

# Basic Home Security Dos & Don'ts

By Ryan Thompson, Pine Knoll Shores Police Chief

Home security should be important to all of us. Our homes contain the most important aspects of our lives, and we should make protecting them a priority. I often have people tell me that they do not lock the doors to their home or their vehicle, and I always give them the same response: Everyone should always lock their home and vehicle doors, no matter what time of day it is. We all work hard to acquire our prized possessions, and we love our families. We should take every step we can to make our homes as secure as possible. It is not a secret that Pine Knoll Shores is the paradise of Carteret County. This also means that it is not a secret that we have nice homes, many of which are empty for the majority of the year. Fortunately, there are some easy steps to take to make your home more secure:

- Make sure each exterior door to your home has a deadbolt. Deadbolts can't be pried open with a credit card like a simple door handle latch can.
- Notify town officials if a street light in your neighborhood burns out. Street lights are an amazingly simple crime prevention tool.
- Exterior lights with motion sensors are a cost effective way to alert you or your neighbors that there is someone (or something) on your property. In addition, they are a great way to make thieves believe someone is home even if nobody is.
- Lock your vehicle doors, and don't keep valuables in plain sight. I can't overstate this one enough. Don't keep items such as wallets, expensive jewelry, electronics or firearms inside your vehicle while it is parked. Far too many firearms are stolen from unlocked vehicles—and this should not happen.
- If you are going out of town or are a second-home owner, consider signing up for our residential security check list. You can sign up in person at the public safety building or by downloading the form from the town's website at townofpks.com. Click on Resources/Document Library/Police to find the form. Contact Natalie Gibble at 247-2268 or ngibble@townofpks.com with questions.
- If you are interested in a home alarm system, shop around. There are fantastic home alarm solutions available that do not require contracts and are inexpensive.
- Get to know your neighbors. Take the time to meet your neighbors and encourage each other to look out for suspicious activity, people or vehicles in your neighborhood.
- Do not put boxes for large televisions or expensive electronics at the street for trash pickup. This is basically an advertisement for thieves and a roadmap to who has the nicest stuff in the neighborhood.
- Glass panels next to your entry doors provide an easier opportunity to break into your home. Someone can easily break the glass panel and reach inside to unlock your door.

Criminals often choose the homes they are going to break into by driving around during daylight hours. Last year we arrested several suspects for breaking into homes during the day. They told

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## PUBLIC SAFETY

### POLICE

During February, there were 3 arrests; 13 911 hang-ups; 4 alarm activations; 1 animal call; 6 disturbance calls; 17 assist Fire/EMS calls; 1 motor vehicle collision; 14 mutual aid calls; 100 traffic stops; 21 citations issued (3 speeding, 1 stop sign/stop light, 4 registration/inspection, 3 license revoked/expired, 4 other traffic violations, 5 narcotics violations, 1 alcohol violation); 10 beach patrols; 331 business checks; 390 foot patrols; and 249 residence checks. Police personnel participated in 284 training hours. Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) worked 64 hours.

### FIRE AND EMS

During February, responders handled 9 false alarms or false calls, 2 fires, 1 good intent call, 1 hazardous condition (no fire) call and 12 rescue and emergency medical service incidents. Personnel participated in 521 training hours.

**REMINDER:** Lock your doors, especially your vehicles, and don't leave valuables in sight. Report suspicious people or vehicles to dispatch (726-1911) so that the police can be notified. You are not "bothering" the police if you call to report something that doesn't look right. They prefer to assess the situation rather than find out after the fact that you had noticed something and didn't report it. Alert citizens are an asset to the community.

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