

Crime Prevention Tips for Avalon Property Owners

- ✓ Keep all exterior and garage doors, gates, and windows closed and locked. Criminals often access property through the invitation of open windows or doors.
- ✓ Keep the exterior perimeter of your home well lighted and visible.
- ✓ Use timers or photo-electric switches to turn on exterior lights or install motion-sensor lights. Install lights high enough to prevent easy removal of the light bulbs. Always replace burned out bulbs in a timely manner.
- ✓ Keep shrubbery trimmed and away from walkways, entrances and windows.
- ✓ Create the illusion that you are home with lights and a radio on timers.
- ✓ If you are away on vacation, contact the Constable Patrol to request a vacation watch (713-755-7628) and ask a neighbor to pick up newspapers, mail and other delivered items. You may consider canceling newspapers and mail delivery while you are away.
- ✓ Keep some shades up or drapes open to maintain a "normal" and lived-in appearance to your home.
- ✓ Don't advertise your absence. Never leave a message on your answering machine that you are away and if possible, don't tell household employees that you will be away.
- ✓ Never open the front door to anyone whom you don't know. Many burglars pose as repairmen and drive legitimate-looking commercial vehicles.
- ✓ Demand credentials and phone for verification before admitting utility or repair workers.
- ✓ Don't hide keys outside your home; burglars know where to look. Rather, leave an extra key with a neighbor who is frequently home.
- ✓ Mark your personal property to make it difficult for burglars to sell it and to make it easy to trace it back to you as the rightful owner.
- ✓ Photograph or video tape all valuables and have them appraised.
- ✓ Contact your alarm company to add the Constable's Patrol phone number designated as the emergency number to be called in case your alarm goes off. On average, the response time for the Patrol is far better than that of the Houston Police Department. In addition, there is never a penalty for a false alarm. HPD charges \$25.00 per call after three false alarms.
- ✓ Keep your vehicles locked and off of the street. If you keep your cars in your driveway, keep the area well lit. Never leave anything tempting (i.e. a wallet, purse, cell phone, CD's, camera) in open view inside your car. If you must leave some valuables in the car, conceal them. Several vehicles in Avalon Place each year are vandalized or involved in hit and run accidents when they are left on the street. Vehicles are safest behind closed gates or in a closed garage.
- ✓ If you think someone is following you, do not go home. You can call the constable patrol to meet you near your home or drive to a "safe" and public place such as a police station or fire station.
- ✓ Watch out for each other. Know your neighbors and watch out for their property as you would your own. Make sure that your neighbors know when you are leaving town and leave emergency instructions or contact phone numbers with them.
- ✓ A home alarm system is an effective deterrent and you may receive an insurance premium discount.
- ✓ Contact the Houston Police Department Community Service Division (713-308-3200) to find out how to pass a home security inspection that may certify you for a 5% reduction in your homeowner insurance premium.
- ✓ You can register your bicycles with the city by taking your bike to a City of Houston fire station. This will make it difficult for a thief to sell your bike to a pawnshop and will make your property traceable and easier to return.