in understanding the inner workings of the Saanich Police Department and in solidifying my goals for the future. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to have been able to work with all the supportive members of the department and look forward to where this opportunity leads.



Crime Prevention Workers in COVID times Continued.



Lauren Carr: My time as a Student Crime Prevention Worker has been invaluable to my future career in policing. This experience has given me insight into how a police organization functions. Additionally, working closely with Saanich Police officers has shown me the level of excellence that the municipality of Saanich expects. After completing my Criminal Justice diploma, I knew that this was the route I wanted to take. However, this experience has solidified my goal and has helped me to find the best path to achieve it. Throughout the summer I enjoyed working in the community the most. Our Food Drive was a wonderful experience that allowed us to connect with the community through education and awareness. I am grateful for the support and guidance I have been given through this entire experience.

Aiden Way: I have truly enjoyed being involved in this program as it has allowed me to be involved in the community. My interactions with Saanich Neighbourhood Playground Program with the children that are attending summer camps has been delightful. My plans for the future are very much still an unknown to me as I wish to finish my degree and then further pursue things, I am passionate about. This experience as a Crime Prevention Worker has shown me that social work and being directly involved in the community is something I will most definitely pursue in future. I have benefitted greatly from this position and appreciate all the support and opportunities that have been provided to me throughout this summer.



Distracted Driving—It's Deadly

Distracted Driving is now the number two cause of BC road fatalities, right after speed and before impaired driving. Even if you're not using your phone, you may still be distracted. Any diversion of your attention away from the safe operation of your vehicle, like chatting with passengers, eating or drinking, or adjusting radio or vehicle settings, can contribute to distracted and inattentive driving. We all play a part in making our roads safe – when you're behind the wheel, focus on the road.

Checking your phone at a red light may seem harmless, but the truth is using an electronic device behind the wheel is a dangerous distraction. Even when stopped, it affects your situational awareness. You're five times more likely to crash if you're using your hand-held phone.

Resisting the temptation of e-mails, texts, calls, posts and cat videos can be hard but it can be done similar to being at the movies, at customs, during takeoff or landing. Think of all the times that you don't feel like taking a break from your phone but do!

If you're caught distracted driving, you'll be ticketed and receive a fine of \$368.

Every ticket for distracted driving also adds four driver penalty points to your driving record. If you have four or more points at the end of a 12-month period, you pay a driver penalty point (DPP) premium. These premiums start at \$252 and increase for every point you accumulate. You may also have to pay a driver risk premium. With increased enforcement in communities throughout B.C., multiple infractions can now put a serious dent in your wallet.

Tips for safe cellphone use include:

... **No call, text or email** is so important it's worth risking your life or the lives of others. Let calls go to voicemail and ignore your text messages while driving.

... **Turn it to silent and keep it out of reach and out of sight** or turn on airplane mode to avoid the temptation to check your phone.

... **Assign a designated texter.** Ask your passengers to make or receive calls and texts for you.

... **Pull over to make or receive a call** when it's safe to do so. For longer journeys, look for signs at highway rest areas, some of which now provide free Wi-Fi.

... **Use the 'Do Not Disturb While Driving' feature** You can't notice it if you don't know it's happening.

... **Don't use your cellphone at a red light.** The law applies whenever you're in control of the vehicle, whether stopped at a red light or in bumper-to-bumper traffic.

... **Keep your hands off.** Hands-free means a Bluetooth, wired headset or speakerphone that can be operated with one touch or voice commands. Make sure to secure the cellphone to the vehicle or attach it on your body before driving.

... **If you have a Learner's (L) or Novice (N) license,** you aren't allowed to use any electronic device behind the wheel, for any purpose, even in hands-free mode.



Saanich Police Department
Block Watch Office
blockwatch@saanichpolice.ca
www.saanichpolice.ca



If you have observed a crime, or a crime has occurred to you or your property,
contact police immediately, not the Block Watch office.

Call 911 for emergencies. For a non-emergency or if the crime has already
occurred & is non-life threatening call 250-475-4321.