

Henderson police share safety tips

Being safe at home, in parking lots, and the importance of calling 311 in non-emergency situations were subjects presented recently when two Henderson Police Department officers met with residents in a program organized by the Solera Lifestyle committee.

The officers were Sterling Candland and Carlos Chorens, each a nearly 20-year veteran- of HPD and each at one time or another a victim of a home break-in or identity theft.

While saying Solera is a good and safe place to live, they shared cautions and precautions, and ways to protect yourself and your possessions.

They noted that while the national average for police to arrive on scene after a call for help is around 11 minutes, in Henderson it's 2 1/2 to 3 minutes for a priority call to 911, for example, for an active break in, or around 6 minutes for a call to the non-emergency 311 number.

“And we’re always trying to cut those times down,” added Officer Candland.

What kind of events should trigger a call to the 311 number?

One example: You see a car following delivery drivers through the neighborhood and suspect possible porch pirates, call 311 and provide as much information as you can — car make and color and, if you can get it safely, license plate number.

Another example: Your doorbell camera alerts you to strangers wandering around the neighborhood, perhaps even checking to

see if people are home. A police car should respond with a few minutes, which isn't too late, Officer Candland said, because while the group or car may no longer be on your street, it likely will still be in the neighborhood.

Also, all solicitors in Henderson must have a permit and wear a city-approved badge.

“We get paid to investigate,” he said.

The officers discussed the “CAPTURE” program through which residents can share video captured by their home security cameras with police. (See <https://www.cityofhenderson.com/government/departments/police/community-programs/capture-community-video-surveillance-program> for details.)

“We've solved a lot of crimes (through the program),” Officer Candland said.

Other tips and comments:

- * Cars being broken into typically are not smash-and-grabs, but cars left with doors unlocked.
- * Another crime of opportunity: People forgetting to close their garage doors after unloading their groceries.
- * Thefts of catalytic converters from cars continue. Gangs can get as many as 20 a night, which they sell for \$75 each (but which costs you \$1,000 to replace). Those converters typically are shipped overseas where they're just beginning to be used to cut automotive emissions.
- * Beware telephone fraud! Social Security will never ever call you. A lot of telephone fraud involves people filing for unemployment benefits in your name, so hang up on unsolicited calls and never follow directions to click any number if you answer.

- * Beware scammers who approach in parking lots wanting to repair a minor dent in your vehicle.
- * Carry a photograph of your auto insurance card on your phone so the card and its information cannot be stolen from your glove box.
- * If you get a text that appears to be from your bank, delete immediately and check your account to make sure everything is correct.
- * It's tax season, so fetch your mail every day.
- * If someone knocks on your door and you don't know who it might be, it's fine to say you aren't opening the door, and it wouldn't hurt to have a recording of a barking dog on your phone to play as well.
- * Should someone break in to your house, you can defend yourself with a gun, and putting a red dot on someone's chest likely will stop them. But be very careful with firearms. If you get one, be sure to use its proper use. Also, record the gun's serial number and make and model (photos on your phone are good for this purpose. the reason is in case the firearms are stolen).
- * Don't hide your valuables in your bedroom, that's where people look first. Try your laundry room or pantry, hiding valuables in an empty food or detergent box.
- * Be very careful what you reveal to people working in or outside your home. And don't tell anyone you don't know about your travel plans.

If you missed the officers' visit, the HPD website has safety videos you can watch.

Reporting every crime is important, the officers said, because such information is logged into HPD's statistics and shared daily with officers on patrol.

Curious about what crimes are committed near your home? The HPD website has a "crime search" function. Go to

<http://maps.cityofhenderson.com/public/police/crime-search.html>, type in your address and you'll get a map showing activity (updated daily) within a mile of your address.