

Safety/Security – December 2023:

Residents/Owners: Please share with renters and contractors – be courteous; we all live in this community.

Bottom Line Up Front:

- Personal Safety – iOS 17 Vulnerability
- Key Word - Visibility
- Driving on Ice and Snow
- Holiday Gift Suggestion
- Christmas/Holiday Trees – keep them watered
- Senior Driving Course Insurance Discount
- CAC – no December meeting

iOS 17 Vulnerability: New iPhone or iPad? Recent operating system upgrade? Great – BUT – police warn of a vulnerability with the new iOS 17 software. The update automatically turns “On” the feature known as “NameDrop.” Therefore, if two Apple products are close together (e.g., airport, shopping mall, bus stop) they will automatically share contact information. This could lead to vulnerabilities, especially for minors, who can then be stalked online or physically. To disable this feature, go to Settings -> AirDrop -> Bringing Devices Together -> toggle to “Off.” Parents – please share with your children.

Visibility: Those who took full advantage of the long Thanksgiving weekend likely had some road time in inclement weather. If using wipers, Virginia State law requires you to have your headlights in the “on” position. Doing this, illuminates both headlights and tail lights. The “On” position is different from the “Automatic” position in that the latter is light-sensitive and often only illuminates the forward-facing day-time running lights (except in darkness). Road spray reduces visibility and having the tail lights “on” provides an added measure of safety by allowing those approaching from behind to see what’s ahead of them (e.g., your bumper). When changing lanes be alert for the brain-dead drivers running without lights on at all. Amber-lensed sunglasses may help you see more clearly through daytime spray or fog.

Don’t overdrive your headlights. If your forward vision is such that you find yourself making quick, herky-jerky motions to follow the curves in the road at night, you might want to back off 5 - 10 MPH. I found this to be the case on the narrow and curvy reaches of western Route 58.

While I discourage the use of high-beams, it gets seriously dark in the country. Some cars have an active high-beam function that turns them off if they sense headlights or tail lights ahead. If your vehicle lacks this feature, be conscious not to blind other drivers by keeping your headlights on low beam unless absolutely necessary to “light the night.”

Finally, ***do not drive with hazard lights flashing.*** Emergency flashers suggest to approaching drivers that you are stationary on the side of the road. In reduced visibility, they could drive off the road trying to give you space – a legal requirement in Virginia since July 1.

Driving in Ice and Snow: Smooth and steady wins the race. Avoid quick turns of the wheel, increase following distance, start braking (softly) early, and remember that 4-wheel drive helps you go – it doesn't help you stop. Be sure that you have good tire tread and wiper blades. Fill up windshield washer reservoirs before departure using approved solutions, not plain water, which could freeze. Sweep snow from all windows, headlights, tail lights, and top of vehicle.

Carry a snow survival kit in the car or trunk – including ice scraper/brush, blanket, gloves, knit cap, flash light, phone charging cord, a small shovel, jumper cables, drinking water, and non-perishable snacks. Try to keep at least half a tank of fuel and ensure that tailpipe is clear of snow/debris if running engine periodically to keep warm. If stuck, sand or kitty litter can help with traction – remove accumulated snow from the front of all tires and try driving off in second gear to reduce wheel spin. EV drivers – I don't know how you keep warm, but recommend following the half-tank (i.e., 50-percent charge) rule of thumb.

Holiday Gift Suggestion: Fresh wiper blades make a thoughtful present for those you love.

Christmas/Holiday Trees: We saw many vehicles with trees this weekend. Even with cutting a fresh base and replenishing water, these trees will be dry in another month. We all love that pine smell but keep in mind that it is *oil* that creates that fragrance. Pine trees can literally explode when exposed to a spark or flame. Last year, someone on Secotan Court (I won't say whom) lit one afire and in 2-seconds, the flames were 40 feet high. Ensure that light strands are in good repair and do not leave non-LED bulbs illuminated overnight or when not a home.

Senior Driving Course Insurance Discount: I received a notice from my insurance company (USAA) recently that Virginia now requires drivers aged 55+ to complete a Senior Safe Driver Course every two years (it had been every three years) in order to receive a discount on one's automobile insurance. I just finished the AAA online course (\$15.95). I found it not quite as mind-numbing as the AARP version and I did learn a couple of new things.

Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC): The next CAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 in the conference room of the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad, Station #14 – 740 VB Blvd (17th Street) - at 7:00 PM. If attending, please park on the east side of the building. CAC meetings are open to all.

M. C. "Connie" Agresti,
CCL Safety and Security Director