



THORNTON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SAFETY INFO

Hello Neighbor!

In an effort to improve the safety of our neighborhood, the **Thornton Park Neighborhood Association's Neighborhood Watch & Safety Committee** has compiled this list of resources and information. We hope you find this useful!

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OUR TOP TEN SAFETY SUGGESTIONS

1. Lock your house doors
2. Lock your car doors
3. Don't leave valuables in visible locations in your vehicle
4. Keep your bicycles in a secure location (inside your house, shed, or fenced-in backyard)
5. Install a security camera or doorbell camera
6. Lock your house doors
7. Lock your car doors
8. Walk you neighborhood periodically to get to know your neighbors and surroundings
9. Report any suspicious activity to the Police by calling 911
10. Lock your house doors and lock your car doors!

SAFETY SUGGESTIONS FROM OPD

Lauri Brooks, Orlando Police Department Neighborhood Watch Specialist, met with us as part of our Neighborhood Watch certification process, and discussed several useful tactics residents should use:

1. If you're outside, acknowledge people you walk past, or see from your porch. That way, they know you're watching, and it helps build relationships between neighbors. It also makes it easier to spot someone who is not a resident.
2. Take note of suspicious behavior, such as walking constantly up and down the street, checking car doors, walking up driveways, etc. Record height, weight, clothing, gender, race, and activity. We must be the eyes and ears on the streets.
3. Never approach a suspicious person.
4. AFTER calling 911, send out a group text or post to Nextdoor, but always call 911 first.

PROTECTING YOUR MAIL AND PACKAGES FROM “PORCH PIRATES”

Here is a list of suggestions to protect your packages from theft from a 2018 CNN article:

Track your packages

The US Postal Service, FedEx and UPS all have systems to track your packages from the retailer to your doorstep. All three use tracking numbers that can be used to figure out where the item is and when it should be delivered to your home.

With the postal service's [Informed Delivery](#) app, you can have email or text alerts about packages sent to you automatically, and you can post delivery instructions for the mail carrier if you won't be home when the package gets there. UPS' [My Choice](#) program and FedEx's [Delivery Manager](#) offer similar options.

Amazon helps you keep [track of your packages](#), too, with tracking information that can be found in your order details.

Deliver to your office or neighbor

Another surefire way to thwart porch pirates is to not have packages delivered to your home at all. Many people have holiday packages delivered to their workplace or to a trusted neighbor nearby who'll be at home when the item arrives.

FedEx will hold your package for pickup at one of its FedEx Office locations or at Walgreens. Packages sent via UPS can be picked up at a UPS facility, diverted to a UPS Store or even delivered on another day that's more convenient for you.

Invite the delivery person in

Maybe you can't stay home during the day when those precious packages arrive -- hey, you gotta work to pay for those things, right? Sending stuff to your workplace isn't allowed, and you're not tight enough with your neighbors for deliveries to be left with them.

But there are a few other options if you have an Amazon Prime membership. Amazon's Key Smart Lock Kit allows you to remotely unlock your door so a package can be [dropped off inside your home](#). Or use Amazon's Key In-Car Delivery, which allows a delivery person to [put a package in your back seat or trunk](#) when it's parked on the street.

What to do if your package doesn't show up

So you got an alert saying your package was delivered but it's nowhere to be found. You can file a police report -- and then also do this:

-- If it was delivered by the **US Postal Service**, you can fill out a [Missing Mail Search Request](#). The main drawback with this, though, is you have to wait seven business days after the package was supposed to arrive before you can take advantage of this option.

-- If it was delivered by **UPS**, the company encourages you to [contact the sender to start a claim](#), because UPS says package senders have the most essential claim documents, like invoices, receipts, etc.

-- If it was delivered by **FedEx**, there's an online form to [fill out a claim](#) for a missing package.

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Amazon's ["Where's My Stuff?"](#) page offers lots of helpful tips on what to do if your package ends up missing.

(Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/26/us/porch-pirates-packages-trnd/index.html>)

There are several different types of mailboxes that will help protect your mail and packages. If your mail box has a lock, use it. Here are photos of ones from around the neighborhood:



INSTALLING A SECURITY CAMERA

Full security systems are also great for protecting your home, but an inexpensive video doorbell may be a more affordable option for you.

For as little as \$27.99, you can install a video doorbell that allows you see who is at the door from your smart phone.



Here is a list of the 10 best video doorbells from PC Magazine:

<https://www.pcmag.com/roundup/358684/the-best-video-doorbells>

Video door bells are also useful for sharing pictures of intruders or suspicious persons with the Police, with your neighbors, or on Nextdoor.com.

One good brand of video doorbell is “Ring”. A basic Ring video doorbell costs about \$99.

Ring is owned by Amazon: <https://shop.ring.com/pages/doorbell-cameras>

Ring also has a free website (<https://neighbors.ring.com/c/bQzRhemrm16UNK4xxLSvNA>), where you can see crime reports and trends from the Orlando Police Department for our ZIP code, even if you don’t have a Ring video doorbell. You can also report crimes or suspicious activity on this Ring app, and it will be sent to the Orlando Police Department.

CLOSING YOUR DOOR TO BURGLARIES

The following suggestions come from the Orange County Sheriff's Office:

For any crime to take place, three elements must exist: the criminals desire to commit the crime, the criminal's ability to commit the crime, and the criminal's opportunity to commit the crime. We call this the "crime triangle". The element we have most control over is opportunity. We can control this opportunity through education as well as by taking precautionary measures. Below you will find some residential burglary safety tips. This is not meant to be all inclusive, but rather to assist you with securing your home.

1. Create the illusion that someone is at your house. Leave a TV or radio on in a room where a burglar would most likely break in and/or is visible from the street. Another affordable option are burglary deterrent TV simulators (see attached picture for a sample).
2. Use exterior lighting and motion detectors to minimize places a thief can conceal themselves.
3. Make sure alarm yard signs and window decals are prominently displayed on your property, as they are a good first line of defense to deter potential burglars. Be sure to set your alarm no matter how short or long you will be away from your residence.
4. Make sure all exterior doors have good proper locks. Install 1-inch deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Also, consider an extended strike plate and using 3 inch screws vs. the traditional shorter screws for your strike plate.
5. If you are home and get an unexpected knock at the door, check to see who it is before opening it. Remember to "answer the door, but not open the door" for strangers.
6. Burglar-proof your glass patio doors by setting a pipe or metal bar in the middle bottom track of the door slide. The pipe should be the same length as the track. Optional home security equipment, such as a glass break sensor can also be used to detect when a glass door or window is shattered and alert you of a break-in. Also, there are several companies selling window security film which can be applied to glass windows and doors. If properly applied, they can significantly increase the time it takes a crook to gain entry. A quick internet search of window security film will show you the potential of this type of product.
7. Keep garage doors closed at all times. Even when you're home, it's important to safeguard your belongings and your family. By keeping garage doors closed, it prohibits intruders from gaining access to a door that leads directly into your home.
8. Store cash, jewelry and other valuables in a safe or safety deposit box instead of leaving them lying around the home. Be sure to inventory all of your valuables. The inventory should include a good description of the item (make/model), serial numbers if applicable, as well as photos.

9. Follow the 2 foot, 6 foot rule. Shrubbery should be trimmed down lower than 2 feet, while tree canopies should be trimmed up higher than 6 feet. This will limit places of concealment around your residence.

10. Security cameras are a great addition in crime fighting. Place cameras to capture the ingress and egress to your house. Additionally, place a camera overlooking your driveway and the front of your home to capture any suspicious persons or vehicles.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, IF YOU “SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING”

9PM ROUTINE

Our neighbors in the Lawsona / Fern Creek Neighborhood follow a routine at 9 p.m. each night:

It's
9:00 pm
Time for the
#9pmRoutine

- ✓ Remove anything you want to keep from your car
- ✓ Lock your car doors and trunk and roll up the windows
- ✓ Lock your home - doors, windows, gates and garage
- ✓ Turn on your exterior lights

HIDE it • LOCK it • KEEP it

EYES ON THE STREET

The famous urbanist, Jane Jacobs, proposed the theory of “Eyes on the Street”, which is another way to deter neighborhood crime. In her 1961 book titled, “The Death and Life of Great American Cities,” Jacobs develops her “Eyes on the Street” theory. Her theory advocates the use of high-density mixed-use communities, which are areas with residential and commercial uses, to stimulate street traffic. Jacobs argues that increased street traffic, day and night, not only help communities flourish socially and economically, but also acts as self-policing which deters criminal and anti-social behavior. Jacob’s theory holds that populated areas are less likely to have criminal activity if the criminal believes there is a greater likelihood of him being seen or caught by others.

Jacobs argued that the ability for people to actually see the street from inside their rooms, storefronts, front stoops, and front porches kept neighborhoods safer. Porches can enable watchful eyes and build community as well.

(sources: <http://sppdtoday.blogspot.com/2007/12/eyes-on-street-theory.html>,
<https://www.citylab.com/life/2017/11/front-porches-are-having-a-moment/546176/>)

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

One of the events the Thornton Park Neighborhood Association (TPNA) participates in each year is the National Night Out, usually held in October.

There is usually a block party on James Avenue, including something for kids, such as a bounce house, and something fun for adults, such as popular human hamster wheel that makes snow cones! The TPNA grills hot dogs and hamburgers while neighbors bring side dishes and desserts. OPD Officer Eddie Rosado and Commissioner Patty Sheehan usually stop by, and sometimes there are police dog demonstrations among other things.



National Night Out Thornton Park 2018

The event enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement while building a sense of community.

(Source: <https://natw.org/>)

Being able to recognize who lives in your neighborhood goes a long way in identifying when there is a suspicious person in the area. Be aware of your neighbor's habits, such as when they are generally at work, if they have small children or teenagers, if they are elderly and may need extra assistance from time to time. This awareness will make the neighborhood a much tighter community, and everyone will be able to better prevent crime.

(Source: <https://www.safehome.org/resources/community-safety-guide/>)

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

What is Neighborhood Watch?

It is an organized group of citizens devoted to preventing crime and vandalism within a neighborhood. The Orlando Police Department's Neighborhood Watch Unit conducts neighborhood training sessions to ensure Neighborhood Watch members are able to effectively identify suspicious activity and always report suspicious activity to 9-1-1.

The Orlando Police Department does *not* train its Neighborhood Watch members to become vigilantes. Members are taught and reminded of four basic principles:






- Neighborhood Watch members serve solely as the extra “eyes and ears” of law enforcement.
- Neighborhood Watch members should report their observations of suspicious activities to law enforcement by calling 9-1-1.
- Never try to take action on those observations.
- Only trained law enforcement should take action.



If you're interested in joining the Thornton Park Neighborhood Watch & Safety Committee, email Regina at reginalthrasher@gmail.com.

BICYCLE SAFETY

When riding in the street, bicyclists are to follow the same rules as an automobile driver. It used to be technically illegal to ride bicycles on sidewalks, but Orlando officially removed this rule in 2018. When riding on sidewalks, you need to be conscious of pedestrians, and especially cars backing out of driveways. The City of Orlando has a useful infographic on cyclist safety:

 <p>Ride on the Right</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always ride the same direction as traffic • Ride as far to the right as practicable 	 <p>Ride Predictably</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride in a straight line and do not swerve between parked cars • Check for traffic before entering any street or intersection • Give an audible warning to pedestrians before approaching from behind, always ride slowly if on the sidewalk and yield to pedestrians
 <p>Follow Traffic Laws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obey all traffic control devices such as stop signs and signals • Don't run red lights • Signal when turning 	 <p>Be Visible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear brightly colored clothing • At night, Florida law requires cyclists to use a white front light and a red rear light • Make eye contact with motorists
 <p>Wear a Proper Fitting Helmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children below the age of 16 are required by Florida law to wear a helmet • Make sure the helmet fits properly on top of the head, not tipped back • Replace your helmet after any crash or impact 	