



**SEASONS GREETINGS**  
Alberta Citizens On Patrol Association  
Holiday 2023 Newsletter

*Alberta Citizens On Patrol Association*

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*Message from the President*

T'was the night before Christmas and all through the town,  
C.O.P. members were driving around,  
Checking on business places, garages, homes, and yards.  
Good volunteers, never letting down their guard.  
Aiding the RCMP to keep all the "grinches" at bay.  
Helping their community to have a happy holiday!

**Sincere thanks to C.O.P. members across the province for all the hours spent volunteering. Going forward into 2024, keep up the good work and enjoy the Christmas season.**

**Garth Kohlsmith  
President ACOPA**



Corporal Mike Fulton and President Garth Kohlsmith sign the Memorandum of Understanding between RCMP and Citizens On Patrol. It is now awaiting the signature of Curtis Zablocki.

**Welcome**

Welcome to new C.O.P. groups starting up in Wetaskiwin, High Prairie and Innisfail.

## Crime Prevention Tips for the Holiday Season

### Mail / Packages

With the holiday season, typically an increase of break and enters to mailboxes occurs. Some tips to protect your packages include:

- Ensure that mail is collected every day from your mailbox. If there is never any mail in the mailboxes, then there isn't mail to steal.
- This is also the season of porch pirates, so for deliveries always:
  - i. Select "flex delivery" so that packages can be left in places that are not so visible if they are not able to be home during for the Using the delivery service's tracking app (if available)
  - ii. Have the package sent to your local postal outlet to be picked up from there?
  - iii. Make arrangement to have a family member, friend, or neighbor be available to collect the package for you if it has to be delivered to your residence.
  - iv. Use AMAZON collection boxes if available in your area.
- If there is a break into the mailboxes or postal outlets, report the incident to police in a timely manner.

### Automobile

- Be sure to lock your vehicle whether you are parking in your driveway, on the street, at the mall, or even at your workplace.
- Keep your valuables out of site, Thieves will be checking parked cars, and they will most likely enter or break into vehicles when they see valuables or gifts in plain sight.
- #LockItOrLoselt
- Don't leaving your vehicle running and unattended.
- Use a steering wheel Locking device (ie the "Club") or similar for an added layer of security.
- Keep your key FOB and garage door opens secure and away from easy access.

### Home

- Do not post on social media that you are going away and avoid posting vacation photos until you have returned home.
- Avoid being obvious when packing your car for a vacation.
- Set a timer to switch various household lights on at night and off in the morning. If you frost or cover your garage windows, burglars won't be able to tell if your car is gone.
- Make sure that all possible entrances to your house are locked properly.
- Use a metal bar or piece of wood on sliding doors and windows to make prying them open difficult.
- Leave a key for your home with someone you trust.
- Make sure trusted neighbours know you are going away and are left with an emergency contact number.
- In general, with the help of friends and neighbours try to avoid the appearance that no one is home. This could be done by:
  - Having a neighbour complete yard maintenance including:
  - Shoveling your sidewalk and driveway while you are away if it snows.
  - Collecting mail and packages
  - Parking a car in the driveway
  - Put your newspaper and deliveries on hold.
- When setting up seasonal displays in your yard, make sure sightlines are maintained and providing hiding areas for unwanted behaviour.
- Contact your alarm company and advise them when you will be away.
- Don't put your Christmas tree close to a window as it potentially makes it easy for smash and grab.
- Do not put "Big" Ticketed packaging boxes out on trash day as it potentially attracts

2023 12 12	Criminal Record Check Status		Grand Total	% Complete
	Completed	Incomplete		
St. Paul	0	18	18	0.0%
Okotoks	0	8	8	0.0%
Vilna	2	26	28	7.1%
Sundre	1	11	12	8.3%
Langdon	1	6	7	14.3%
High River	3	15	18	16.7%
St. Albert	5	13	18	27.8%
Three Hills	4	6	10	40.0%
Edson	7	10	17	41.2%
Red Deer	14	17	31	45.2%
Thorhild County	8	9	17	47.1%
Rimbey	9	10	19	47.4%
Pincher Creek	10	10	20	50.0%
Crowsnest Pass	5	5	10	50.0%
Devon	5	5	10	50.0%
Airdrie	11	10	21	52.4%
Linden	9	8	17	52.9%
Beaumont	6	4	10	60.0%
Carstairs	9	5	14	64.3%
Sexsmith	14	7	21	66.7%
Nanton	12	6	18	66.7%
Penhold	10	4	14	71.4%
Stony Plain	13	5	18	72.2%
Redcliff	3	1	4	75.0%
Valleyview	14	4	18	77.8%
Legal	7	2	9	77.8%
Fort Macleod	11	3	14	78.6%
Carbon	12	3	15	80.0%
Drumheller	8	1	9	88.9%
Westlock	27	3	30	90.0%
Redwater	13	1	14	92.9%
Lloydminster	14	1	15	93.3%
Gull Lake North	30	2	32	93.8%
Diamond Valley	17	1	18	94.4%
Strathcona County	33	1	34	97.1%
Ponoka	12	0	12	100.0%
Taber	9	0	9	100.0%
Heartland	5	0	5	100.0%
Wainwright	4	0	4	100.0%
Innisfail	2	0	2	100.0%
Ryley	2	0	2	100.0%
Wetaskiwin	1	0	1	100.0%
Grand Total	382	241	623	61.3%

## *Criminal Record Checks*

Thank you to those who have entered the updated criminal record checks into the ACOPA website. It is important to take care of this because anyone patrolling who has not updated their criminal record check will not be covered by the insurance provided through ACOPA.

No criminal record check means no patrolling.

Only the administrators for the groups can enter the date for updated criminal record checks. The administrator needs to first change the date for the member, and make sure this is saved at the bottom.

It is a good idea to check and see if that member went from being "blocked" to "active". If there are any problems, please contact the webmaster at [webmaster.acopa@gmail.com](mailto:webmaster.acopa@gmail.com)

Please check the following statistics to see how your group is doing for getting the criminal record checks updated on the website. Check and see if any updated member went from being "blocked" to "active". If there are any problems, please contact the webmaster at [webmaster.acopa@gmail.com](mailto:webmaster.acopa@gmail.com)

### **Did you know that Citizens On Patrol volunteers can get special pins and certificates for time volunteered in the program?**

Pins are available for 5 years of service. Pins and certificates are available for 10, 15, 20, 25 years of service.

In order to get the pins and certificates to the people who qualify, please put the date the member joined your local C.O.P. program where it says **Member Since** and add the date while you are updating criminal record release dates. Remember to hit **SAVE** button at the bottom.



## PENHOLD C.O.P ASSOCIATION

It is your community.....  
let's protect it.

This is the business card for  
Penhold Citizens On Patrol.

Just an idea if any groups  
are considering creating a  
business card!!!!

**Register your security camera**

**Help police investigate crimes and keep your community safe.**

The registry is voluntary and secure. Sign up and help protect your property, your family and your community.

REGISTER YOUR CAMERA(S) AT  
[ruralalbertacapture.ca](http://ruralalbertacapture.ca)

### *Don't Be a Victim of Investment Fraud*

Follow these tips to help protect your money:

**Do your homework before investing.** No matter who is recommending or offering you the investment, be sure to check it out before making a decision to invest.

**Check registration.** With limited exceptions, in order to sell securities legally in Alberta, an individual or company must be registered with the Alberta Securities Commission. You can do a quick and free registration check by going to [www.aretheyregistered.ca](http://www.aretheyregistered.ca) or by contacting the Alberta Securities Commission directly.

**Ask questions and check the answers.** Be certain that you understand what you are investing in and be sure to ask questions if you don't.

**Don't be drawn in by appearances.** A smooth-talking salesperson, and professional-looking marketing materials and websites don't guarantee a sound investment opportunity.

**Get educated.** Educating yourself about investing is a great way to help protect your money. To get started you can find a lot of free information about investing on the ASC's website ([www.checkfirst.ca](http://www.checkfirst.ca)).



### *ACOPA Patrol Apps*

The ACOPA Patrol apps have been updated and continue to be worked on. If you have found a problem

when using the app, please document the problem and forward to [webmaster.acopa@gmail.com](mailto:webmaster.acopa@gmail.com)

Please let the webmaster know which app you are using – the apple or the android and your full name and which group you are a member of.

Have a story or an idea for our newsletter????? We'd love to hear from you!!! Email [newsletter@acopa.ca](mailto:newsletter@acopa.ca).



*The following article is courtesy of Town & Country News which appeared in the November 9, 2023 issue as reported by Austin Payeur - Editor Rebecca Dika*

Crime prevention is everyone's responsibility and Alberta Citizens on Patrol (COP) Association secretary treasurer Beth Endresen said residents are being urged to step up in Sexsmith.

The Sexsmith COP group has 22 active members, down 10 from pre-pandemic.

"Since COVID, we've had a lot of members fall off our radar just because they had decided they didn't want to patrol anymore and then they just didn't come back," said Endresen.

COP requires a very low time commitment, Endresen said, with members only patrolling for a couple hours every month.

"Currently our 22 members patrol on weekends for a couple of hours a night," she said.

"They just patrol around the town, looking for suspicious activity and report it to the RCMP. That's our main job, to be the eyes and the ears of the RCMP."

With more members, Endresen said time requirements would be even less.

"The more members we have, you could go every other month; that's the way it was when we had 32 members," she said.

"Nobody was patrolling during COVID because you have to travel in pairs, so the only people who could patrol were spouses, because we couldn't be in the car with somebody else to maintain that six-foot distance.

"None of the COP groups across Alberta patrolled during COVID."

Potential members must be over the age of 18 and are required to provide a criminal record check.

"We do provide some training. The Alberta COP Association website has numerous training videos," said Endresen.

The RCMP has numerous programs in place to prevent crime, she adds.

"You always hear, 'Why would I call the RCMP? They never call me back.' But they'll call you back within the week to get the details on the crime and investigate it after the fact."

### ***Maintaining the South Peace COP***

La Glace and Hythe used to have COP programs of their own which have since folded. Endresen said that Grande Prairie was also attempting to start a local COP program, which has not seen success.

"Sexsmith is the last COP group in the area, so we'd really like to keep that going," Endresen said.

But while La Glace and Hythe have folded their COP programs, new groups have opened in High Prairie and Legal, and there is interest in starting a group in Fairview, Endresen said.

"We actively recruit there as well," she said.

"We've got new groups starting all the time."

There are currently 49 COP groups across the province.

"We had two groups quit, and three groups start up," Endresen said.

"A few years ago before COVID, we had upwards of 83 groups. It definitely has gone down; people are having trouble finding volunteers for their organizations.

"Some groups are trying to collaborate with each other; for example, Innisfail, Penhold and Red Deer work together in that area trying to do some crime prevention. Wherever they can, they try to make it work."

Interested recruits can find an application form on the Alberta COP Association website at [acopa.ca](http://acopa.ca), or can visit the Sexsmith town office to receive an application form.

*The following article appears on Global News on December 3, 2023 by Jennifer Ivanov & Carolyn Kury de Castillo*

Airdrie RCMP and Alberta Citizens on Patrol are reminding homeowners to call police if they discover a suspected thief on their property and that approaching intruders can be dangerous. The reminder comes after a rural homeowner near Linden was shot at and had his vehicle rammed while trying to prevent thieves from stealing gas on his property.

Airdrie RCMP received a report Saturday of a theft and shooting on a rural property near Township 304 around 1:30 a.m. Police said the homeowner observed people in two vehicles stealing gas. When he approached the suspects with his vehicle, they began to flee. As they fled, they rammed the homeowner's vehicle and shot at him. His truck was hit by bullets fired by one of the suspects.

"While RCMP investigate, we are cautioning homeowners about the dangers of approaching suspects who are committing offences. RCMP officers are specifically trained and equipped in dealing with the hazards of interdicting suspects while they are committing crime," said Sgt. Greg Tullock of the Airdrie RCMP. "When you see a crime in progress your first action should be to call the police."

The suspect vehicles are described as a newer model silver SUV and an older model white or silver truck with front end damage.

Anyone with information is being asked to Airdrie RCMP at 403-945-7200 or [Crime Stoppers](#) at 1-800- 222-8477 (TIPS) or submitted online <http://www.P3Tips.com>.

Flo Robinson, head of Linden Citizens on Patrol, said it isn't unusual to be patrolling the streets of Linden at any hour of the day or night. She told Global News she was out on a 1 a.m. shift early Saturday morning when she noticed two suspicious vehicles in the village. She observed them heading to an acreage just east of the village where they turned into the property. "As the vehicle was coming out of the driveway, and I was going past. I heard a gunshot. At first you hear this popping noise you don't even consider that immediately. I went in to see if they were OK and they were. They were shaken up, but they were all right," Robinson said. His truck was hit by bullets fired by one of the suspects.

The homeowner didn't want to appear on camera but he said the bullets that hit his truck came within two meters of hitting him.

"I understand his frustration. I understand his wanting to get out there and intercept these people but just remember you're going to block him into your property and you haven't called police yet so nobody's coming to help you once you block them in so let us know. We deal with these things every day and I assure you this is what police officers want to. They want to get to your property. This is why they joined the RCMP is to intercept these criminals," said Cpl. Troy Savinkoff.

The mayor of Linden says the Citizens on Patrol have been effective in keeping crime down.

"The COP does an amazing job in this community. They are the eyes and ears in the community at night and putting in 100's of hours. They see a strange vehicle coming into town and they keep an eye on them. They observe and report from a distance and when these guys see the sign on the side of the door that says COP, they think maybe they should move onto a different town because there's too many eyes on them," said Kelly Klassen mayor of the village of Linden. "It's always shocking to hear of something like in a small town. It's something that doesn't happen often,"

Robinson says volunteers are trained in first aid and self-defence among other things and the rules are to observe and report. There are 25 volunteers now in the village. "It's important for our communities and other communities to observe and report because you're not going to fight these guys. Half the time they're on drugs. They don't care. They're doing something they want to get the job done and they don't care if they hurt somebody," Robinson said.

## Global News Article Cont'd

She said the Linden COP won the Alberta Award for community crime prevention in 2013. Cpl. Savinkoff said RCMP can use measures such as spike belts or activating a helicopter, or bringing other assets that increase chances of intercepting suspects. "Sometimes it's difficult to watch someone who's stealing something from your property. Your first instinct are going to be to run but if you intercept these people, what is essentially a theft under (\$5,000) investigation is now going to be something significantly more because these individuals are going to do what they need to do to get away," Savinkoff said. He said right now RCMP in Alberta are seeing a lot of copper wire thefts and catalytic converter thefts. "It only takes a few criminals or suspects to commit a large amount of crime especially if they do that full-time.

The RCMP focuses on an intelligence lead approach. We focus on who these individuals are rather than predict where they might go. Our crime reduction teams identify who these people are once they are charged. We try to get them under conditions if they get released. Our crime reduction unit follows up with these individuals and tries to track their whereabouts and make sure we keep those individuals under control so that they're not victimizing the public," Savinkoff said.

To view the article, use the following link:

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10145077/rural-theft-shooting-airdrie-alta-rcmp/>



**CAPTURE reduces the time it takes a police officer to search for and gather video evidence by providing them with a map of registered security cameras in the area of the crime scene. If an investigator believes a registered camera may have captured video that could assist in their investigation, they will contact the owner using the email or phone number provided when they signed up. The investigator may ask the owner to upload a portion of video from their camera to the CAPTURE website so that they can assess it. If they believe the video would be useful, the investigator will bring the owner a USB drive and ask them to download the video from the camera onto it. This strategy is another way the Alberta RCMP are working with our communities to help solve crime faster, together. By providing video footage to police during an investigation, communities increase the chance of a successful prosecution. If you would like to register your home or business security cameras with CAPTURE, visit [www.ruralalbertacapture.ca](http://www.ruralalbertacapture.ca) and create an account. From there you can enter your contact information and the location of your video cameras on the secure site. If an investigator needs to contact you, they will do so using the contact information you provide. Registrants are able to delete their account at any time without their personal information being retained. Access to your personal information is strictly limited to authorized RCMP employees. For more information, contact [KCAPTURE@rcmp-grc.gc.ca](mailto:KCAPTURE@rcmp-grc.gc.ca)**

## **INSURANCE**

Invoices were sent out for insurance payments that are due by January 15 2024. Please note that there will be no refunds for the 2024 term. Any new group starting up in 2024 will have their insurance pro-rated.

