



CITY OF POST FALLS POLICE DEPARTMENT

1717 E Polston Ave.
Post Falls, Idaho 83854
Phone 208-773-3517
Fax 208-773-3200

Press Release

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Contact: Captain Scot Haug
Phone: (208) 773-3517

The Post Falls Police Department, in collaboration with the Post Falls School District and the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (I.C.A.C.), will be hosting an **Internet and Cell Phone Crimes Against Children** community discussion on **April 14, 2009 from 6:00 – 7:30 P.M.**

The discussion will be held at the River City Middle School gymnasium, located at 1505 N. Fir in Post Falls. This event is free to anyone wishing to attend. The discussion is tailored to provide parents, teens, and educators information about technology related crimes and children. This program will help build a foundation to help teens make sound decisions. Speakers will provide updated information about this topic, and discuss ways to prevent your child from becoming a victim.

Speakers will include Officer Paul Farina, Post Falls Police Department School Resource Officer (SRO), Jim Kouril, Chief I.C.A.C. Investigator for the Idaho Attorney Generals Office, and Mike Mitchell, Deputy US Attorney General.

It is estimated that 93% of children, ages 12-17 are using the Internet, and according to one recent study nearly 50% of children own a cell phone. Although these technologies are a valuable resource for our children, law enforcement agencies nationwide have experienced a significant increase in reported Internet and texting related crimes against children. Crimes related to texting or "sexting" are occurring more frequently than ever.

The term "sexting", a disturbing national trend, typically refers to the act of sending, receiving or forwarding sexually explicit photos and video messages via a text message using a cell phone.

According to a survey of 1280 teens and young adults, conducted by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and CosmoGirl.com, 22 percent of girls and 18 percent of boys say they have electronically sent or posted nude or semi-nude images of themselves. And about one-third of teen boys and one-quarter of teen girls say they have had nude or semi-nude images shared with them. These are alarming numbers.

Locally, the Post Falls Police Department has experienced an alarming increase in reported “sexting” related crimes. From 2007 to 2008 the Department experienced an 84% increase in “sexting” related calls.

Cell phones and the Internet can give children the freedom to communicate with anyone including strangers. As children start to use these tools, parents need to monitor who their children are talking to, and equally important, know what they are talking about.

Please join us as we discuss ways to prevent these crimes and work toward a mutual goal of reducing this epidemic through awareness and education. If you have further questions about this issue please contact Captain Scot Haug at (208) 773-6366 or Officer Paul Farina at (208) 773-3517.

AUTHOR: Captain Scot Haug