

June 2009

# RM News & Notes

## Emergency & Operations Division Risk Management Department

### PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS

**Walk with purpose like you are sure of yourself.** Never drop your head or look down when you pass a stranger.

**Keep your strong hand free and your keys accessible to that hand.** Hopefully, your keys have pepper spray (O.C./oleoresin capsicum) attached.

**Shop with at least one other person whenever possible.**

**Do not assume that just because your vehicle is locked that no one was able to gain access.** Locks can be defeated, and there are some keys that may be common to your vehicle.

**When you stop in traffic behind another vehicle, stay far enough behind to see that car's rear tires.** That allows you room to maneuver in case there is an attempt to block you in.

**When you go home tonight, remove the spare key from the flower pot, ceramic turtle or wherever you have it hidden.** A burglar or rapist can find it in minutes.

**If you come home and the door is open or unlocked, do not go in.** Back off and call the Sheriff's Office. Let the deputies search and secure the house.

**If someone knocks on your door, don't ignore it. A burglar may be ascertaining if the house is unoccupied before he kicks the door in.** Announce through the door that you are not coming to the door and for the person to leave. If they don't, announce you are calling 911 and do it.

**On vacation, plan each stop.** When you are ready to stop and you have a feeling a place doesn't look right, go on. Honor your gut feelings.

**Talk over safety issues and plans with your family.** Make safety and self defense a team effort.

**Darlene M. Bartlett CRM, ARM**  
**Risk Manager**

706-868-3363

[dbartlett@columbiacountyga.gov](mailto:dbartlett@columbiacountyga.gov)

**Janice A. Matthews CPS/CAP**  
**Administrative Assistant**

706-312-7475

[jmatthews@columbiacountyga.gov](mailto:jmatthews@columbiacountyga.gov)

### Web Page

<http://www.columbiacountyga.gov/home/index.asp?page=2440>

	Page
"Safety Officer Corner", "Message from the Risk Manager"	1
"Don't Take A Vacation From Safety"	2
"Policy Highlight"	3
"Upcoming Events" in June, July, August	4

## Message from the Risk Manager

Summer is here. The kids are out of school and it's time for a much needed vacation. Relax, let your hair down and have some fun for a change. While I do not want to rain on your good time, please don't relax your commitment to safety. A little pre-planning and common sense can provide you with a fun filled vacation rather than one ruined by accident or injury. While certainly not all inclusive, I've tried to provide some travel tips that may be you haven't heard before in addition to many of the tried and true. On a related note: we also have a section dedicated to personal safety and security with information provided by Major John Wheeler, Sheriff's Office. (If you ever have a chance to attend one of his self-defense classes, I highly recommend it.) Now, something to look forward to in future issues: We will be adding another feature that we're tentatively calling the "Safety Officer's Corner". While I hope you already know your departmental safety officer, this will give you a chance to become familiar with some of the other safety officers throughout the county and give these dedicated employees a chance to share a little bit of their valuable knowledge and experience. Play safe and enjoy your summer!

*Darlene*

### Checklist before the Trip:

**If traveling by car:** make sure everything is in good working order – don't wait until after your vacation to get those new tires or the tune-up you've been postponing. If renting: become familiar with the type of car you will be driving. Make sure you have appropriate seating, including necessary child seats for all occupants.

**Let someone know where you are going** and when you should arrive. Allow plenty of travel time so that you don't have to rush. In fact, take extra time and enjoy the ride instead of rushing to your destination. You may find unexpected treasures along the way and will certainly arrive more calm and relaxed.

**Let a trusted neighbor know that you are going** to be out of town and who, if anyone, should be at your home. Ask them to contact you and/or local law enforcement if they see any other activity.

**Clean out your wallet and/or purse.** Leave most credit cards and other non-essential items at home. Keep things light and easy to carry.

### Out and About:

**Remember the name and address of the hotel, condo or home where you are staying.** Take a business card or write down the address and keep it with you.

**Ask for directions at your hotel or place of residence.** Ask if there are any areas of town to avoid.

**Stick to well lighted main streets and public areas.** Avoid short cuts through deserted or dimly lit areas.

**When walking around, try to travel in small groups or at least pairs.** Even if you are lost, walk with confidence as if you are in control and know where you are going. Only ask directions from those in authority.

**Never display large amounts of cash when making purchases.** It is better to use traveler's checks or credit cards. Don't stop to give money to panhandlers.

## DON'T TAKE A VACATION FROM SAFETY

By thinking ahead, you can avoid potential minor emergencies. Just a little forethought to a few safety tips before you hit the road will keep your precious vacations days safe and hazard-free!

### While on the Road:

- Never pick up a hitchhiker or stop for someone who appears to need assistance. Instead, use a cell phone or drive to the nearest phone and call for help. Remember: appearances can be deceiving. Those that appear harmless, well-dressed, pregnant women and even children may be dangerous or used as a decoy to put you off guard and in harm's way.
- Stay alert and be aware of what is happening around you. Take care so that you don't accidentally advertise your plans, travel route or the amount of cash you are carrying to strangers. Trust your instincts and take immediate action to remove yourself from any potentially dangerous situation.
- Always lock your car when entering or leaving it (even if only for a couple of minutes). Park in well-lighted areas and check the interior and surrounding area when you return.
- If you do become lost, drive to a public place to check the map. Don't stop along a street or the highway.
- Use your headlights, even in the daytime. It lets other drivers see you better and reduces accident rates.
- Buckle up yourself and your passengers. If someone needs to unbuckle, even for a short period of time, wait until you can pull over and stop at a safe location.
- Fatigued drivers cause over 100,000 accidents, including 1,500 fatal crashes each year. Let someone else drive or pull over and take a break. Loud music, cool temperatures, caffeine and snacking may temporarily help you feel more alert, but if you find yourself losing concentration or dozing off, stop the car and get a good night's rest. Choose sunglasses wisely. Yellow or blue lens sunglasses distort colors and are not good choices for driving.
- Never drink and drive.

### On Location:

- Unpack and place items in the closet and dresser. Arrange things so that you will notice if anything is missing.
- Suitcases should always be closed and locked so that they cannot be used to carry your property out of the room.
- Identify anyone requesting entry to your room. Open the door only if you are certain that the person has a legitimate reason to enter your room. If in doubt, call the hotel/motel office.
- Whenever you walk into any building other than your home, look around for fire exits. People have been known to bypass several fire exits in an emergency and head right for the door they entered because they didn't take the time to plan their escape.
- At night, keep a flashlight and your keys by the bed.
- While picnicking or just taking snacks for the beach: store food properly to avoid food poisoning.
- Have a good first aid kit handy: be prepared to treat insect bites and stings, sunburns and minor cuts and scrapes
- Drink plenty of water and avoid dehydration. Protect yourself from the sun with a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.
- Always wear appropriate protective equipment (helmet, eyewear, etc.) for any physical activities you may participate in. Wear bright colors so you are highly visible.

## Policy Highlight

### Risk Management Safety and Loss Prevention Manual Page 38

#### B. GENERAL POLICY:

1. No person employed by Columbia County will accept responsibility for damages or injury to persons or property owned by the public.
2. All incidents of damage to property or equipment or injury to the general public will be reported to the Risk Management Department by telephone, and followed up with the Columbia County Incident Report, Sheriff Office Incident or Accident Report.
3. Any employee knowing of an incident (injury or damage) which involves an employee or equipment of Columbia County and the general public will report the incident immediately to his / her supervisor.
4. File all claims of damage and injuries on the ACCG-IRMA Claims Reporting Form in this section. Send this form and any statements or reports about the incident to the Risk Management Office as soon as reasonably possible after the incident.
5. Injuries received during the course of employment will be reported and the procedures for Workers' Compensation will be followed.
6. Any incidents of theft will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency as well as following the procedures of this section.
7. The Risk Management Department will not accept claims from employees for the loss, theft, damage or destruction of personal property not directly related to Columbia County operations.

#### Discussion points regarding this Policy:

**DO NOT ADMIT FAULT. Do not commit to payment of any property damage, medical bills or any expenses of any other party.**

Vehicle Accidents: Notify local law enforcement immediately and follow their instructions: even when the other party does not want to "file a report". Do not leave the scene. If your vehicle is creating a hazard, move it to a safer place.

For all accidents / incidents involving any Columbia County vehicles or equipment, property or operations:

- Check for injuries and render first aid (within your training). Call 9-1-1 or other emergency number for assistance as appropriate.
- Contact your supervisor and/or Risk Management immediately. For any major incident involving serious injuries or excessive property damage, Risk Management is available 24/7.
- Avoid discussing the situation with other involved parties except to obtain necessary facts such as name, address, phone numbers, insurance company information, etc. Don't engage in discussions about similar situations, or share opinions.
- If there are no injuries or immediate action to be taken, it may be best to step away from the other involved parties and take a few minutes to calm yourself. Write down any factual observations that may be pertinent. Wait for authorities to arrive.
- Cooperate fully with authorities.

## Up Coming Events

Each program is advertised by Risk Management and is available to employees of Columbia County Board of Commissioners and the city employees of Grovetown and Harlem. Additionally, the Defensive Driving Courses may be attended by immediate family members of employees, on a space available basis, for a nominal fee.

**Pre-registration is required.**

For additional information or to register contact Risk Management. 706-312-7475

**Safety Review Board July 14, 2009**

**Defensive Driving June 25, 2009**

**Course – 8 hour July 21, 2009**

**August 20, 2009**

**Defensive Driving July 30, 2009**

**Course – 4 hour**

**CPR/AED/First Aid June 16, 2009**

**County Office Closed July 3, 2009**

## Holidays

Father's Day, June 21<sup>st</sup>



**JUNE 2009**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

**JULY 2009**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**AUGUST 2009**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

