



# Neighborhood Watch Newsletter



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## New Year's Checklist

### Happy New Year!

San Gabriel Neighborhood Watch hopes all your holidays were pleasant. If you are like many people, you exchanged gifts during this season. However, just because the holidays have passed, you can't put your guard down. You must still be vigilant, alert, and report all suspicious activity. Below are just a few things you should do as we start this New Year to keep from becoming a victim:

- If you received electronic items as gifts, be sure to break down the boxes and place them in the proper trash receptacle (you don't want to advertise what items you have in your home).
- The New Year is a good time to write down serial numbers and descriptions of items. You should also take pictures of jewelry (use a black background and lay items next to a yard stick) and don't forget to write a brief description of it. You can also choose to go through your home with a video recorder. Describe items in each room and give serial numbers when possible.
- Make two copies of your serial number and jewelry list or video; keep one in a safe place at home and the other in your safe deposit box or other safe place away from your home in case that list is taken or destroyed.
- Review all credit card and bank statements.
- Request a free annual copy of your credit report from one of the credit reporting bureaus every 4 months.

### Review it for any discrepancies and/or unauthorized credit report checks.

- Equifax: 1-800-685-1111 or [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)
- Experian: 1-800-397-3742 or [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)
- TransUnion: 1-800-916-8800 or [www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)
- Don't forget to get a copy of your child's credit report and review it too.
- After you've removed the decorations and taken down holiday lighting, take a home security survey of your home. Check your outside lighting; is it adequate and are the motion detectors or dusk to dawn lights working properly?
- Check the time set on your light and radio timers. Adjust the time if you changed them for the holidays.
- Check all the locks on your doors and windows. Be sure they work properly or have them repaired.
- If you have a camera on your home be sure it is working properly.
- If you have an alarm monitoring system, call the alarm company to check that it's working properly. If your alarm company signs are faded, ask if they will provide you with new ones.
- Update your computer firewalls and antivirus software.
- Check your fire and carbon monoxide alarms and replace batteries if needed.
- Put together a family emergency plan and update out of state telephone contacts.
- If it has been a year since your last Neighborhood Watch Block meeting or you've never had one, it's time to talk to your neighbors about scheduling one. Please call the Crime Prevention Office at 626-308-2846 (We usually need at least a 2- or 3-week notice).

## Tax Fraud Scams



It's tax time--and time for tax scams.

### EMAIL SCAM

According to the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP), taxpayers are receiving emails that appear to be from TAP about a tax refund. These emails are a “phishing” scam, where unsolicited emails which seem to come from legitimate organizations—but are really from scammers—try to trick unsuspecting victims into providing personal and financial information. DO NOT RESPOND OR CLICK THE LINKS IN THEM. If you receive an email that appears to be from TAP regarding your personal tax information, please forward it to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov) and note that it seems to be a scam email phishing for your information.

TAP is a volunteer board that advises the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on customer service improvements. It never requests, and does not have access to, any taxpayer’s personal and financial information such as Social Security and PIN numbers; or passwords and similar information for credit cards, banks and other financial institutions.

### TELEPHONE SCAM

We have heard instances of residents receiving threatening phone calls and emails from individuals claiming to be IRS or US Treasury agents, demanding payment of back taxes on a prepaid debit card or by immediate wire transfer. PLEASE NOTE THESE AGENCIES WILL NEVER:

- Call to demand immediate payment over the phone or call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill.
- Threaten to immediately bring in local police or other law enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.
- Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
- Require you to use a specific payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card.
- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone or threaten to bring in local police or other law enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.

If you get a call from someone claiming to be from the Treasury or IRS, here’s what to do:

- Hang up the call.
- If you think you might OWE federal taxes, call the IRS at (800) 829-1040.
- If you DO NOT OWE taxes, report the fraudulent call to the US Treasury at (800) 366-4484.

**San Gabriel Police Department**  
**Emergencies 9-1-1**  
**Police Service - (626) 308-2828**  
**Crime Prevention Office - (626) 451-5455**  
**Website: [www.sangabrielcity.com](http://www.sangabrielcity.com)**  
**E-mail – [sg551@sgpd.com](mailto:sg551@sgpd.com)**