

Neighborhood Watch Crime Bulletin # 54 To All Our Neighborhood Watch Personnel:

Our Latest and Greatest Crime Bulletin



End of the Year Crime Statistics: 2014

The End of the Year Crime Report for 2014 is now available for your review on the Ocean Pines Association website. I am happy to report that Ocean Pines had a DROP in serious crime of nearly **40 percent** during 2014 compared to 2013. This is the largest crime decrease in my tenure as Police Chief (from 2003). There are a number of factors which have contributed to this decrease, and my experience as a Police Chief provides statistics with caution, some factors we control, other factors are out of our control. And with every low number, the following year tends to show increases.

I do believe that our increased enforcement efforts have shown some positive effort at crime control. Identifying and arresting criminals puts them out of service, if only temporarily. Increases in arrests and traffic enforcement tend to reduce some serious crime. Our community is a very mobile community, with nearly 70 miles of roads and a very busy Parkway. We receive numerous complaints of speeding and reckless driving which we must address. It is important to examine our traffic statistics to see that there is a very healthy number of WARNINGS issued, rather than citations. This emphasizes the need to educate as well as enforce.

Ocean Pines continues to be one of the SAFEST communities, per capita, in the State of Maryland. Of course, if you are the victim of a crime in Ocean Pines, these statistics may not have the degree of significance as it does on other residents. We are not immune from crime or crime patterns. Our proactive enforcement is an effort to KEEP Ocean Pines safe. Towards that end, we ask our residents to report suspicious activity, and be vigilant. Basic crime prevention efforts, such as locking your vehicle and securing your home when absent, make a huge difference in preventing crime opportunities.

Home Improvement Scam Arrest:

A 62 year old Ocean Pines man was arrested in connection with a home improvement scam. This individual drove around the community soliciting alleged home improvements and yard work. Some work was done, but often residents were asked to pay up front for work which was later never provided. Residents should never pay for the total cost of a work project before the work is completed. Utilize only reputable home improvement companies, with a proven track record.

Trespass Arrest at Recreation Department:

Police were forced to arrest a 19 year old resident who was verbally abusive and refused to follow Recreation guidelines. He had been warned from previous incidents. Police have a duty to assist other association employees in keeping our amenities as a healthy environment for our citizens. Arrests are only made when absolutely necessary.

Traffic Deaths in Maryland Are the Lowest Since 1948:

A total of 442 people died in traffic-related incidents in Maryland in 2014, the lowest number since 1948 and about half the 872 deaths on Maryland roadways in 1968, the deadliest year on record.

The decline continues a steady, decades-long trend in Maryland despite motorists driving billions more miles a year and new distractions such as mobile phones becoming ubiquitous. There were 643 deaths in 2004 and 466 deaths in 2013.

The drop, announced by state transportation officials in Annapolis, included a substantial dip in fatalities related to drunken and impaired driving, which dropped to 133 in 2014 from 152 in 2013 and a five-year average of 171 from 2009 to 2013.

I realize there are times when residents question the need for increased traffic enforcement, but these statistics should give comfort to the fact that our efforts do make a difference. Stricter drunk driving laws and an increase in cab and bus service as an alternative to driving have all helped make our community a safer place. Last year saw a **23 percent decrease** in traffic accidents in Ocean Pines, which may indicate that increased traffic enforcement contributes to public safety.

Disturbed Individual Threatens Neighborhood:

A 51 year old Ocean Pines resident was charged by police with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. Police received a citizen complaint on the man who was threatening his neighbors with a baseball bat. When police confronted him, and attempted to take him into custody, he resisted. Our Officer received assistance from both the Maryland State Police and the Sheriff's Department. This is a good example of how our **Police Mutual Aid Agreement** benefits our community. When we are needed to assist the State or County in areas surrounding Ocean Pines (recent bank robbery), we do so. And in this case, when WE need support inside Ocean Pines, they assist us.

In this particular case, the suspect was later evaluated for mental health issues.

Domestic Assault Arrests:

As the largest year-round residential community in Worcester County, we often receive domestic disturbance complaints. In cases where evidence of physical injury occurs, arrests are made. Since our last Bulletin, police made a total of six (6) domestic assault arrests. In one domestic case, BOTH parties were arrested. Maryland law mandates arrests, when certain legal criteria are met.

Construction Material Theft:

Police charged a 26 year old Ocean Pines man with stealing lumber from a construction site in Ocean Pines.

Drug Arrests:

Two adults and two minors were charged with Possession of Marijuana in separate incidents. Marijuana is still illegal in Maryland, although minor amounts can be written on civil citations, now.

Drunk Driving Arrests:

Since our last Bulletin, police have arrested 5 individuals for Drunk Driving in Ocean Pines.

Snow Storm Events:

As in every community, police must patrol during inclement weather. In recent years the department switched over to all wheel drive Ford Explorers to aid in this process. This has greatly aided us in keeping police vehicles available to respond to emergencies and stranded motorists during snow and low level flooding.

Naloxone Training:

Naloxone is an emergency spray which can be given to suspected drug overdose individuals. Maryland has had a recent epidemic in heroin related drug deaths. Over the years, Ocean Pines had several heroin- related deaths. To improve our response to emergency overdoses, the entire police department received training in the administration of Naloxone spray to an individual who may be overdosing. The Worcester County Health Department conducted the training through a grant and issued vouchers for the procurement of Naloxone for each police officer. This may save lives in our community.

Promotion to Corporal:

After a very competitive promotional process, I am happy to report that PFC Tish Ottey was promoted to the rank of Corporal. Tish is a Detective in the department and works very hard at clearing major and minor criminal cases.

Thank You!!! To all our Neighborhood Watch Personnel and Citizens who keep Ocean Pines a wonderful and SAFE community!!

Chief David C. Massey, Ed.D.

Ocean Pines Police Department