

Neighborhood Watch Summer 2019 Update

School is out and summer is nearly upon us! Recently I had the opportunity to ask Chief Tony Holloway of the St. Petersburg Police Department his number one crime prevention tip. His response was simple: lock your vehicles. Auto burglary is almost entirely a crime of opportunity, committed by individuals who systematically and quickly try door handles. We have had this happen in Harbor Isle and historically the rise in our vehicle burglaries coincides with holidays and summer. Summer also means leaving our homes to travel. To keep our neighborhood safe during this time when crime is at its peak, please do the following, as recommended by the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC).

- Ask a trusted family member, neighbor, or friend to keep a watchful eye on your home and have the mail and paper deliveries held while you are away.
- Put lights on timers to give the impression that someone is home.
- Motion sensor lights around your home are a good way to thwart off a potential burglary.
- Keep your yard groomed to give the appearance that someone is home.
- Don't post on social media that you are leaving town and make sure that family members are not posting this info either. Wait to post photos until after you have returned.
- Lock all vehicles, windows and doors, including your garage door. Unlocked doors are open invitations to intruders. If you have guests or visiting family members, remind them to lock their vehicles too.
- Never leave valuables in your vehicle, especially in plain sight.
- Never keep an extra set of keys or title and original registration in your vehicle.
- Never hesitate to call police at 727-893-7780 if you suspect suspicious activity. Call 911 if you feel in danger or witness a crime.

Finally, because we share our beautiful area with the occasional coyote or alligator, here are a few reminders from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. Keep cats indoors as they are at high risk of being preyed upon if allowed to roam free, and, always walk dogs on a leash. If you encounter an alligator that you believe poses a threat to people or pets, call the nuisance alligator hotline at 866-FWC-GATOR. Please be aware that nuisance alligators are killed, not relocated. If you witness any other wildlife acting strangely or aggressively, call the FFWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-3922.

Some telephone numbers to keep handy:

St. Petersburg Police Non-Emergency: [727-893-7780](tel:727-893-7780)

Pinellas County Animal Services: [727-582-2600](tel:727-582-2600)

CALL 911 in ANY EMERGENCY

Neighborhood Watch is all about getting to know your neighbors and looking out for one another. If you are not already a member, I encourage you to join the HIHOA and enjoy the many fun activities sponsored by our neighborhood Home Owners Association as well as all Neighborhood Watch alerts via email.

Wishing you a safe and wonderful summer!

Diane Lajoie

Harbor Isle Neighborhood Watch Coordinator