

We all have a lot on our minds these days: job security, home values, the economy. There are lots of things going on that can distract even the most diligent resident from things going on around us. The Chapel Grove Homeowner's Association would like to take a chance to remind all homeowners about one thing we want to make sure remains on our minds: Personal Safety and Security.

No one wants to think about criminal activity in our community. That's something that happens somewhere else to other people we don't know, right? Don't be so sure. Several communities have noted increases in some crimes in recent months. Recent strings of thefts, burglaries, and robberies, even during daylight hours, have community associations on the alert. So, what can Chapel Grove residents do to help combat criminal activity?

Get to know your neighbors and be aware of your surroundings.

- Watch activity in the neighborhood.
- Pay special attention to vacant houses near you.
- Report emergencies, including a potential crime in progress, to 9-1-1.
- Immediately report any other suspicious activity to Anne Arundel County Police Department Western District. If you aren't sure, report it anyway, taking note of:
 - How many people are involved? Age? Gender? Race? Clothing? Cars? License plates?
 - Contact AAPD:
8273 Telegraph Road
Odenton, MD. 21113
Phone: (410) 222-6155
- Be aware of activity in this and surrounding communities: Review AAPD press releases, including criminal activity in the county: <http://www.aacounty.org/Police/PressReleases/index.cfm>
 - Use the above link to sign up for email alerts from the AAPD.

Be mindful of how your home looks to strangers while you are home AND while you are away.

- Don't let newspapers and mail delivery pile up.
- Keep your lawn mowed and planting beds tended.
- Don't leave recycling or trash bins out after collection.
 - When you get new toys and equipment, be careful when disposing of the boxes.
 - Take the time to break down the boxes and only put them out just prior to your designated pick up day.
- Don't leave expensive equipment or toys out any longer than necessary.
- Expecting a package? Try to arrange to have a neighbor pick it up and store it for you if no one will be home to accept it.
- Replace burned out bulbs in outdoor lights. Install and USE automatic timers and/or motion sensors.

Secure your home and car at all times.

- Keep doors and windows secured, both in the house AND the car.
 - Don't forget to lock the door leading into the house from the garage! Garage doors can be a weak point in home security, especially if you have a garage door opener in your car.
 - Consider using a steering wheel locking device on all vehicles.
- Don't leave valuables in the car. If you must keep them in the car, keep them locked in the trunk. Phones and GPS systems have been particularly keen targets of late.
- Use your alarm system. Most homes in the community have security systems installed and activated, but the systems can't help if they aren't turned on. Test systems regularly.

Get a free security survey.

- The Crime Prevention Unit is available to provide citizens of Anne Arundel County information about how to prevent burglaries at their homes and businesses.
- The Crime Prevention Unit is also available to come to your Anne Arundel County home or business and conduct a free security survey.
- You may contact the Crime Prevention unit at (410) 222-0042 to request these services