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How to prevent 'porch pirates' from stealing packages



Porch pirates likely hope that small packages contain expensive items that can be resold, such as phones, video game systems, sound systems or computers.

It's the giving season and time to protect your incoming packages from theft. Columbia Police officers are on alert for suspicious activity, but there are steps you can take to assure the gifts you buy reach those you care for.

Video doorbells are becoming cheaper and more easily available. Someone thinking of stealing your package might see the video doorbell and think again. Video footage also helps our detectives and officers identify suspects if the camera doesn't deter theft.

Advertise if your home is protected by cameras or a home security system. According to data from the University of North Carolina, 83% of burglars try to determine if a house has a system. If protected, 87% of burglars would move on to another home.

Use package tracking so you are aware when packages arrive and can quickly retrieve them once delivered. You can also opt to require a signature on delivery to prevent packages from sitting around and becoming targets for theft.

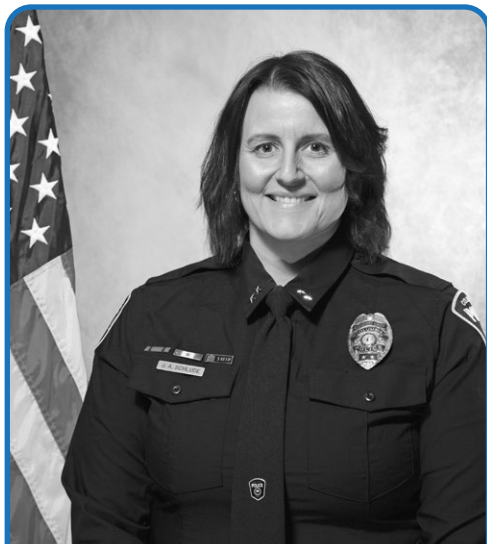
You can't always control when packages are delivered, but you can choose where. Opt to pick up your package directly from your shipping service instead. Amazon also has lockers throughout the city where a package can be securely delivered for retrieval at your convenience.

With package theft becoming more frequent during the holidays and throughout the year, a porch lock box could be a permanent solution. When you order online you can tell the delivery driver how to access the box.

We're thankful for any measures you can take to help keep our community a safer place for everyone. If you are a victim of any kind of theft, call 311 to file a non-emergency police report. In an emergency, always call 911.



Jill Schlude named City's next police chief



Incoming Chief Jill Schlude

The City of Columbia has announced Jill Schlude as the City's next police chief. City Manager De'Carlton Seewood made the announcement during a news conference Nov. 15.

"Jill was the standout candidate during the search process for Columbia's next chief," City Manager De'Carlton Seewood said. "Community members representing business, public safety, education and more, identified her strong vision for the Columbia Police Department and her ideas for addressing those issues most important to our residents as the reason she will be the best fit for the next chief."

Schlude has served as the assistant police chief in Columbia since 2019.

Before being assistant police chief, she worked as the deputy chief of police, a police sergeant, and a police officer in the same department. She has been with the Columbia Police Department since 2005.

Schlude's education includes a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice Administration from Columbia College and a Master in Strategic Leadership from Stephens College.

Her additional professional development includes the Senior Management Institute for Police (SMIP), Boston University, sponsored by PERF.

"Stepping into the role of police chief is not just a promotion; it's a commitment to safeguarding our community, administering justice fairly, and leading our dedicated team with unwavering integrity. I am equally honored and humbled at the opportunity to serve my community in this important role," said incoming Police Chief Schlude.

Incoming Chief Schlude will be sworn in at the December 4 City Council meeting in Council Chambers.



Tickets now available for Columbia Values Diversity Celebration

The City of Columbia presents the annual Columbia Values Diversity Celebration Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024 from 7-9 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Expo Center. This annual event will celebrate the life and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The program includes live music at the breakfast followed by the presentation of the annual Columbia Values Diversity Awards, speakers and artistic performances representing the rich diversity of our community.

Individual tickets are \$25 per person. Tables and event sponsorships are also available. Visit CoMoDiversityCelebration.com to purchase tickets and more information on the event.

City of Columbia Consolidated Plan Needs Assessment Survey

City of Columbia
CONSOLIDATED PLAN Needs Assessment Survey

Each year the City of Columbia receives federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) due to its population, demographics and available funding. The City estimates it will receive approximately \$1,000,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Special Use HOME funds each of the next 5 years. These funds primarily benefit low to moderate income households, and can be used for affordable housing, economic and workforce development, community facilities and neighborhood revitalization and stabilization.

The survey is primarily for residents of Columbia, Missouri. The survey will be available from October 6, 2023 - February 9, 2024.

This survey is designed to collect public opinion regarding how the City should use its federal funds. This survey is voluntary; your answers will be kept confidential, and you may choose not to answer any questions. Please do not take this survey more than once. Thank you for providing your valuable input.

DEFINITIONS:
 Affordable Housing: The cost of housing (rent/mortgage plus utilities) is 30% or less of a household's gross income.
 Low to Moderate Income Area: A census tract in which at least 35% of households have an income less than 80% of the area median gross income.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING	Priority areas based on level of need in your community		
	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New affordable single family housing development for homeownership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rehabilitation of existing housing for homeownership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Down payment assistance for homeownership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Construction of rental housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rental vouchers (in addition to Section 8 and other local vouchers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rental housing for senior citizens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility improvements for elderly and persons with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency homeless shelter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing for homeless individuals and families needing supportive services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The City of Columbia is now gathering feedback for its FY 2025 through FY 2029 Consolidated Plan. The City of Columbia's five-year Consolidated Plan is a document required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The current Consolidated Plan is approved from FY 2019 through FY 2024.

The FY 2025 - FY 2029 plan is currently being developed and will be due to HUD in November 2024. The plan is designed to help guide the community in directing federal dollars received in the areas of affordable housing, economic development, fair housing, community facilities and neighborhood needs.

The consolidated planning process serves as an avenue for the public to weigh in on the most important community needs in Columbia.

The survey is primarily for residents of Columbia, Missouri. The deadline to complete the survey is Feb. 9, 2024 at BeHeard.CoMo.gov.

Warming centers, shelters available this winter

The City of Columbia partners with several emergency shelter providers in the community to provide a warm place for individuals to escape the cold.

SHELTERS

Columbia's shelters include:

- Flourish (for teens), please call 573.615.6135
- Rainbow House (for children/youth), 1611 Towne Dr., 573.474.6600
- Room at the Inn (for adults), 1509 Ashley St., 573.825.6038
- The Salvation Army Harbor House (men, women and families), 602 N. Ann St., 573.442.1984
- True North (for those in domestic violence situations), please call 573.875.1370
- Welcome Home (for veterans), 2120 Business Loop 70 E., 573.443.8001

Shelters provide sleeping accommodations and may or may not include meals. Shelter availability may vary. Specific questions about the shelters should be directed to the applicable provider.

OVERNIGHT WARMING CENTER

The City of Columbia contracts with Turning Point to provide temporary overnight warming center services at Wilkes Boulevard United Methodist Church, 702 Wilkes Blvd. The temporary overnight warming center at this location will open only in the event of a National Weather Service forecast of temperatures 25 degrees Fahrenheit or below between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. of a given night.

The temporary overnight warming center will serve as a refuge of last resort for persons unwilling or unable to access local emergency shelter services. Turning Point staff will continue to coordinate closely with homeless service providers to ensure low barrier access to overnight emergency shelter as the preferred option for persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

WARMING CENTERS

Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services also coordinates a network of warming centers in the community. As the temperature begins to drop, the public is reminded of several locations in Columbia available to those who need shelter from the cold.

Columbia's warming centers include:

- ARC (Activity and Recreation Center), 1701 W. Ash St.
- City Hall, 701 E. Broadway
- Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services, 1005 W. Worley St.
- Columbia Public Library, 100 W. Broadway
- Salvation Army, 1108 W. Ash St.
- Salvation Army Harbor House, 602 N. Ann St.
- St. Francis House, 901 Rangeline St.

Warming centers are available to the general public during the building's normal business hours. The public is allowed access to public areas, such as lobbies, restrooms, drinking fountains, etc.

Specific questions about each warming center should be directed to the facility's management.

Additional information about warming centers can be found at [CoMo.gov/Health/Public-Health-Safety/Warming-and-Cooling-Centers](https://www.como.gov/Health/Public-Health-Safety/Warming-and-Cooling-Centers).

Parks and Recreation events

For more information, please visit [CoMo.gov/parksandrec](https://www.como.gov/parksandrec) or call 573.874.7460. You may also visit the Parks and Recreation Facebook page at [Facebook.com/parksandrec](https://www.facebook.com/parksandrec).

January 2024

- 15 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Candle Light Walk and Celebration, Walk at Armory Sports Center at 6:30 p.m., proceed to St. Luke UMC
- Columbia Parks and Recreation will hold the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Candle Light Walk and Celebration on Monday, Jan. 15. The Candle Light Walk will start at 6:30 p.m. at the Armory Sports Center, 701 E. Ash. Participants should meet in the basement of the facility; the lower level entrance is at the back of the building. The walk will then proceed to St. Luke United Methodist Church, 204 E. Ash St., for the memorial celebration at 7 p.m. Participants will celebrate and reflect on the life and contributions of Dr. King.
-
- 20 ROC Trail Run, Rhett's Run Trail at Cosmo Park, 9 a.m., ages 12 and up, \$35

Board and Commission vacancies

Boards and Commissions are a way for residents to be involved in local government and to represent the voices of their fellow community members.

The City is accepting applications for the following boards, commissions or task forces:

- Parking Advisory Commission
- Tree Board

Application deadline is Friday, Jan. 5, 2024 at 5 p.m. Applications and information about current vacancies are available at [CoMo.gov](https://www.como.gov). Call 573.874.7208 for more information.

Senior Benefit Services and Senior Marketing Specialists - December featured volunteers



Thank you to the December volunteers of the month for your dedication to the Adopt-A-Spot Litter program. We are so thankful for your service!

Senior Marketing Specialists (SMS), a senior insurance organization, has been a dedicated Adopt-A-Spot Litter program participant since 2017. Their sister company Senior Benefit Services (SBS) joined in 2022. Both began volunteering to help make a direct impact on the local community, which their organizations encourage through their 12 Months of Giving Program.

When asked why the organizations volunteer, there was a common theme of caring for our City, and those that live and work here. Katlyn Drebenstedt from SMS and Riannon Zellmer from SBS said, "Our volunteers are proud of being able to see the impact their work has on our community. When they fill up

those orange bags with trash, they know they are not only making our community look better, but also cleaning up our environment. They also have fun getting to know other volunteers better outside the office setting!"

We also asked the two employees what they would tell someone who is considering volunteering. They noted how volunteering makes it easy to help a cause you are passionate about. "When you volunteer for the City, you are able to see the direct impact it has on your community. It also provides you with the opportunity to meet new people and make connections."

In addition to their work volunteering with the City of Columbia, both organizations also share their time to the Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri, Columbia Senior Center of Boone County, and the Central Missouri Humane Society.

The SMS & SBS teams have made a noticeable and continuing difference in their neighborhood of Gray Oak and Green Meadows. Both have dedicated crews that regularly serve to keep their adopted roadways clean. Rain or shine, they are never short of employees willing to pitch in.

Thank you for all that you do, Senior Marketing Specialists and Senior Benefit Services! To find out how you can volunteer, visit CoMo.gov/volunteer.

Participate in the MLK Day of Service - Jan. 13, 2024

Join volunteers across the country in serving their neighborhoods and communities to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr who believed, "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve."

To honor Dr. King's legacy, the City of Columbia Volunteer Programs is offering volunteer opportunities to participate in MLK Day of Service with litter-cleanups Jan.13. Volunteers are invited to the Rainbow Softball Complex in Cosmo Park at 10 a.m. to pick up supplies and receive a cleanup assignment. Volunteers are also welcome to arrange a trash pick-up at another location and date convenient to them. For more information, contact Volunteer Programs at 573.874.7499 or Volunteer@CoMo.gov.



OUR VISION

Columbia is the best place for everyone to live, work, learn and play.

OUR MISSION

To serve the public equitably through democratic, transparent and efficient government.

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CITY OF COLUMBIA ✱
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CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH ANSWERS

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