

February 3, 2011

New Security FAQs

Why did the Board decide to replace the Constable patrols?

The Board was concerned over the ever-increasing cost of the Constable patrols and also wanted to regain better control of our security. Vacations, sick days, sharing the Constables with the Colony were all becoming real issues. To address these issues the Board created a security subcommittee back in the summer to look into possible alternatives. With our new arrangement we now have security patrols when *we* want them. We no longer pay for vacations or sick days or for officers patrolling somewhere else.

What telephone number should I now call to request law enforcement assistance?

As always, in an emergency, call 911. All other calls that require the dispatch of a deputy should be directed to the Harris County Sheriff's Office at 713-221-6000.

What response time to a call for assistance can I now expect?

Unknown, but the County average is 45 minutes on non-emergency calls.

Will the Sheriff's dispatcher call our off-duty patrolling deputies in response to a call for assistance?

No. While on patrol our officers will be monitoring the Harris County Sheriff's Office radio dispatches. If you make a 911 emergency call, or a non-emergency call to the Sheriff 's Office requesting the dispatch of an on-duty officer, our patrolling off-duty officer, if in the subdivision when the call goes out, will hear the call on his radio and will respond immediately and attempt to handle the situation while the Sheriff's officer is in route.

My home has an alarm system which when activated caused the monitoring company to call the Constable's Office. Do I have to notify my alarm monitoring company to change the number it calls?

Yes. Those residents who have a centrally monitored home security system should contact the monitoring company and tell them that all calls for police assistance should now be directed to the Harris County Sheriff's Department instead of the Constable's Office.

How many deputies are involved in the patrols?

However many it takes to handle the number of hours that we request each week

Will any of them be retirees?

No...once retired you are no longer a Peace officer

Will any of them be Settlement residents?

We are not restricting who will patrol. The security coordinator is picking the best officers for the job. If there are any problems with an officer he will be replaced without hesitation.

How many hours per day and per week will they be patrolling the subdivision?

This will vary and be adjusted as necessary to provide the coverage that the Board believes necessary.

During which hours will the deputies be patrolling?

This also will vary and for security reasons will not be posted.

Will we have coverage on weekends and holidays?

Same answer as to the question above.

Will we still have a vacation watch program?

Yes. A new Vacation Watch Request form is now posted on our web site.

Will the officers also be patrolling the Colony as did the Constable's deputies?

No. They are hired by our Association and will not leave our subdivision except to check the perimeter which is a part of their patrols.

Will they always be in uniform and armed?

Yes.

In what vehicles will they be patrolling?

Their personal vehicles.

What legal authority will the deputies have?

All that the State allows.

Will they be able to enforce traffic laws?

Yes, but only on foot. They will not pull you over in their personal vehicles. They may pursue criminals if they witness a crime just as would any other officer.

If a deputy in an unmarked car pulls over a resident, how does that resident know that the driver is a legitimate deputy and thus someone it is safe to stop for?

This will not happen. Do not ever pull over for anyone not in a vehicle with lights and/or siren. If you have any doubts, pull over only in a well lighted public place if you think you should.

If the deputies are patrolling in unmarked cars, haven't we lost the valuable deterrent that a highly visible marked police car provides?

Perhaps, but with our new arrangement the next headlights or vehicle coming down the street may or may not be the patrol. So the criminals no longer have the "green light" after the Constable patrol goes by and thus won't be returning for a considerable period. It is hoped that this uncertainty will be a greater deterrent than were the marked police cars.

How can a resident differentiate between a slow moving patrolling deputy's car versus another suspicious vehicle?

Always be aware of suspicious vehicles....however the officer will be in their dark blue uniform.

Will we continue to receive reports of the monthly security statistics?

Yes.

What steps has the Board taken to ensure that this new security arrangement is not exposing the Association to legal liability from the actions of these deputies?

The Board has sought legal advice and acquired additional insurance to provide what is deemed to be an appropriate amount of coverage.

Final comment:

Thank you for your concerns on our new security arrangement. The Board hopes that the above answers address most of your important questions. If you have further concerns, Board meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday at 5:30 PM at the clubhouse. You are welcome to attend these meetings at the beginning of which homeowners are provided with an opportunity to make a brief statement of any concerns they may have on this or any other issue.