

2022 Bella Ranch Homeowners Association – Annual Homeowners Meeting Agenda - Minutes

January 18th, 2022

Call to order – 7:00pm Heath Haseloff

- Welcome and thank everyone for coming
- Board Introductions of all existing members
- Electing two members of 4 nominees:
 - o Jeremy Berman “Mike” – coming from Northern Illinois, no complaints other than the vehicles fly up and down the street. Been a CEO, COO, VP of Operations – sold his company and moved to TX. Kids are grown up. Running because he wants to try and slow the cars down and be more involved with neighborhood activities.
 - o Henry Graterol – happy overall with the neighborhood. Works with old and gas - he looks at things from a safety lens and he sees the speeding in the neighborhood as an issue. Delivery person that was going more than 60 mph’s down the streets. More and more issues with security, people running around the neighborhood, and we need to figure out a better way to do things.
 - o Brian Krajka – served on many boards, church boards, non-profits, served on the first group after the homeowners took over from the developers, proud of many of the things that were done when he was on the board. Agrees with many of the items brought forward by the other two candidates, but something must be done. Wants to bring greater communication between the board and the homeowners – would take leadership on making it better.
 - o Heath Haseloff – running again. Went back and forth on whether to run because it is a lot of work. He is running because of the investment he put into it so far. We are our own little private community. He deals with all the same things as a city engineer as what we deal with inside of Bella Ranch. Putting money into a capital reserve is something they put money into for a rainy day for when the money will need to be used. Road maintenance is key. You can vote up until the end of the presentation from Tarrant County Sherriff’s Department.

Deputy Kelly Biggs with the Tarrant County Sherriff’s Department Presentation (Attachment – Deputy Biggs Presentation)

- Question from Deputy Biggs about our policy around cars being left on the street or in the driveway?
- Speeders – Tarrant County can’t go in there and write citations because it is private property, and it is a violation if they write a ticket.
 - o Addressing speeders – if you can fine speeders in the bylaws of the HOA – you can do it!!
- Open it up to questions to the HOA:
 - o Nicole – how are we supposed to know if a crime is happening based on dog barking? Don’t know if there is a prowler or a dog just barking way too late:

- If you feel something is not right, call the Tarrant County Sheriff's department instead of guessing if it is an issue or not.
- Some of these things can be remedied from the JOP as a general disturbance – a civilian can file a complaint against anyone – if determined there is enough probable cause.
- Question about dog barking again – can we call animal control?
 - You must have an ordinance in place in order to call out animal control – county does not have this in place as an ordinance.
 - You will have to get a court order and there is a process associated with that.

Doug Brown suggested that everyone focus on less nuisance stuff and more law enforcement related activities.

- Question from Henry – do you find that crime is less with a security guard and checkpoint with ID checking versus what we have at Bella Ranch?
 - If you regulate the people that come into your property you will have a lower crime rate, but there are down sides to that as well.
 - You can eliminate many of the items just to paying more attention to what is going on. You don't have to know your neighbors, but just care enough to tell them something is going on.
- Courtney Christiansen question – security at night that would drive around the neighborhood, and we could call him/her directly. What happened to that and why was it done away with?
 - Heath indicated that the previous estimate was \$35K-\$40K per year.
- Courtney Christiansen question – is there a certain % of the neighborhood? 60% is the majority that must be approved in order to pass. Any change to deed restrictions requires 60% vote.
- Courtney Christiansen question – could there be an off-duty police officer hired out?
 - You are in a private gated community and as an officer he/she can interject if we have an off-duty officer, and we can choose to set the hours. Private Security will charge the same as an off-duty office. Off-duty officers tend to have better optics versus a private security guard.
- Deputy Biggs teaches crime prevention based on Day Time and Night Time – two different strategies – there is no law for you to have a light so bright that it will bother your neighbor, but the HOA may say something different.
 - Camera system won't prohibit someone from breaking into the house, car, etc..., but it gives the investigators a place to start.
 - ALR Reader – will take pictures at the gate
- Heath – regarding the speeding – Only applies to members of the HOA for fining purposes?
 - Deputy Biggs said that if a neighbor invited a person in, then that person who did the inviting, then that person becomes responsible
- Doug – Don't give your codes to people!
- Heath – If you get a call from the gate then you press 9
- Wayne – don't ever provide a contractor your code. They can scroll the name register and then choose your name. Don't give out the code.
 - Who have the people told the code to that you gave the code to?
 - Codes are changed weekly for contractors is an option to consider – Deputy Biggs

- Gate has been open for 5 days now – when I leave it's open and when I get back it's open.
- Bill and his wife – get the sense and hopes he is wrong – but he gets the sense that fines hit the owner for people that speed that were invited in from the neighbor. He hopes he is wrong, but that is the sense he is getting.
- Publicly say thank to the Sherriff's department – Uhaul van story.
- What do you think about curfews? We have many kids in the neighborhood – curios of the deputy's opinion?
 - o Burglaries happen when the kids are out of school or vacation breaks is when the uptick occurs.
- Deputy Biggs – 817-238-4216 – questions or concerns – call him and leave a message. He gets an email saying that someone left him a voicemail.

Heath – thank you to Deputy Biggs. We will include the presentation in our meeting minutes.

Turn your votes into the table out front.

Question to check on the quorum as they thought it was 2/5ths

Business items:

2021 Financial Report – Chris (Attachment – 2021 Financial Report)

Need to approve this report for the 2021 Financial Report? Doug makes the motion and Wayne seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

2022 Budget Readout – Chris (Attachment – 2022 Budget)

No questions from the board and no action to be taken.

ACC – Wayne Williams

- 104 property medication requests forms submitted
- Jason Williams, Bruce Gillespie, and Erica Kitchens
- They compare and render decisions
- Thank you for the service this year
- 5 new homes constructed
- 10 undeveloped lots
- 298 lots in the community
- Board members can't be on the committee, but Wayne is the board liaison.
- That is it for the ACC Report.

Questions/Comments (Attachment – Questions/Comments Submitted by Homeowners)

Heath read through the questions submitted in writing.

Wayne comment – get your own security system versus paying.

Sean Odell – carports allowed within the deed restrictions but must fit the guidelines? Yes

Matt Ashton – Bella Dio Gate – app on the phone that opens that, and he would love to see that on the front gate. Opportunity to add that to the front gate – could this be an option?

- VINO gate was the developer, not the best on the market. Dio gate is much better and have looked into upgrading the VINO gate. Replace operators in the VINO gate in 2022, but the software is expensive, and we are looking at phasing it to align with the Dio gate.

Suggestions – special assessment for that year for HOA to pay more for that particular year to get certain upgrades for that year. You are responsible for anyone that comes into the property and find the parents for the kids that are causing the issues.

- Feels like our bylaws are really lax and a solution may be to update and she would volunteer to be part of a committee to rewrite

Robert Bryant – parking at the White House by the Dio gate and it is causing near head on collisions. It is going to happen sooner rather than later.

- Nothing in the deed restrictions
- The challenge is that you do for one you must do for all. How do you pick and choose? Not saying it is not solvable but there are challenges. Don't have a solution at this time.

Henry – has the HOA BOD talked with the owner of that house?

- No communication has been brought forward to the board until now
- Take a picture of it and send us some data

Nicole – Dog Barking – begins at 4:30 in the morning and goes all day.... Contacted the owner and she said that the owner was out of town, nothing has been done. Not sleeping, not able to use the pool, has had to make changes in where she sleeps just so she can get through the night. She has sent videos to Heath. Wants to know what her options are – disrespectful.

- Heath needs something in writing, and he will go talk with the neighbor
- Send an email outlining what is going on
- Contacted on Facebook
- She sent it again
- She is considering selling because how miserable she is
- Heath apologized about not seeing the email and they've talked about the language in the deed restrictions around nuisance – encouraged her to get the ball rolling and he will address.

Jennifer – Bella Parko – Financial Statements

- Question around fines – no one is paying their fines!
- Management fees – Globolink – when was the last time we bid out these services? Was this competitively bid?
 - o Brian Krajca – indicated it was competitively bid two years ago, some of the other management companies we looked at to see if we were overpaying and found that we were getting a very fair rate and the rate is very clear with Globolink and with other companies there were many different hidden fees.
- Question – is it expensive to erase our gate codes every other year?

- Heath – not sure of cost but it is difficult to manage, and we'll need to look into it as an option.

No further questions and we will review the suggestions, comments, questions, and get back to the homeowners via future HOA meetings.

Doug – looking to get a security committee and he'll be looking to ramp up that effort. If you have a comment or a complaint – put it in writing.

Heath – kind words about Doug and how great of an asset he is!

Newly elected board members:

- Heath Haseloff
- Brian Krajca

Congrats to those folks and thanks to the candidates that put forth their name. Love to hear ideas at any board meeting in the future.

8:45 Meeting Adjourned

Homeowners in attendance:

Austin, Barrow, Baugher, Berman, Bilsky, Brantly, Brown, Bryant, Colombo, Christiansen, Dervaes, Erasmus, Flannery, Flores, Fournier, Gillaspie, Graterol, Harrell, Haseloff, Hatch, Irvine, Jones, Jordan, Karlen, Krajca, Kuentz, Liniger, Mueller, O'Dell, Osborne, Poynor, Siehling, Tennison, Thomas, Torres, Tribble, Williams

Bella Ranch Homeowners Association

2021 Income and Expense

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Income | |
| ACC Review | 500.00 |
| Bella Dio Gate Damage | 15,204.14 |
| Finance Charges | 431.23 |
| Fines | 625.00 |
| Gate Transmitters | 350.00 |
| Interest Income | 278.73 |
| Late Payment Statement Fees | 915.00 |
| Membership Dues | 145,990.00 |
| Transfer Fees | 5,000.00 |
| Total Income | <u>169,294.10</u> |
| Capital Expense | |
| Bella Dio Gate-Security Cameras | <u>6,970.73</u> |
| Operational Expense | |
| Accounting/Audit | 400.00 |
| Bella Dio Gate Damage | 12,670.00 |
| Electricity | 3,344.55 |
| Entrance Cameras | 687.80 |
| Entrance Decorations | 3,340.52 |
| Federal Tax | |
| Garage Sale | 234.97 |
| Gate Administration Access | 2,423.80 |
| Gate Internet Service | 1,008.95 |
| Gate Maintenance | 9,491.19 |
| Gate Telephone | |
| Gate Transmitters | 712.80 |
| Infrastructure Maintenance | 817.65 |
| Insurance | 1,548.00 |
| Irritation System Maintenance | 2,489.75 |
| Landscape Maintenance | 28,331.73 |
| Late Payment Statement Fees | 1,950.00 |
| Legal | 135.27 |
| Management Fees | 33,600.00 |
| Meetings | 0.00 |
| Postage and Delivery | 1,128.22 |
| Printing and Reproduction | 2,599.05 |
| Property Tax | 6.40 |
| Road Maintenance | 5,544.54 |
| Social | 3,878.57 |
| Website | 41.00 |
| Welcoming Committee | 450.00 |
| Total Expense | <u>123,805.49</u> |
| Net Income | <u><u>45,488.61</u></u> |

Bella Ranch Homeowners Association
Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2021

Current Assets

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Checking Account | 34,534.60 |
| Contingency Reserves | 198,987.29 |
| Dues Receivable | 9,227.35 |
| Fines Receivable | 10,675.00 |
| Unusable Land - 12601 Volare Drive | <u>100.00</u> |
| Total Current Assets | 253,524.24 |

Liabilities & Equity

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Retained Earnings | 201,027.64 |
| Unusable Land - 12601 Volare Drive | 100.00 |
| Net Income | <u>52,396.60</u> |
| Total Liabilities & Equity | <u><u>253,524.24</u></u> |

Bella Ranch Homeowners Association
2022 Budget

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Membership Dues | 149,000.00 |
| Total Income | <u>149,000.00</u> |

Capital Expenditures

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Bella Vino Gate Motor Replacement | 8,000.00 |
| Total Capital Expenditures | <u>8,000.00</u> |

Expense

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Accounting Audit | 400.00 |
| Contribution to Reserves | 30,000.00 |
| Electricity | 4,200.00 |
| Entrance Decorations | 2,500.00 |
| Federal Tax | 150.00 |
| Garage Sale | 250.00 |
| Gate Internet Service | 1,550.00 |
| Gate Maintenance | 10,000.00 |
| Gate Telephone | 2,500.00 |
| Gate Transmitters | 1,000.00 |
| Infrastructure Maintenance | 7,000.00 |
| Insurance | 4,500.00 |
| Irrigation System Maintenance | 2,000.00 |
| Landscape Maintenance | 25,100.00 |
| Legal | 1,500.00 |
| Management Fees | 33,600.00 |
| Meetings | 75.00 |
| Postage and Delivery | 1,750.00 |
| Printing and Reproduction | 3,100.00 |
| Property Tax | 7.00 |
| Social | 6,000.00 |
| Website | 61.00 |
| Welcoming Committee | 1,000.00 |
| Total Expense | <u>138,243.00</u> |

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Net Ordinary Income | <u><u>2,757.00</u></u> |
|---------------------|------------------------|

Questions/Comments Submitted by Homeowners

1. Question: Are there plans in place to put in a community pool? Or, a park? Or, extend the paved hiking trail?

Answer: There are no plans to build a community pool or park or extend the walking trail.

2. Question: If we have a need for street repair, who do we contact?

Answer: The first point of contact for any requests, issues, or concerns should be the property management company, GloboLink, at HOA@globolink.com. The management company will bring these items to the attention of the Board as needed.

3. Comment: Security: More cameras at strategic locations will give us better options to enhance security and driver control in Bella Ranch. Intersections like Bella Colina and Bella Dio have become raceways. No speed bumps ever in Bella Ranch please...there are other options like cameras.

4. Comment: Adolescent problems: I found that there are some HOA's that have established a curfew which sounds like a possible option for the ongoing problems we are having in Bella with adolescent children. Blocking roads with 12 or more kids, stealing mail, property damage, animal attacks are not acceptable behavior and we need to do something as a community. A curfew would give us leverage with those parents who elect to have an open door policy at all hours of the night. Bottom line is that our community needs to get control of this before we have something more serious happen.

5. Question: Fireworks: do we really need multiple days of fireworks? There have been numerous issues with fires...yes even Bella Ranch...Why not just say fireworks are allowed on July 4th and January 1? A prairie fire out of control in Bella Ranch is not something we need either.

Answer: Texas State Law permits the use of fireworks, but only allows the sale of fireworks from June 24 to July 4, as well as from December 20 to January 1. The State Law does allow for Cities and Counties to enforce their own restrictions. Tarrant County allows the use of fireworks in unincorporated areas if it is on your private property or you have permission from the property owner. If you feel someone is illegally using fireworks, please contact the Tarrant County Sheriff.

6. Question: Has there been any discussion about adding some sort of street lighting at the intersection of Bella Vino and Bella Italia? At night I find it very difficult to make the turn, avoid the boulders and stay on the road.

Answer: There have been no discussions to add street lights at Bella Vino and Bella Italia.

7. Comment: Similar to previous question and this HOA probably has no input but, the NEW entrance to Bella Crossing of and on 377 needs to be widened, lengthened or something. It is too short and sharp. I see too many vehicles especially trucks try to make that turn and end up swinging way into the opposite lane. Just look at the mud hole/swamp created on both sides. Sooner or later if not already, there is going to be an accident there.

A Neighborhood Watch program is just that, learning how to effectively watch a neighborhood. It is neither a substitute for police protection nor a platform for taking the law enforcement into one's own hands. Neighborhood Watches are designed to supplement police patrols by residents becoming the eyes and ears of their department.

The three main principles of Neighborhood Watch are as follows:

1. Getting to know neighbors and watching out for them.
2. Watching out for neighbors' property.
3. Reporting suspicious or illegal activity to the Sheriff's Department immediately.

Members of a Neighborhood Watch are simply asked to use commonsense and observe what is going on around them. The three principles listed will help residents recognize their neighborhood's individual identity (i.e., what is normal activity, who "belongs" there, etc.). The added benefits are that members have a sense of community, pride and peace of mind

. FACT VS. MYTH

Myth: Neighborhood Watch areas do not work.

Fact: Working programs reduce crime as much as 80 percent. Criminals have said that Neighborhood Watch programs scare them into other areas.

Myth: Neighborhood Watch areas are nothing more than a clique.

Fact: Neighborhood Watch groups are for everyone in the block or area. Neighbors' observations and input are just as valuable as anyone else's.

Myth: To be part of a Neighborhood Watch group, means dropping out of something else.

Fact: Neighborhood Watch takes very little time. All a neighbor needs to do is watch what is going on, report suspicious activity and attend meetings in the neighborhood.

Myth: The Sheriff's department runs the Neighborhood Watch program.

Fact: Your Neighborhood Watch program belongs the neighbors in the area. The Sheriff's Department will help set it up, but the members in the neighborhood will be the voice.

HOW TO START A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH:

Neighborhood Watch programs take many forms but organizing by blocks is the cornerstone of all residents' crime prevention programs. The following suggestions can help build a Neighborhood Watch group in the community.

Step 1 Talk with neighbors and friends and ask for their participation. Find out who else is interested in being a leader (Block Captain) for the area. Explain the need for, and the value of, a Neighborhood Watch. Define the boundaries of the area to be organized.

Step 2 Contact the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department 817-238-4200. Ask to speak with the SCOPE Deputy, about starting a Neighborhood Watch.

Step 3 Plan the first meeting! Get the news out by telephone, fliers or going door-to-door. Give neighbors at least two weeks' notice and plan a time and place that is convenient for everyone. Keep in mind that not everyone can attend an early meeting during the week. Typically, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays get low attendance results.

KEEP THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCHING:

Starting a Neighborhood Watch and keeping people interested are two of the biggest hurdles to overcome. Enclosed is a list of some ideas to help keep the community engaged by making meetings fun and informative. This will help turn the "block" into a community instead of a row of houses.

- Have a picnic at a local park.
- Have a backyard barbecue.
- Invite a guest speaker to the meeting. Have about a 20- or 30-minute question-and-answer session with a landscaper or a home repairman?
- Have a holiday party (Christmas, Halloween, etc.).
- Have a summer block party. (Arrange to have a police car or fire truck on site).
- Have a neighborhood clean-up day.
- Start a Neighborhood Association.

- Hold a best-kept yard event.

Another great idea is to start a neighborhood newsletter. This will keep friends informed (especially if they missed a meeting). To keep reader's interest the following can be included.

- Safety news (for home and self)
- Garage sale notices• Announcements (wedding, babies, graduates, etc.)
- Recipes• Lawn and garden ideas
- Awards
- Services within the neighborhood (including personal sales consultants) There are so many possibilities to choose from. A Neighborhood Watch is only as good as the people who are willing to stand behind it and keep it going.

WARNING



CRIME WATCH AREA

WE WILL REPORT

SUSPICIOUS PERSONS OR VEHICLES TO THE POLICE

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL MEMBERS:

Participation in Neighborhood Watch requires only a small fraction of time. Members should try to meet once per month. Of course, members must use their eyes and ears daily and report suspicious activity to the Sheriff's Department. That is all there is to it!

During monthly meetings, residents will have the opportunity to meet new neighbors, keep friendships thriving, voice concerns about potential problems and pass along valuable information about the neighborhood.

BLOCK CAPTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:

If a neighbor chooses to participate as a Block Captain, they will be asked to help with certain duties within the neighborhood:

1. Block Captains acquire and maintain a current list of participating block members (including addresses, phone numbers, emails or other contact information).

2. They will create a notification system (by phone tree, email or other means) so all members of the group will receive information as needed.

3. They will put together a block map showing exactly where each participating family lives (an example follows) and give members copies of the map. Find members who are willing to be a "block parent." Mark these "safe homes" on the map for children to go to in an emergency.

4. Block Captains should keep regular contact with the Sheriff's Department SCOPE Deputy. They will disseminate any information received from the Sheriff's department out to the neighborhood. Block Captains also will bring the concerns of the members to the Sheriff's department. This can be accomplished by phone, email or written correspondence. This way, the Sheriff's Department and neighborhoods maintain positive and open communication.

5. Block Captains also are responsible for planning and setting Neighborhood Watch meetings. They plan the agenda and decide for special speakers or other items of interest, if needed. They ensure that each group member is notified about meeting times and places. There is a minimum of two Block Captains for Neighborhood Watch groups. Of course, more are welcome!

6. When Planning a Neighborhood Watch meeting, notify the SCOPE Deputy to request the District Deputy to attend. Keep in mind that the District Deputy is subject to calls and may not be able to attend each meeting.

When to Call the Sheriff's Department

THE PURPOSE OF REPORTING

The purpose for reporting suspicious activity to the Sheriff's Department is to stop the criminal activity that may be occurring, increase Sheriff's presence in the neighborhood and give a true perspective of crime in the area.

Making a report helps Sheriff's Department establish criminal patterns and increases the potential for the return of property. Keep the non-emergency number for the Sheriff's Department handy: (817)-884-1213. This is a 24-hour line. If the situation is an emergency, or a member is not sure go ahead and call 911. Never worry about "bothering" the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's department is there for residents. Sheriff's Deputies check on suspicious circumstances and persons every day. If suspicions prove to be unfounded, do not be embarrassed. It might help stop a potential crime, save a life or prevent an injury. Think about what could happen if a member fails to act.

Whether calling 911 to report an emergency or the non-emergency number, remember to stay calm. The operator will ask about the problem. Give a specific and brief answer (i.e., a man is breaking into a car or there is a fire at my neighbor's house).

Next, answer the operator's questions and know that help is on the way. The operator is trained to get information in the order it needs to be sent to the Deputy. Provide a location and a description of what is occurring or who is involved. Again, be as specific as possible (but brief).

Do not hang up until the operator says to.

Do not attempt to apprehend a person who is committing the crime.

Do not attempt to investigate suspicious activity. Personal safety may be at risk if trying to intervene.

The Sheriff's Department needs information — not action.

When the Sheriff's Department Deputies arrive, do not immediately rush onto the scene. Stay in a safe place and tell the operator where the Deputy can make contact.

WHEN SHOULD YOU CALL THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT?

Use common sense! Not every person who comes into the neighborhood is a criminal. There are some basic rules of safety and common sense that come into play.

1. Be alert. Know what is going on in the area.
2. Be aware. Consider the circumstances. For instance, is he going door-to-door putting fliers on doors and walking off? Or, might the criminal be the person taking his time knocking on the door (while nervously glancing around), and looking into windows as he goes house-to-house? Who would the Sheriff's Department be called on?
3. If something does not feel right, it probably is not. Everyone has had that feeling. Too many times though, officers have taken crime reports from people who ignored that "funny" feeling that something was not right. If a member is that suspicious, go ahead and call the police.

LEARN TO BE OBSERVANT

The most valuable help a member can give an officer is information to identify suspects or suspect vehicles. That and facts about the crime or suspicious circumstance are the two main components of an investigation. Keep a notepad handy to write down the facts.

Here are some important details to focus on:

Person –Sex, Race, Age, Height/Weight, Hair Color, Eye Color, Hat, Shirt/Pants, Glasses, Shoes, Coat, Tattoos, Jewelry, Scars, Complexion and Facial hair

Vehicle –License plate, Color, No. of doors, Model/year (Chevrolet, Ford, etc.) Body damage, Custom features, Stickers, Direction of travel.

This seems like too much information to digest, do not worry. By making it a habit to be aware of people and cars around every day, observation will become second nature.

Be mindful, in the era we are currently in, most phones have a camera, take a picture if it safe to do so.

CIRCUMSTANCE POSSIBLE CRIME

Door-to-door sales person is seen going--
to the rear of a home or apartment.

burglary or theft

Waiting/loitering in front of home
or closed business.

burglary or theft

Forcing entry into home, business or car.

burglary or theft

Person running, especially if something of
value is carried

suspect fleeing

Large amount of human traffic to/from
residence on a regular basis.

a drug, vice or fence
Operation

Person screaming

rape or assault

Person looking into parked cars
especially if carrying light

car thief, car
burglar

Person loitering around school, parks,
secluded area, parking lot

sex offender,
pedophile

Person offering items for sale.
in parking lot, road-side

selling stolen items

Person repeatedly driving through area.
Delivery man with "wrong address" or
asked if another person lives at location

burglary, theft "
suspect or scam
artist

Car being driven slowly or with lights off

casing area; eluding
Police

Parked car with occupants

"look-outs"
Burglary/theft

Cars being loaded with valuables

burglary or theft

Moving van or other vehicle being loaded
at a residence

burglary or theft

HOME SECURITY:

Always keep in mind personal safety when reading and implementing these or other crime prevention tips. Do not do anything that may hinder or prevent a person's ability to escape a dangerous situation. Make sure all family members are aware of all safety features in place and that they know how to quickly overcome them if they need to get out in an emergency.

Look at the home exterior. In an emergency, can the Sheriff's Department, fire department or an ambulance find the home quickly from the street or other entrance? One of the top complaints of Deputies and other emergency responders is that they cannot easily see address markers at night.

At night, try and find the address markers of the houses in the neighborhood. Now, imagine how a speeding ambulance trying to locate a heart patient, or an officer looking for a burglary in progress does it. Be sure that the address can be seen. Use large numbers that are contrasting or reflective. The numbers should be no less than 5 inches in height. If there is an alley behind the residence, post the address on the rear entrance. Also, trim plants away from address markers for good visibility.

Lighting is another major problem. Can a prowler, burglar or vandal hide in the shadows around the property? One of the most cost-effective features that can be placed around the home is exterior lighting. Lighting has proven to be an effective crime deterrent. Effective lighting should:

1. Illuminate as many sides of the house as possible.
2. Be placed under the eaves of the house or shielded with a protective covering to prevent tampering.
3. Kept on at night (consider motion lighting as well). An inexpensive timer or photoelectric cell will automatically turn lights on at dusk and off at dawn.

Do not overlook the sides and rear of the property. Could a criminal hide behind shrubbery or use a tree to gain access to the roof? The security of the home depends on visibility. Ornamental plant growth should be kept well-trimmed, especially around doors and windows where a person could hide to attack or break into the home. In planning the landscape, consider discouraging intruders from window areas by planting sticker-type bushes

(i.e., roses, holly, pyracantha, etc.). Keep trees trimmed. This is not only good for the life of the tree, but also eliminates hiding places. Cut away branches that allow roof access to the home. Trim trees from the bottom up and shrubbery from the top down. A person should be able to walk under the trees and see over the bushes.

Is there a privacy fence that obstructs a neighbors' view of the backyard? Are fence cross-rails on the outside giving a step-ladder type entry into the backyard? What about the gate; is it secured? Privacy fencing is a disadvantage to home security since it provides concealment. Other forms of fencing would eliminate this disadvantage, but here are some methods to offset this problem:

1. Remove every other slate along the sides of the fence to allow greater visibility. Use chain-link instead of wood.
2. Plant a sticker-type bush or vine to cover the outside of the fence to discourage climbers (i.e., thorny vines or pyracantha).
3. Padlock the gate so that entry is restricted.

SECURITY INSIDE YOUR HOME

When there is a knock at the front door, look before opening it? If there is a peep-hole use it. If not, install a wide-angle peep-hole with a 180-degree angle. This will help to view not only who is in front of the door, but anyone who might be hiding to the side of the doorway. What type of door is it? Is it solid to the core or hollow? How thick is it? Is it metal? Is the door in good condition? Not only the front door, but all exterior doors and the door between the house and garage should be solid core construction or heavy-gauge metal with a minimum thickness of 1-3/8 inches. A thinner door may give if pried or kicked.

If the door is the panel-type, make sure the joints have not deteriorated or come loose. Check the strike plate on the door frame. (That is the small metal plate surrounding the bolt on the edge of the door.) Are the screws short? The metal strike plate should be secured with screws that are a

minimum of 3 ½ inches long. Better yet, install a heavier gauge security strike plate with 3 ½ inch screws. The screws should reach beyond the frame into the structural 2' x 4's.

Take a good look at the door lock. Is it a simple lock in the knob (such as one on a bathroom door)? Is the latch spring-loaded? The simple lock in the knob only offers convenience and privacy. It can be easily defeated by intruders with a screw-driver or even a credit card! A more secure lock is needed for better security. The best is a deadbolt lock with these safety features:

- Single cylinder• Minimum one-inch bolt throw
- Rotating cylinder guard
- Five-pin tumbler
- Hardened steel interlocking screws.

When there are a pair of double doors, at least one door must be made inactive to make them secure. To do this, flush bolts should be installed at both the top and bottom of the inactive door. The flush bolts should be secured into metal strike plates. A deadbolt may then be added to the active door. Other types of doors in the home also must be adequately secured. Sliding glass doors are particularly vulnerable to attacks. Secure sliding doors to keep them from sliding or being pried up and out of the track.

Here are a few suggestions:

A Pinning: Drill a slightly downward sloping hole through the center or bottom part of the sliding door frame. Insert a straight pin (not a screw). This will help keep the door from being pried open.

B. Track Screws: To keep the door from being lifted out of the track, place two or three screws into the top track. Leave the screw heads out far enough to allow just enough room for the door to open and close. The screws will take up the extra space needed for lifting.

C. Charlie Bar: Commercially available, these bars are bolted onto the moveable glass frame and have a hinge. When the door is not in use, the bar is lowered and connected to a small metal grip that is mounted to the frame. This also will help keep the door from being pried open.

Remember to check the door hinges on all exterior doors (garage door too!). If hinges are exposed to the outside, make sure they are "pinned" in place to prevent removal. Non-removable hinge pins also are commercially available. Having the biggest lock on the block, can still be easily bypassed when a burglar taps out the hinges!

Because windows are easy entrance points, secondary locks need to be added for extra security. First, determine what type of windows they are (single hung, double hung, sliding, aluminum frame, wooden frame, casement, jalousie, etc.). There are many different types of secondary locks for windows. They can be pinned (like sliding doors) or have key locks attached. However, key locks on windows are discouraged because they will hinder escape routes in a fire.

Now take a walk through the garage. The door from the garage to the house should meet the standards for doors and locks previously discussed. What about the actual garage door? Is it in good condition? Is it metal or wooden? Does it have windows? Is there a garage door opener? If so, does the cord release to the opener hang in front of the windows? Is there a sliding bolt on the door that goes through the rail?

Most garage doors are difficult to secure due to their construction. Here are a few ideas

- Remove any knobs or rings from an automatic garage door release cord. If they are left in place, an intruder can break out the window to pull it or use a coat hanger slipped through the top of the door (or a crevice) and pull the cord. Then the door will be released from the track. (Note: By removing the knob or ring from the cord it may not be as easily pulled if there is an emergency so have an alternate release plan ready).

- Always Keep the garage door closed and locked. Cover the windows to keep thieves from peering inside. Another option is to place mirrored film over the windows so a burglar will not know if someone is home or gone.

- While on vacation, place a padlock through the track or at the end of the door bolt. Unplug the automatic door opener as well. It is easy for a burglar to drive along the street with a "code-grabber" and simply open the garage door with the touch of a button!

- If the garage door needs to be replaced, consider buying a windowless, metal door. They offer the most security. While standing in the

garage, look up. Is there an attic access? Are there pull-down stairs? This also needs to be secured. A case hardened, hinging clasp with a good padlock will help secure this.

OTHER SECURITY INFORMATION

Alarms offer extra security, but they are no substitute for good locks and other hardware. Keep in mind that alarms do not keep people out of your home. Although they can be a good deterrent to burglars, alarms are designed to notify an alarm company first. Then, the company notifies the police. An alarm with an audible, exterior siren or bell will add additional security, as this will alert anyone in the neighborhood when it sounds. For additional information on alarm systems, see the last page of this booklet. With all the alarm companies that are in the area, take the time to research for one that has a good reputation and also can offer references if requested. Pay close attention to the quality of the service and products offered.

Padlocks:

Do not buy a cheap lock that may not offer the protection needed. The most common method of defeating a padlock is to cut the shackle with bolt cutters or break it with a pry bar. Minimum Standards (exterior lock):

1. Case hardened steel with a 3/8 -inch shackle
2. Locking mechanism in the toe and heel Be sure to record and then file off the "key code numbers" from all padlocks. This number (usually on the bottom of a lock) is used to make keys for that lock. If a thief gets the code number, they can make a key and simply enter at their convenience. Where are the keys?

It defeats the purpose of locks if the location of the keys are not known. If someone recently purchased or rented a home or apartment where the locks re-keyed? If not, think about what could happen if the former occupants still have keys! What about the garage door opener? Is it in the unlocked car that is sitting in the driveway (or worse yet on the street)? Was there on left in a car that was sent for repairs? The garage door opener is a convenient, electrical key granting access to the home. Before leaving for vacation, notify trusted neighbors and the police the form by phone. While away, an officer will check the home at random.

For convenience, a vacation check list follows.

DO

- ☐ Lock all doors, including the garage door and overhead doors.
- ☐ Lock all windows, including basement and garage windows.
- ☐ Cancel all deliveries (newspapers, mail, bottled water, etc.) or have mail and newspapers picked up by a family member/neighbor.
- ☐ Have family/neighbor pick up any handbills/trash.
- ☐ Arrange to have the lawn mowed
- ☐ Adjust blinds or draperies.
- ☐ Place at least two interior lights on timers in separate rooms.
- ☐ Secure all exterior valuables (ladders, mowers, etc.).
- ☐ Secure items such as jewelry, furs, cameras, credit cards and checks.
- ☐ Arrange to have friend/family house sit while away.
- ☐ Have a neighbor park in the driveway and report suspicious activity to the Sheriff's Department.
- ☐ Make sure a friend/family member has the travel plan and emergency contact information
- ☐ Leave a radio on near the doorway (tune it to a talk station).
- ☐ Turn down or turn off the ringer on the phone.

☐ Put the house on the police vacation watch.

☐ Make sure someone will take care of pets.

DO NOT:

- ☐ Leave notes outside indicating absence.
- ☐ Hide keys under mats, in lights, flower pots, fake rocks, etc.
- ☐ Leave a message on the answering machine that says no one is there.

Consider setting up a security closet. If there are valuables, such as silver or jewelry, build a place to keep them safe. The interior walls of an existing closet can be reinforced (it is easy to cut through wall board). Install a metal or solid core wood door with a one-inch deadbolt. Use only a single-cylinder deadbolt with the flip latch on the inside. Make sure the hinges are pinned or nonremovable. Use a reinforced strike plate with 3 ½ screws. This closet also could be used for temporary personal safety if someone breaks in while at home.

If possible, keep a cordless phone or cell phone in the closet to call 911. Another good idea is a metal safe. There are two basic safes. A fire safe protects against heat, not necessarily theft. A valuables safe is heavy duty and protects against break-in, but is not heat proof. Combination fire/valuables safes are available. Buy quality products! A safe can be put inside a security closet and be bolted to the floor or mounted inside a wall for extra security.

Tarrant County Sheriff's Department

Dispatch: 817-884-1213

South Patrol: 817-884-2270

North Patrol: 817-238-4200

Emergencies: 911