

Watchwords by Officer Tom Hanshaw
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The official start of winter is just about a week away but New Englanders know we are already in the midst of the season. A snowstorm or changing weather conditions can happen anytime now, so it's important to stay tuned to the weather forecasts. Even though I've mentioned it a few times before, I cannot emphasize how important it is to "be prepared," monitoring the weather is the best way to know what's expected. Whether you travel to school, commute to work, stay at home or just chill during the winter, here are a few winter tips to remember.

- Pack a winter kit in the trunk of your car, which includes a blanket, flashlight, batteries, jumper cables, washer fluid, change of clothing, mittens, a tool kit and some snacks. Just be sure the snacks are in a sealed plastic container, Chief Gagnon found out once that mice like to check out car trunks and they love granola bars!
- Keep the gas tank above the half way mark during the winter.
- Have a mechanic do a "check-up" to be sure everything with your car is winter-ready. Inspect your wiper blades and replace them if they are worn.
- Around the house; have extra batteries, medication, food and water on hand in case you are unable to get out for a couple days or lose power for an extended time.
- Home generators are becoming quite popular, be sure yours is fueled, ventilated properly and tested before the power goes out.
- Check the carbon monoxide detectors at your home; they can save your life.

Every once in a while we investigate a crime, which leaves even police shaking their heads. Such was the case last week when we were called to a Hillside Ave. residence to investigate a stolen purse incident. A resident was approached by a young male, as she was working in her yard. The suspect said his vehicle ran out of gas down the street and he attempted to purchase gas from a local retailer. Since he only had \$5 and no gas can, he was unable to do. The resident spoke with the man for a few moments and offered to let him borrow a gas can, then even drove him to a gas station. She brought him back to the vehicle and dropped him off; figuring he would bring the gas can back when done.

A moment later, the resident saw the vehicle pass by the house without stopping and figured the gas can was gone. A couple moments later, the resident realized she had become a victim of a crime, when she was unable to locate her purse, which was last seen on the floor in the back of her car. Gone were her credit cards, a few dollars and everything else she carried. Despite a search of the area, police were unable to locate the vehicle or the suspect. This is one of those stories which show how low criminals will go, even during the holiday season. In this case the victim was trying to help someone in need and found herself taken advantage of. It's sad to say but you've got to be careful today, more than ever. It's ok to help someone in need but be aware that incidents like this can happen. Stay alert when dealing with a stranger and don't let your guard down.

In closing, The Chamber of Commerce will be holding a food drive to support Our Neighbor's Table, tomorrow from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Super Stop & Shop on Macy Street so stop by and help fill up the pantry in time for Christmas.

