# Transcript for the City of Ohio State Podcast Season 3 Episode 4: Back to School Safety with Monica Moll

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The City of Ohio State podcast takes a deep dive into the support services that keep OSU's Columbus campus running 24/7. Hear from industry experts in facilities, construction, real estate, public safety, transportation and more. The City of Ohio State podcast is brought to you by the Office of Administration and Planning. Go Bucks. Hello and welcome to the City of Ohio State Podcast. I'm your host, Dan Hedman. With the start of a new academic year upon us, students are back on campus and safety is once again top of mind. Our guest today is Monica Moll, Ohio State's associate vice president of public safety. She's here to fill you in on what you need to know. Monica, thanks for being with us. Thanks for having me again. Of course, today we'll run down safety resources, tips and advice for all Buckeyes. But first, I want to start with something new, a change atop the police division. After 30 years, Kimberly Spears-McNatt has retired from the university with the chief's last day coming up here at the end of August. You were recently named interim police chief. And I know a search for a long-term replacement is underway. So, what can you tell our campus community about this transition and what your goals are for the department as both chief and the overall safety director? Well, it's going to be really hard to say goodbye to Kimberly, but she has set the OSU police division up for success well into the future. My number one goal really is going to be appoint a new chief that cares for and protects our university community in the same ways that Kimberly did. And then, of course, other goals will be to maintain the significant decreases in crime that we've experienced both on and off campus over the course of about the last three years. We'll try to work more efficiently to meet an increased demand for our safety services due to really just an increase in the number of students living on campus this year. And then, as always, preparing for an exciting football season and everything that brings with it a lot of visitors to campus and a lot more activity on campus during football season. And then as an extension of that, I know Chief really, really leaned into community policing. She had great connections across campus with students and faculty groups and emphasized that community policing. I trust that will remain a focus for the division moving forward, not just in your interim term, but long term, too. Absolutely. The issue division of police will always be a community-oriented organization. Kimberly definitely led the way in making connections with her faculty and staff, and each year she focused on creating new connections with new student leaders as they came in. But she also engaged all of her police division staff in those efforts. And so they'll continue that work through lots of things like liaison assignments for each residence hall, liaison assignments for each athletic team. We also have a public safety advisory committee that's made up of students, faculty and staff. And, you know, we can't maintain safety without the help and trust of the community that we serve. So that is always going to be a priority for us. Makes total sense. Okay. Now onto the safety resources for any returning or new Buckeyes. What types of safety programs can they lean on to have a safe and successful year? I know a couple of transportation options may come to mind. Yes. We have a Lyft Ride Smart program from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.. Students can access discounted rides on campus and in many of the off-campus areas that they frequent, including down into the short north. And then we also have a CABS On Demand service by our campus bus system, and that will take them anywhere to and from any on campus location overnight. If students are walking or riding scooters, you know, we would want them to try to stick to groups, take their earbuds out, be vigilant and alert and watch out for traffic if they're driving for their transportation options. We would ask them to do the same. Look out for bicycle scooters and pedestrians. You really can't be afford to be a distracted driver in an area like this where there are so many people out and about all the time. And then, of course, if you're operating a scooter or driving a vehicle, never drink and drive. And for our listeners, if they go to dps.osu.edu/resources, it will link out to both Lyft and CABS On-Demand or they can find those through the OSU app. For some students, it's their first time away from home. How can they keep safety a priority, both in residence halls and living in a house off campus? Because those are two different things, obviously. Yes. Well, my you know, one piece of advice. If you're living in an on-campus residence hall is don't let people tailgate into a residence hall behind you. Sometimes that can be difficult. You don't want to seem rude, but don't go out of your way to hold the door open or allow people access that aren't swiping in with their book IDs that that may not live there or maybe aren't supposed to be in the residence hall. Guests should always be escorted by a resident. And then other things that you can do is secure your valuables. That includes making sure your residence hall room door is locked and secure. Don't crack those open if you're just running down the hall. It's always better to bring your BuckID with you and make sure those doors are locked. Same thing in your vehicles. Lock your cars, don't leave anything laying out in plain sight in your vehicle. That would be of value like a tablet, a laptop, cell phones, wallets, things like that. If you're living off campus, the Office of Student Life gives out free window and door alarms. So I would definitely take advantage of those. Talk to your landlord and make sure that all your windows and doors lock and are properly functioning. And then, as always, report suspicious activity. If you see something, say something. If you notice something that doesn't quite look right. Speak up. Let us know and we'll help you check it out. Yeah, I mean, this sounds like common sense, right? But just lock those doors. I know sometimes if you have four or six or even eight students living in a in one house, it's more convenient sometimes to go, well, I know people are coming and go and I'm just gonna leave it unlocked for the next person. But that makes it an easy target for the for the bad guy, too. So make sure you're doing the common sense things locking doors, locking windows, like you said, and taking advantage of some of those window and door alarms. So not necessarily new this year, but recently expanded is the joint patrol program. This pairs OSUPD officers with Columbus Police officers to patrol the off-campus area. I know you have a total authorized strength of 75 sworn police and four of those officers work east of High Street as part of this specific joint patrol program. What can you tell us about this partnership with CPD and why it's so important? Well, one of the things that we do in conjunction with CPD is a program called Crime Interdiction, which is where we pair OSU officers on overtime with CPD officers on overtime on a part time basis, usually in the evenings and overnight and on the weekends when most of our students are out and about in their off campus areas and they provide an extra layer and extra presence in addition to and above the normal staffing that the Columbus Division of Police provides for the University District off campus. What Joint Patrol is, is kind of like crime interdiction, but it's on a full-time basis where those four OSUPD officers, that's their regular 40 hour work week is to work across the street, across High Street, paired up with a CPD police officer and they ride in vehicles together. As a matter of fact, we just bought four new police vehicles for that program, and we've striped them a bit differently than Columbus Police Cruisers and OSUPD cruiser so the community can recognize them as our four joint patrol units. So along with their CPD partners, that is eight police officers really dedicated and dedicated to protecting our students that live in the off-campus areas. They often won't go to regular calls for service in the university district so they can just focus on the needs of our students and crime. Interdiction and joint patrol are both above and beyond the typical CPD patrols that are already over there. So it's adding extra resources to the neighborhood, which obviously is a really important thing to do, supporting the police division on campus or non-sworn security. That's both on campus and at the medical center. Ohio State has its own 911 call center, more than 5,000 surveillance cameras and emergency management team and more. How do all these divisions which report up to you, work together to host major events, perform daily patrols and just overall enhance safety on campus? Well, we have over 300 OSU employees dedicated to keeping our university community safe as part of the Department of Public Safety. And there are five divisions and you mentioned most of them in the Department of Public Safety. We've talked a lot about the police division. They patrol campus and take crime reports and work closely with the Columbus Division of police off campus. We have that 911 center that has emergency dispatchers and folks that monitor all of the over 5,000 surveillance cameras on and off campus and all of the license plate reader cameras. We have over 60 of those in the on and off campus areas and may also watch those cameras and provide all of those things. They answer the calls, get emergency information. Get all the information from the cameras and license plate readers, and they transmit that to our police officers in the field so they have a better response and a more informed response to what's going on in the community. Our emergency management team sends our Buckeyes alerts for on campus emergencies and they write all of our emergency plans. They make sure we're paying attention to severe weather. Weather when it's tornado season, med center security maintains the safety and all the buildings affiliated with our hospital and our central campus. Security folks are an extra set of eyes and ears on campus, but they also manage the contract for Buckeye Block Watch, which our security patrols in the off campus areas. So all of our divisions have to come together in addition to all the technology and resources that we've added over the last few years to make sure we're all working towards the same goal of keeping our students, faculty and staff safe. It definitely takes a village. And you mentioned Buckeye Alerts. So I just wanted to put this out there because sometimes I know we get questions about this, but there's actually three ways folks can find out about crimes and crime trends. So Buckeye Alert, that would be an emergency where there is an imminent threat, where someone needs to take immediate action to remain safe, severe weather or even an active attacker. There's public safety notices required by the Clery Act, which are more like email summaries of crimes that have occurred on campus. If they check the boxes of a clearer, reportable crime, clearer reportable property and an ongoing threat to safety. And then there's a third way, which is a community crime map, which shows crimes from the Columbus Division of Police off campus and I guess kind of a 3 B would be the on campus daily crime long that OSU PD has to offer. So finally one thing that would lead to a buckeye alert. Scary to think about, but I know OSU PD trains each year to be ready for an active, aggressor threat. The university has educational resources for the campus community and like I said, an emergency like that, a Buckeye Alert would be issued. Classroom locks have been installed and folks could secure in place if that were to happen. But what overall tips do you have for everyone to be prepared for the unthinkable should it occur on this campus? Probably the best thing for a university community to do would be to watch a nine minute video that we have online called Surviving an Act of Aggressor. And it really summarizes your three options, which are run, hide, fight in an active aggressor situation. And what I would ask them to do is, you know, just take maybe 10 minutes out of your day, watch that video, and then think about the places that you frequent on and off campus in your daily life. So whether that be classrooms, libraries where you live and then also could be at the grocery store wherever you're going on a frequent basis and try to think about the tips given in that video and how you would apply them in those scenarios. And with just a little bit of forethought, you would be surprised at how much quicker your reaction will be if the unthinkable happens. And while we're doing all sorts of things to try to mitigate that risk and make sure that doesn't happen, if it does, you will be much more prepared if you watch that video and just give a little bit of thought to that. And then the other thing that I would remind folks is we'd love to have the opportunity to intervene before someone resorts to violence. So that's where that see something, say something is important is if you see someone that you think might be in crisis or struggling with something, pass that on. Let us know. We are not going to overreact or jump to conclusions. We will try to hook that person into the resources that they need to try to prevent violence. Good tips, good advice.

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Monica, we appreciate the work of you and your team and for your time today. Thanks for being with us. Thanks, Dan.

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