



MIDDLETON POLICE DEPARTMENT

7341 Donna Drive Middleton, WI 53562

Brad Keil - Chief of Police

MEDIA RELEASE

Middleton Police to Provide Texting Service for Non-Emergency Calls

*New Middleton Police Service Enables Residents and Visitors to Text the Department
Using its Existing and Familiar Landline Phone Number*

MIDDLETON, WI [October 1, 2013] – Middleton Police Social Media Manager Keith Cleasby thought it was a good idea to text enable the Middleton Police Department non-emergency phone number to offer citizens a new means of communication with police. He didn't expect such immediate results from the change in technology.

When Middleton police officials posted a single message on Facebook about a hit and run accident and a request for anyone with additional information to call or text the department at 608-824-7300, the police department received four text messages over their new texting service with information that ultimately led to an arrest in the hit and run.

Officers were later called to check on a person who was reportedly suicidal and potentially armed with a weapon. Upon officers' arrival, the individual did not answer the door or repeated phone calls but after the Middleton police dispatcher sent a text message explaining that it was the police at the door and officers wanted to make sure the person was safe and okay, the individual answered the door within seconds. The individual was taken into protective custody to get the help they needed.

Thanks to a partnership with Zipwhip, the world's first text carrier, people in Middleton have a new but familiar way to contact police for non-emergency services or to simply ask a question. They can now call or text the department at the same number they've been accustomed to using for years: 608-824-7300. The text service also fills a critical need by enabling better access to non-emergency services for citizens who are speech or hearing impaired.

"We're excited to announce that we are now able to receive and respond to text messages sent to our non-emergency phone number," said Police Chief Brad Keil. "Our department is constantly striving to enhance communication with the public and make police services more accessible to everyone in the City of Middleton and based on citizens initial response to this new service that's exactly what we're seeing."

While the Middleton Police Department is pleased to offer this valuable new service, it does come with an important note of caution.

"It's important to remember that texting while driving in Wisconsin is unsafe and illegal and that this new text service is for non-emergency calls for service or questions only," added Keil. "In an emergency, residents should continue to make voice calls to 9-1-1. There is a nationwide effort being led by the Federal Communications Commission and other entities that may soon allow people to text 9-1-1, but that service is not currently available in our community."

Call or Text: (608) 824-7300

www.middletonpd.com



Fax: (608) 833-9990

police@ci.middleton.wi.us



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Some of the benefits that Middleton police and residents can anticipate receiving or are already getting from the new service include:

- Fewer time-consuming phone calls for things such as power outages, parade times and curfew hours, freeing up limited resources to respond first to more pressing matters
- Shorter 'on-hold' times for callers
- Increased citizen engagement
- Safer, silent way for citizens to report suspicious activities or provide information about an incident – such as a robbery or hit-and-run
- Ability for police to send a single outgoing text message to a group of staff members – instead of contacting each person individually – which could increase the department's communication efficiency during an investigation.

“We’re pleased the Middleton Police Department selected Zipwhip to enhance the communications services it provides to citizens in its community,” said John Lauer, CEO of Zipwhip. “Other non-emergency texting services require people to use unfamiliar and cumbersome short-code numbers. We believe our cloud-based texting application allows police personnel to connect and engage with residents, visitors and fellow staff members more easily and more frequently, leading to a safer, better protected community.”

About Zipwhip

Texting is more than mobile. [Zipwhip](#), the world's first text carrier, has taken the 20-year-old texting service and given it new life. It pioneered the concept of utilizing the cloud to enable existing mobile, landline and toll-free numbers to send and receive text messages from virtually any connected desktop, tablet or smartphone. Zipwhip powers a messaging service on any device over any number. Zipwhip's carrier-grade texting platform helps mobile and landline operators modernize the text-messaging medium. Its technology introduces trailblazing functionality while holding true to the distinct culture of texting that consumers have grown to love. Zipwhip now has more than seven million registered users of its texting services. For more information, visit www.zipwhip.com.

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Media Contacts:

Keith Cleasby
Social Media Manager
Middleton Police Department
(608)558-7857
kcleasby@ci.middleton.wi.us

Laura Borgstede
Calysto Communications
(404)266-2060 x11
Lborgstede@calysto.com

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