

We're Stuffed

The West Jordan Police Department is stuffed full, full of stuffed animals. The animals are overflowing the nooks and crannies of the City Justice Center. So what's the problem? Residents are bringing used stuffed animals to the Department thinking officers can give them to children in crisis.

"I know that our residents have big hearts and want to help children in need," said Police Chief Doug Diamond. "Many times police officers come in contact with youngsters that are in crisis. Sometimes fears and emotions can be calmed by hanging onto a cuddly stuffed animal."

The problem is that the stuffed creatures have to be brand new and never used. They must also be of a certain size. The toys, besides being clean and new, must fit into nothing bigger than a gallon sealed food storage bag. The toys are kept in the trunks of cars or covered beds of the police pickup trucks.

The toys must small and protected in plastic so officers can easily store them in cramped quarters for emergency situations. A toy that is dirty or has an odor could intensify the children's feelings instead of giving some peace in a time of stress.

Residents have been bringing toys that are used, soiled, and/or damaged. The department has no way to properly clean them. Plus, officers are required to follow strict rules about cleanliness and conform to health guidelines. Some of the toys are also too big. Some are three and four feet tall. There is no way to accommodate large sizes.

"We appreciate the good intentions and see the donations as a way to bring a smile to a child," Diamond said. "But, please find other ways to recycle the used toys."

If you have questions about donations or other ways you can help call **Crime Prevention at 801-256-2032 or 801-256-2033.**