

## **SIG 9 Global Security**

### **Tips and Reminders for Residential Communities**

Dear Valued Residents,

We want to remind you all that a community that collaborates strengthens the offense and defense from becoming a crime target and weakens the perpetrator's position. We always promote and teach the fact that crime statistics are derived from an alarming event that can reoccur, and we should never consider ourselves “the exception” that it will not happen to us or within our household. Sadly, those statistics represent many victims who once believed they would not fall victim to a crime or “that crime.”

Criminals place their efforts on seeking the deficiencies that we may overlook or dismiss, which will widen their opportunity to commit their crimes. Some of the best-starting defenses are awareness, collaboration, mitigation, and detection. Within residential security, a balanced and proactive collaboration can enable a community to develop a strategic framework that will complement the efforts of those working hard to minimize the margin for vulnerabilities and deficiencies. Just as career professionals can detect strengths and weaknesses in their trade, criminals can and will do the same. They are predators seeking their next victim, and they often prey on the vulnerable. Your homes are your sanctuary and place of peace; however, this should not negate the fact that criminals have no respect and only value their motivation and gains.

We all understand there is much science to a cause-and-effect correlation of events, and although we all know that we are not the cause of crime, letting our defenses down can promote the effects of crime. This means that even if the opportunity exists for the criminal because the victim is unaware of the vulnerability, it can unintentionally attract criminals into the community. The more we work together to promote awareness, the better we can bridge the gap that fosters vulnerabilities. By no means can we suggest that your community would fall under the social disorganization theory, in which there exists the “inability of community members to achieve shared values or to solve jointly experienced problems” (USDJ, 2023). However, studies show that the social disorganization theory links these systems of relationships to crime and delinquency and that strong networks of social relationships can help prevent crime and delinquency (USDJ, 2023). Therefore, we can infer that criminals fostered under the social disorganization theory will seek and detect communities with this “limited capacity for communication, collective action, problem-solving and common value achieving” (Gu et al., 2023).

Here are some tips that can help mitigate crime:

- 1. Secure your homes.** Physical security systems such as CCTV or PTZ Cameras can help deter and document crimes or attempted crimes. Arm your homes with Alarm Systems, Motion Detection Cameras/Lighting/Sensors and use them. Do not provide private codes for people to gain access to your homes, and if you do, have a system in place that will document entry/exit, record video, and expire after use. Use signage indicating your home is protected and monitored. Layers of physical security surrounding and in your home provide more layers of defense for a criminal to penetrate.
- 2. Secure your vehicles and key fobs.** Most auto thefts reported in the past year included the victim leaving their vehicle key fob inside the vehicle or leaving the vehicle running with the key fob inside the vehicle. Be aware of your surroundings and if someone may be following you. You know the value of your vehicle and items you may have with you or on your person, so please be aware that criminals will profile and prey on their victims and may follow you home from other locations. Do not leave valuables in your vehicles. A high volume of crimes of opportunity exists in which criminals

drive through neighborhoods to search for unlocked vehicles to rummage for valuables. The criminals will also test vehicle door handles to check for vehicles with key fobs inside and then steal the vehicle.

3. **Keep proprietary information within your household.** This includes but is not limited to your physical security systems, cameras, hidden cameras, timers, emergency battery backup durations, codes to systems, garages or keylocks, etc., and safes.
4. **If you see something suspicious or a possible crime, say something and communicate.** This also means calling the police or minimally reporting it to security or the HOA. Knowledge is a factor in awareness, and just as people cannot read minds to react accordingly, lack of information makes it harder to remedy a potential reoccurring issue.
5. **Secure deliveries and do not leave valuables or vulnerable property unattended or unsecured.** This means closing your gates, fences, and garages if you are absent. Put scooters and bicycles away. Put away equipment such as sporting items, golf clubs, and fishing rods. There is a high prevalence of porch pirates that drive through neighborhoods seeking an opportunity to steal a package or an item left unattended.
6. **Be aware of who you may encounter while out, especially in leisure, and be cautious of inviting strangers into your home.** We see people fall victim to criminals that target individuals in social settings. Or residents will allow contractors/workers or subcontractors of companies into their homes and have no criminal history of these people. Remember that many times criminals seek positions that will enable their intended crimes, so never let your guard and defenses down, especially if you may have young children or minors in the home.
7. **If you are a victim of a crime, call the police and document the crime.** SIG 9 Global has noted that many community residents will call security to report a crime and seek assistance from us but will not report the crime or occurrence to the police. **If you are a victim of a crime, we urge you always to call the police and report it or influence a victim you know of to report a crime they have not reported.**
8. **Communicate with the HOA and stay abreast of trending crime statistics.** For example, securing your vehicle key-fobs and not leaving in the vehicle is highly emphasized throughout Fort Lauderdale, but many still fall victim to car theft due to this highly promoted topic. If information is provided to educate on a particular topic, a reason influences that need.

#### References

Gu, X., Liu, L. Lan, M, & Zhou, H. (2023). Measuring perceived racial heterogeneity and its impact on crime: An ambient population-based approach. *Cities*, Vol 134.

U.S. Department of Justice. (2023, July 18). *U.S. Department of Justice Library*. Retrieved from National Criminal Justice Reference Service: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/HTML/ojjdp/193591/page1.html>