



FARMINGTON HILLS **ALERT**



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FARMINGTON HILLS **FOCUS**
Michigan

The Farmington Hills Focus is produced by the City of Farmington Hills. Articles are submitted by City department directors to highlight upcoming events, provide important news, and update residents on City projects and programs. Editor: Gillian Pines, gpines@fhgov.com

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City of Farmington Hills
Michigan - Municipal
Government

Police Department

Farmington Hills is One of the Safest Cities in the Country to Raise a Child!

Safewise.com recently ranked Farmington Hills as the 22nd Safest City in the country to raise a child; we were one of only two cities in the State to receive this designation. Safewise.com, a company offering online safety solutions, ranked cities with populations over 75,000 who reported crime statistics to the FBI.

The low levels of crime and superior safety record were attributed to the vital partnership between members of the community and our City's Police Department. This latest recognition continues to showcase the City's many accolades for our record crime reduction efforts. Farmington Hills was named SecurityChoice.com's Fifth Safest City to Retire; Reviews.com ranked Farmington Hills as the 18th Safest City in the Country; and Areavibes.com ranked Farmington Hills as the Fourth Safest City in Michigan.

According to Police Chief Chuck Nebus, this new distinction as one of the safest places to raise a child is terrific news for parents, schools, and the community as a whole, reflecting the outstanding

work of our police officers, school officials, and local families. The Police Department's Annual Report is available at www.fhgov.com.

Neighbors App by Ring - A Virtual Neighborhood Watch



Neighbors by Ring

The Police Department recently partnered with the Neighbors App by Ring to participate in a "Virtual Neighborhood Watch" program. The Neighbors App brings community members together to share information and updates with each other and with law enforcement. This app provides an online location for residents to post safety alerts and videos of issues related to crimes that were recorded with their own personal home security systems.

This technology is already being used by numerous Farmington Hills residents who have voluntarily shared their videos and provided information to the Police Department. This cooperation between residents and police officers has led to the apprehension of several suspects who were shown committing crimes on video captured by residents' home security systems.

The Neighbors App provides the Police Department with another tool in seeking out important crime and safety information from its residents. The Department will add this new program to its highly effective traditional investigative techniques in order to identify and apprehend suspects involved in mail delivery thefts, larceny from vehicles, residential break-ins, and more. Users of this app will also have the opportunity to share useful information with officers who are involved in active investigations. The Police Department welcomes the opportunity to work further with local residents to help keep Farmington Hills neighborhoods safe.

Internet Safety for Parents

The Police Department recently hosted a seminar on Internet Safety for Parents, which was designed to inform local parents of the dangers of unsupervised internet access for children. Parents were encouraged to research and implement safety measures to protect their children on the internet. A multi-tiered approach to internet safety was covered including these tips:

- Apps offering parental controls on internet usage can be downloaded to the child's phone or devices that allow parents to discretely monitor their child's texting, sharing, and general online footprint.
- Geo fencing apps can be downloaded to devices offering parents a way to geographically track their children and even set up safe boundaries that the child is allowed to travel within. If the child is out of the safe zones set by the parent, the parent receives an alert to their smart phone.
- Parents were advised to investigate all of their children's apps to discourage the sharing of inappropriate pictures and information in an unsecure environment, which could make them vulnerable online.
- Parents were told about how to watch for indications that their child has been a victim of social media bullying. Signs may include changes to normal behavior such as your child appearing nervous when receiving a text, instant message or email; being unwilling to share information about online activity; or abruptly shutting off or walking away from the computer.

Fire Department



Car Seat Safety Inspections

The Farmington Hills Fire Department can help make sure that your child is safely protected. Nationally-certified child safety seat technicians inspect all types of child car seats and booster seats for proper installation, as well as possible product recalls. Inspections are held monthly on designated Saturdays or Sundays **by appointment only** from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Fire Station #4 located

at 28711 Drake Road. Car seat inspections are free, take about 30 to 45 minutes to complete, and are open to the public. Participants do not have to be Farmington Hills residents. Watch for details about upcoming car seat safety inspection events at www.fhgov.com.

Clothes Dryer Safety Tips

Every year, firefighters across the country respond to approximately 15,000 home fires caused by clothes dryers, according to the National Fire Protection Association. These fires caused annual averages of 13 deaths, 444 injuries, and \$238 million in direct property damage.

- Clothes dryers should be installed and serviced by a licensed professional who will ensure that the electrical, exhaust vent and gas connections are correct as required by Building Codes.
- Dryer use should be in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Always clean the lint filter after every use.
- Vent exhaust tubing should be listed for use by a testing agency such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- At least annually, or more frequently if needed, the entire exhaust vent discharge tube should be cleaned starting at the dryer to the point of termination outside of the home.
- Never leave a dryer on and operating when you are asleep or not at home.
- Keep the area around the dryer clear of household items and debris.
- Gas dryers can be a source of carbon monoxide if not vented properly.

Carbon Monoxide Detector Use

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that is difficult to detect. You can't see or smell it. A properly installed CO detector is vital in keeping occupants safe.

- A carbon monoxide detector should be installed on each level of the home.
- If carbon monoxide is detected, the alarm will sound to alert or wake you. Exit the home to a safe location and call 9-1-1.
- Test the detector monthly.
- Keep the carbon monoxide detector clean and make sure it's free of dust and dirt.
- Change your detector's batteries annually when turning your clocks forward for Daylight Savings Time.
- Before installing, check to make sure the detector is approved by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) to meet strict testing and safety requirements.
- Install the detector in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Connect multiple detectors when possible for all alarms to sound when one of them detects carbon monoxide.

Clerk's Office

Upcoming 2020 Election Dates

- March 10, 2020 – Presidential Primary Election
- August 4, 2020 – Primary Election
- November 3, 2020 – Presidential Election

More details will be available closer to the date of each Election on the City website at www.fhgov.com.

Permanent Absent Voter List

To be added to the City's Permanent Absent Voter Application list, contact the Farmington Hills City Clerk's Office at 248-871-2410 or email a request to permlist@fhgov.com. Please include your name, registered address, and a contact number.

Absent voter ballot applications are automatically mailed out by the City Clerk's Office to all voters on the Permanent Absent Voter list approximately two months prior to an Election. Please be aware that in order to receive an absentee ballot, a signed absent voter application is required.

Benefits of being on the Permanent Absent Voter List:

- Automatically receive an absent voter ballot application for every Election
- Receive your absentee ballot prior to Election Day, upon return of your signed application
- Vote from home by absentee ballot and take your time to study the ballot
- Avoid potential lines at the polls on Election Day

Update Homeowner Association Contacts

The City Clerk's Office maintains a list of all Homeowner Associations with contact information. This enables the City to provide contact information to new residents and also to notify Associations of upcoming developments, such as road projects, that may affect your subdivision. Please submit updated contact information annually, or as officers and contact information changes, to jmunoz@fhgov.com or fax it to the City Clerk at 248-871-2411.

Door-to-Door Peddlers/Solicitors

Spring typically brings out door-to-door peddlers/solicitors. Persons peddling door-to-door selling goods or services must be licensed with the City and have photo identification issued by the City Clerk's Office. Persons may only peddle/solicit between the hours of 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.

There are certain groups that are exempt from the City's licensing provisions; however they may still be required to register with the City, should be able to provide photo ID from their respective organizations, and are asked to comply with local time requirements. For questions on licensing, contact the City Clerk's Office at 248-871-2410.

If you do not wish to have peddlers/solicitors come to your door, consider posting a "no peddling/no soliciting" sign on your property. Subdivision associations may also decide to post similar signage at subdivision entrances. Please be advised that State Law dictates that peddling/soliciting cannot be prohibited within the City; however, licensed peddlers/solicitors must adhere to City ordinance requirements. The licensing process requires applicants to submit a background check for review by the Police Department.

The Police Department reminds residents that you do not have to open your door for a stranger. If the person is peddling, ask them to display their City-issued ID or ID from their organization. Call the Police Department at 248-871-2600 if you have concerns. It is helpful if you can provide the name and/or organization that the person was representing and also your address or subdivision name.

Public Services Department

Holiday Garbage – Recycling – Yard Waste Pickups

Thanksgiving – No collection Thursday, November 28. Monday through Wednesday – regular collection. Thursday and Friday – collection delayed one day, with Friday's collection occurring on Saturday.

Please note: The last yard waste pickup will occur during the week of December 9. Starting the week of December 16, yard waste will not be picked up until the program resumes in April 2020.

Christmas Day and New Year's Day – No collection Wednesday, December 25 or Wednesday, January 1. Monday and Tuesday – regular collection. Thursday and Friday - collection delayed one day, with Friday's collection occurring on Saturday.

Martin Luther King Day and President's Day – Collection takes place on the regularly scheduled day. City offices are closed on Monday, January 20, 2020, and Monday, February 17, 2020.



In the interest of worker safety, trash containers must be limited to a 35-gallon size (60 lb. maximum). Wheeled varieties are available in the acceptable size. **OVERSIZED CONTAINERS WILL NOT BE EMPTIED.**



Recycling Reminders

Wondering What Can Be Recycled?

Visit rrrasoc.org and use the recycling directory search bar to type in keywords and get recycling, composting, reuse or disposal instructions. The recycling directory is also available as a free mobile smartphone app. From your App Store or Google Play, search for “Recycling Authority.”

Recycle More and Recycle Right!

Please DO This:	It's Important Because:
<p>NO plastic bags in recycling carts or in the recycling drop-off containers. Recycle plastic bags at local grocery and big box retailers. Look for collection containers in lobbies or service areas.</p>	<p>Plastic bags wrap around the many moving gears and parts of the sorting equipment, causing jams that require shutting down the system and hours of manual removal of the bags each day.</p>
<p>Place recyclables loose in your recycling cart or in the recycling drop-off site containers.</p>	<p>Recyclables placed in plastic bags are removed from the sorting lines and thrown away. This is done for the safety of employees.</p>
<p>NO foam products (Styrofoam).</p>	<p>Foam products are NOT recyclable with RRRASOC's program.</p>
<p>Keep propane tanks and pressurized containers such as fire extinguishers, oxygen tanks, diving tanks, helium tanks, and freon/refrigerant tanks OUT of the recycling cart and trash containers.</p>	<p>These containers are dangerous in the waste stream. They can cause fires, explosions, serious injury or death if put into compactor trucks, recycling centers, and other waste management equipment.</p> <p>Many retailers, including AmeriGas and Blue Rhino, will take the five-pound steel propane tanks, often at no charge. Tanks can often be returned to the point of purchase or to another local dealer, regardless of their condition and functionality. Tanks can also be taken to Household Hazardous Waste events.</p>
<p>When using a recycling cart, place the cart with the “street side” imprint toward the street and the hinge toward your house.</p>	<p>This allows the cart and its contents to be easily emptied into the recycling truck.</p>

Winter Reminders

Division of Public Works 248-871-2850

Snow Plowing Operations

Major roads and school bus routes receive the highest priority; they are plowed and salted following any accumulation of snow or ice. Local (subdivision) streets are plowed following accumulation of four inches or more of snow. The City rotates which neighborhoods are plowed first after each snow event.



Snow Buildup at the End of Driveways

Snow plows are angled to the right for plowing from the center line of the street to the curb, making the deposit of snow at the end of driveways a natural byproduct of plowing operations. You may help alleviate some of this accumulation if you clear the area to the right of your driveway before a snow plow comes down your street. The City is unable to return to clear this deposit at the end of your driveway and is unable to prevent this from occurring at over 23,000 driveways City-wide.

Mailboxes

Curbside mailboxes may become blocked by plowed snow. The U.S. Post Office policy requires snow to be removed enough to allow the mail trucks to drive up to the mailbox for delivery. This is the responsibility of the postal customer.

During snow plowing operations, weak or damaged mailboxes are sometimes knocked down by the weight of snow thrown by snow plows. To ensure that your mailbox is sturdy enough to survive the winter, give it a good shake to see if it needs to be repaired.

Fire Hydrants

Removing snow around fire hydrants greatly assists the Fire Department. It is important that fire hydrants be visible and accessible at all times.

Safety Reminders

In addition to driving defensively and carefully in inclement weather, please follow these important safety reminders:

- Discourage children from playing on snowbanks near the road.
- When following a snow plow truck, please stay a safe distance behind the truck.
- Snow should not be plowed or shoveled into the roadway.

Salt/Sand Barrels

The City places 55-gallon drums filled with a mixture of sand and salt at intersections and hills upon written request from homeowner groups. If your association is interested in having barrels placed within your subdivision, please send a letter, along with a clear description or sketch of the location, to the Division of Public Works at 27245 Halsted, Farmington Hills, Michigan 48331. It is important to obtain the approval of the property owner adjacent to the selected location, given that spilled salt may burn the grass.

Be a Good Neighbor

Many people require assistance after a snowstorm. The elderly and disabled often need help removing snow from their driveways. If you know of a neighbor that needs help, please give them a hand!

Planning & Community Development

Housing Rehabilitation Program - Home Repair Loans

Funding for zero-interest, deferred home repair loans is provided by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Office (HUD). Homeowners may be eligible for loans to replace roofs, windows, furnaces, septic fields or hot water tanks. To qualify, applicants must own and occupy a home in Farmington Hills and the family must meet Federal income guidelines. A family of four, for example, must have a gross income of less than \$61,050. For information, call the Community Development Office at 248-871-2543 or go to www.fhgov.com, and search for Housing Rehabilitation Program.



Honor Your Family History with a Memorial Brick at the Heritage and History Center in Heritage Park

The Heritage and History Center, located in Heritage Park, is undertaking a fundraising campaign for a renovation project. The Farmington Hills Historical Commission is overseeing the project, which will include a handicap accessible entrance, new floors, and a reconfiguration of the space to include multipurpose rooms and conference space.

As a part of their efforts, the Historical Commission invites you to purchase a sidewalk brick for the Heritage and History Center to honor a person, event, organization or memory and help support ongoing efforts to preserve and protect local history. Be a part of this community effort and honor someone special! For more information, contact Brian Golden at 248-701-8112.

TWO SIZES OF BRICK PAVERS ARE AVAILABLE

4 x 8 – three lines of 11 characters (and spaces) for \$75

8 x 8 – six lines of 14 characters (and spaces) for \$125

Zoning Division – Winter Home Checklist

- Car Storage - Find an inside storage location, top off the gas tank, and add gas stabilizer. Change the oil, put tire jacks under tires, and disconnect the battery. Tarps collect moisture, so use a breathable car cover. Put a plastic drop cloth underneath the car to collect fluids. Do not store a car outdoors; moisture permeates every nook and cranny from underneath. Put mothballs around the car to repel rodents.
- Swimming Pool – Take appropriate measures to close and cover the pool.
- Yard Clean-up – Remove any leaf piles, grass clippings, and tree and garden debris. Store ladders, tools, patio furniture or other yard items indoors. Clean and stow your lawnmower inside. A clean yard is less likely to harbor rodents.
- Firewood Storage – Keep firewood stacked above the ground; the recommended height is 18 inches, which helps to deter rodent habitats.
- Snow Removal – The City does not enforce residential snow removal, but please be considerate of your neighbors when clearing your property. Don't block their view along the driveway by piling snow too high, and ask your contractor to do the same.
- Gutters - Clean gutters so they are free of leaves and other debris, this can help to preserve your roof and assist with drainage.

Questions? Call the Zoning Division at 248-871-2520.

Housing Discrimination Notice

Housing discrimination is prohibited by law. Everyone has a right by law, to rent, purchase or obtain financing or insurance for housing without discrimination based upon RACE, COLOR, SEX, NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION, AGE, MARITAL, FAMILIAL or DISABILITY STATUS. Both State of Michigan and Federal laws apply to the actions of owners, real estate brokers or agents, apartment managers, cooperatives, condominiums, mortgage lenders, appraisers or residential insurers, and they prohibit, with few exceptions, any differences in treatment based on any of the protected characteristics.

For more information on housing discrimination, visit www.hud.gov/fairhousing. If you have a housing discrimination complaint, contact the Michigan Department of Civil Rights at 313-456-3700 or the HUD hotline at 1-800-669-9777 or 1-800-927-9275 (TTY).

HUMAN RESOURCES NOW HIRING

The City of Farmington Hills Human Resources Department is currently hiring for several full and part-time positions in various City departments. To find out more about these positions, go to www.fhgov.com and click on Employment.



Zoning Regulations for Accessory Structures (Storage Space)

Are you considering adding some additional storage space at your home? If so, the winter is a great time to do some advance planning so your projects are ready to go in the spring. Whether you're constructing a new garage, expanding your existing garage, or adding a new shed, there are some general zoning regulations on accessory structures that you will want to keep in mind when planning your project.

The first thing to consider may be how much storage you need and how much is permitted by City zoning regulations. The maximum amount of accessory structure floor area is based on the livable floor area of your home. Accessory structures include, but may not be limited to, attached and detached garages, and sheds. The amount of combined accessory structure floor area is 50% of the floor area of your home, up to a maximum of 1,250 square feet. All homes, regardless of size, are allowed to have a minimum of at least 750 square feet of accessory structure floor area.

In most cases, detached garages and sheds may be located no closer than six feet to your rear property line. Minimum side yard setback distances are based on the zoning district that your home is located in. If you are planning a detached structure, it may not be located nearer than 10 feet to your primary residence. The maximum height for detached garages and sheds is 14 feet. The maximum height for attached garages ranges from 25 to 30 feet depending on the zoning district your home is located in.

Please contact the Zoning Division at 248-871-2520 for the zoning regulations as they apply to your property. You may check what zoning district your home is located in using the Zoning Districts map available in the map gallery through the City website at www.fhgov.com then click on Government/Reference/Map Gallery.

Finance Department

Fast Facts about Your Property Taxes

- After tax bills are mailed, amounts will be available at www.fhgov.com. Click on the Resident or Business tab and then click on Property Tax Inquiry and follow the instructions.
- If you use online bank payments (not recommended), mail the payment to: Treasurer's Office, 31555 W. Eleven Mile Road, Farmington Hills MI 48336. The remittance portion of the tax bill is not included with online payments. *If we can't identify the property involved, the check will be returned and the unpaid tax will be subject to all penalties and interest for late payment.*
- The original copy of the tax bill is mailed to the owner of record. If property taxes are paid through an escrow account, the paying agent receives a separate notification. Original copies of the tax bill should be retained for income tax purposes.
- Property tax bills are mailed to the address of record. Changes of address must be filed with the City in writing. Tax bills are not forwarded by the Post Office to new addresses on file with the Post Office, unless it is a temporary forwarding only. Temporary seasonal changes may be filed with the Treasurer's Office, but permanent changes must be filed with the City Assessor. *Failure to receive a tax bill does not waive the tax or any penalties for late payment.*

2020 Property Tax Calendar

- February 14** – Last day to pay winter property taxes without penalty.
- February 20** – Due date for the filing of affidavits to exempt personal property with a true cash value of \$80,000 or less.
- February 20** – Personal property statements due to assessor (business only.)
- Late February** – Change of assessment notices mailed.
- March 2** – Last day to pay summer or winter property taxes at City Hall.
- March 9-11** – Board of Review meets.
- June 1** – Last day to file Primary Residence Exemption affidavit, for the entire tax year.
- Early June** – Budget public hearing where City Council sets City tax rate.
- June 30** – Summer tax bills mailed.
- August 31** – Last day to pay summer property taxes without penalty.
- September 14** – Last day for eligible persons to file for summer tax deferral.
- November 2** – Last day to file Primary Residence Exemption affidavit, for winter taxes only.
- November 30** – Winter tax bills mailed.
- December 31** – Taxable status set for coming year's bill.

The City of Farmington Hills Citizen's Guide and Performance Dashboard can be found on the City website at www.fhgov.com. Click on Government/ Reference/Reports and then click on the document "Citizens Guide and Performance Dashboard."



FH Alert Communications System Keeps Citizens Safe and Informed

The City has a new critical communications and emergency alert system called "FH Alert," that has replaced the Nixle emergency communications program. FH Alert sends notifications to residents, employees, and anyone else who voluntarily registers and provides contact information.

FH Alert informs citizens about a variety of events such as severe weather, fires, floods, road closures, water main breaks, warming/cooling centers, event cancellations, election precinct location changes, and more. To ensure access to vital information, messages will be sent via the participant's preferred contact paths including text, cell phone, home phone, and email. Residents with a landline phone are already listed in the Farmington Hills 9-1-1 database and will automatically be subscribed to FH Alert (for mass notifications only) via their home phone. If you do not wish to receive any mass notifications, FH Alert allows citizens to go online and opt out of the system entirely.

To opt in and register for the FH Alert notification system, go to www.fhgov.com and then click on the FH Alert icon on the main page of the website. You will be directed to the FH Alert login page where you will set up an FH Alert account, create a username and password, then complete a profile page where you enter registration information and select the order of importance for the devices on which you will receive critical information. *Current Nixle users must re-register with FH Alert.*

You do not have to be a resident to use the FH Alert system; you may register as an interested individual or as a business. Notifications of incidents or events are based on geographical locations, so if you do not have a Farmington Hills address, you may register using the City Hall address – 31555 W. Eleven Mile Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48336. You will be presented with registration options for various alerts such as emergencies, weather events or community happenings.

For more information on the new FH Alert system, go to www.fhgov.com and click on the FH Alert icon.







The next United States Census is coming in 2020. This is the first U. S. Census to offer options to respond online or by phone, in addition to the option to respond on a paper form as with previous censuses. Local government officials use the census to ensure public safety and plan new schools and hospitals. Real estate developers and city planners use the census to plan new homes and improve neighborhoods. The 2020 Census is important for you and your community!



How the 2020 Census will invite everyone to respond

What to Expect in the Mail

When it's time to respond, most households will receive an invitation in the mail.

Every household will have the option of responding online, by mail, or by phone.

Depending on how likely your area is to respond online, you'll receive either an invitation encouraging you to respond online or an invitation along with a paper questionnaire.

Letter Invitation

- Most areas of the country are likely to respond online, so most households will receive a letter asking you to go online to complete the census questionnaire.
- We plan on working with the U.S. Postal Service to stagger the delivery of these invitations over several days. This way we can spread out the number of users responding online, and we'll be able to serve you better if you need help over the phone.

Letter Invitation and Paper Questionnaire

- Areas that are less likely to respond online will receive a paper questionnaire along with their invitation. The invitation will also include information about how to respond online or by phone.

WHAT WE WILL SEND IN THE MAIL	
On or between	You'll receive:
March 12-20	An invitation to respond online to the 2020 Census. (Some households will also receive paper questionnaires.)
March 16-24	A reminder letter.
	If you haven't responded yet:
March 26-April 3	A reminder postcard.
April 8-16	A reminder letter and paper questionnaire.
April 20-27	A final reminder postcard before we follow up in person.

We understand you might miss our initial letter in the mail.

- Every household that hasn't already responded will receive reminders and will eventually receive a paper questionnaire.
- It doesn't matter which initial invitation you get or how you get it—we will follow up in person with all households that don't respond.

**Shape
 your future
 START HERE >**

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Census
2020