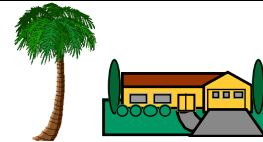


# Cypress Isles News



The official newsletter of the Cypress Isles Homeowners Association  
**May 2015 Edition – Published Quarterly since 2001**  
<http://www.CypressIsles.org>

(Reproduced from the May 2015 edition)

## Special Crime Prevention Section

*No, we don't have a crime problem and we want to keep it that way. Here's what works and what doesn't.*

Thank goodness we have almost no violent crimes in Cypress Isles. Our main worries are theft from cars, theft from garages, occasional vandalism, and rare but scary home break-ins. True, we have speeders, but dealing with speeders is tricky because you need a description of the car and hopefully a license number to file a report. Otherwise, speeding cars are just annoying.

So now that summer is upon us, we are devoting most of this issue to crime prevention. According to Cypress Isles President and retired NJ police chief Harold Engold, Waterford Lakes has a low crime rate within Sector 2 and one of the lowest crime rates in Orange County. We would like to keep it that way.

In this issue you can read about easy ways to prevent crimes, the importance of outdoor lighting, and what to do if you see something suspicious or notice that a crime has happened. There is also a hard-nosed look at police patrolling and a literary tour of our Neighborhood Watch program.

So sit by a window where you can peer out between the venetian blinds from time to time and read on...

*Dennis Horazak  
Neighborhood Reporter*

## Homeowners Prevent Crime Best

*Lights on, garage door closed, car doors locked, garage remote out of your car, and more...*

Criminals need desire, ability, and opportunity in order to operate. Homeowners can't do much about the first two, but they can reduce or eliminate opportunities by following crime-prevention practices, such as these:

- Use outdoor lighting to deter criminals. (Read "Throwing the Light on Crime" below.)
- Know your neighbors next door and across the street, and know your Block Captains (Read "Cypress Isles Neighborhood Watch" below.)
- Trim shrubs away from windows to deny burglars a hiding place.
- Close and lock garage doors and doors between garage and home.

- Lock your vehicle if left outside, and do not leave anything of value, such as a wallet or a garage door opener, in the vehicle. In Waterford Place recently, a thief broke into a locked car in the driveway, used the garage door opener to get into the garage, walked into the house through the unlocked door in the garage, took keys from the counter, and stole the new car from the garage.

The Orange County Sheriff's Office offers free security checks for homeowners, and they are willing to discuss safety and crime prevention at neighborhood board meetings. Contact Harold Engold if interested.

*Lt. Harold Engold, Haledon New Jersey Police Department (Ret.)*

## **Throwing the Light on Crime**

As part of your ongoing Crime Prevention effort or to help make your neighborhood safer, you should have adequate lighting.

- Lights are a deterrent to crime. Effective lighting can:
- Make it easier to see other people and vehicles.
- Eliminate dark hiding spots in areas used by residents & their guests.
- Discourage intruders from trying to go into private or restricted areas.
- Prevent Crime!!
- Strong lights pointed in the right directions are a key part of reducing vandalism and graffiti.

Destructive people like to see what they're doing, but they don't want others to see them. So, light up the areas other people can easily see, and don't light the areas that are hidden from public view.

Lighting systems themselves can be targets of vandalism. If the lights can be tampered with, they won't be effective in preventing crime. Put protective coverings on lights so the bulbs can't be broken and hide the wires so they can't be cut.

A good way to examine your lighting is to think like a criminal. Go through your neighborhood at night and think of how you could break-in. Are there other people around who may see a burglar attempting to break-in, and would they call the Sheriff's Office? You may be able to think of better lighting solutions by looking at the weaknesses of your existing system.

Do you check your streetlights frequently at night to make sure they are still working properly? Do you report them? Or just let the other guy do it?

Lighting may be the single, most cost-effective way to deter crime.

*Cathy Mullenix, Area Coordinator NW OCSO Sector 3, Zone 30-34 (2006)*

## How to Report a Crime

*Sometimes it's good to be "Mrs. Kravitz." If you see something, do this:*

If you see suspicious activity, a crime in progress, or notice that a crime has happened:

1. Report a crime in progress or a crime that has just occurred by calling **911** first, then contacting your Block Captain. For emergency incidents, such as crime in progress, the alert chain can be done via phone.

If the crime or incident is not an emergency, you can call the Orange County Sheriff Non-emergency number – **(407) 836-HELP (4357)**, but the preferred method is to file a report online. The Orange County Sheriff's Office is now offering different online services to assist the public. <http://www.ocso.com/Fileapolicereport/tabid/126/Default.aspx> allows you to report certain types of crime online, such as lost property, theft, vandalism, and vehicle burglary. The report should include what happened, when it happened, point of entry, and any suspect information.

Online reporting is preferred by OCSO because information about the crime is accurately submitted as written text instead of spoken through a possibly bad phone connection. Filing a police report is important because it helps OCSO keep statistics on neighborhood, which helps them decide where to dispatch patrols.

After you complete and submit your report you will:

- See the words: "Your report has been submitted" showing proof that your report is complete.
  - Be given a temporary case number.
  - Be able to print an unofficial copy of the report to keep for your records.
  - Be sent a confirmation and an unofficial copy of your report by e-mail so long as you provide a valid email address,
2. Finally, email or call your Block Captain with any information – what happened, when it happened, point of entry, and any suspect information. Email is preferred, since all the details are right there, rather than depending on notes taken over the phone, possibly resulting in inaccurate information. If the Block Captain is not home, email or call the Coordinator.
- The Block Captain / Coordinators are not armed and are not the police of the neighborhood.
  - The telephone chain is for emergencies (up to 9 PM). Email can be sent any time.
  - Do not use the telephone or email chain for domestic problems.
  - The residents --not the Block Captain, and not the Coordinator --should call the Sheriff's Office themselves to report an incident.
  - Please tell your Block Captain if you change your phone number or e-mail address.

*Sandy Horazak  
Cypress Isles Neighborhood Watch Coordinator*

## Police Patrols: Myth and Reality

*Do police patrols reduce crime? Not necessarily.*

Mention crime and most people call for more police patrols. Cypress Isles had off-duty patrols from 2000 through 2007 but discontinued them in 2008 because of recurring absences and the lack of effect on speeding or occasional property crime. Jade Forest used to hire off-duty patrols but discontinued the practice because officers would not provide reports of their patrolling.

But the real question is whether patrolling prevents crime. The answer seems to be that it does not.

### *KCPD Study: Police Patrols Don't Prevent Crime*

At a recent meeting of the Waterford Lakes Neighborhood Council, Harold Engold and Dennis Horazak summarized the results of the *2010 Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment* to determine the effectiveness of patrols. In the Kansas City study, normal patrols were maintained in one area, patrols were doubled or tripled in another area, and patrols were eliminated in a third area. The study concluded that:

“Interestingly, citizens did not notice the difference when the level of patrol was changed. What is more, increasing or decreasing the level of police patrol had no significant effect on resident and commercial burglaries, auto thefts, larcenies involving auto accessories, robberies, or vandalism—crimes traditionally considered to be prevented by random, highly visible police patrol.”

Does this mean that the police are ineffective against crime? Certainly not! Police excel at responding to calls, tracking and arresting criminals, and solving crimes. But random patrolling – especially with criminals who learn how to avoid the patrols – is one of the least effective uses of precious police resources.

So the next time you're thinking about having more police patrols, think instead about how you can prevent crimes yourself. (See “Homeowners Prevent Crime Best” above.)

*More information about the KCPD study is available at  
<http://www.policefoundation.org/content/kansas-city-preventive-patrol-experiment>*

## Cypress Isles Neighborhood Watch

*The best crime deterrent is to get to know your neighbors, especially those in our Neighborhood Watch.*

### **Coordinator:**

Sandy Horazak  
sanden@bellsouth.net  
407-207-6557

### **Back-Up Coordinator:**

Cookie Symons  
minnieland@aol.com  
407-273-5460

Back in 2000 Cookie Symons and Myron Davis contacted the Orange County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) to start the Cypress Isles neighborhood watch program, and it has been continually operating ever since. Our neighborhood watch was formed after a car was stolen from a garage, a car was broken-into, and a yard was damaged from someone driving through it.

Our neighborhood watch was started primarily as a crime prevention tool; to provide information to our residents on good home security techniques; how to help be the eyes and ears of the community by looking out for one another; and how to report suspicious activity.

Here's how the Neighborhood Watch Program works:

- Cypress Isles is divided into 14 zones (blocks). Each block has a Block Captain, and the Block Captains are coordinated by the Watch Coordinator. The coordinators and captains are not armed and are not the police of the neighborhood. By law and by common sense we do not have, nor do we want, any George Zimmermans.
- Any resident who sees suspicious activity, a crime in progress, or notices that a crime has happened contacts OCSO first and then his or her Block Captain. (Read "How to Report a Crime.")
- The Block Captain contacts the Watch Coordinator, who relays the information to the other Block Captains.
- The other Block Captains inform the people in their blocks.

Our neighborhood watch has an active email chain to keep our neighbors informed of recent criminal or vandalism activity in the community. We also send out alerts of scam artists in the area going door-to-door as phony security company reps, or leaving flyers of a suspicious nature on doors. We also watch out for our 4-legged friends and family and send out email notices of a lost or found pet! All Cypress Isles Neighborhood Watch email alerts are posted on our website - [www.cypressisles.org](http://www.cypressisles.org), and are shared with adjoining neighborhoods.

Cypress Isles has never had to use "phone chain" for serious and imminent alerts. Our residents e-mail alerts to block captains about occasional break-ins, vandalisms, or lost dogs. Our block captains strongly encourage residents to report their incidents to OCSO.

A Neighborhood Watch gives neighbors the feeling that they're not alone, that there is a network to go to when they see something or when things happen. The bad guys like to divide and conquer, with homeowners feeling fearful and alone. The Watch helps to connect the neighborhood, which helps to frustrate the bad guys.

*Would you like to be get involved with our neighborhood watch? Contact any block captain, the coordinator, or any Cypress Isles board member. All contact information is listed in our quarterly Cypress Isles News, and on our website: [www.cypressisles.org](http://www.cypressisles.org)*

