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## *Community Advocacy Network Alert*



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The holiday season always brings me joy. It is the perfect combination of good food, family, friends and holiday cheer. Unfortunately, it is also the time of year when theft and property crimes increase. Here are a few **CAN** tips to keep your belongings and your home safe during the next few months:

(1) Online shopping is great to avoid the crowds, but a front door loaded with packages is never a good idea. Criminals often troll neighborhoods specifically looking for packages at the front door to steal. Consider having your packages delivered to your office or during a time when you know you will be home.

(2) Make it difficult for people to look inside your home. You may want your neighbors to see your fabulous holiday decorations, but consider closing the drapes sometimes to avoid criminals seeing what they can steal inside your home.

(3) Put an automatic timer on your indoor and outdoor lights. Now that it gets darker earlier with the time change, you want to make sure your home looks occupied.

(4) Don't leave your valuables inside your car since "smash and grab" crimes are common during the holiday months.

(5) Don't advertise on social media that you are on vacation or away from home.



As a community association member, there are also things you can do to protect your neighbors living in your association. One **FREE** service is offered through

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your local police department. An officer will come to your community association and educate your members on crime protection and detection that is specific to your association. Police departments are generally certified by the Attorney General to provide the best "industry standards" for crime prevention and detection. In other words, they really know what they are doing when it comes to holiday crime prevention.

Another great tool is contacting your local neighborhood watch. They will also come to your community and educate your residents on what is considered suspicious activity, particularly for that area. Most importantly, they inform residents on what steps to take to prevent or detect crime. They encourage residents to take the appropriate measures and NOT take matters into their own hands. We all know community associations never want our residents fighting crime on their own initiative.

One paid service available to associations is a database that tracks resident criminal activity. Associations generally perform criminal background checks on potential residents (especially renters), but after the resident moves in, nothing more is done. By entering each resident's information into the database, you will then be notified via email if a resident is arrested within the city limits. This is a great extra step to help protect your residents and prevent potential liability exposure.

Keep these tips in mind as you prepare for this holiday season.

## Honoring Our Veterans

And speaking of holidays, we hope all of our Veterans and their families had a wonderful day yesterday. Although we can never truly repay the debt we owe you, we want you to know that we honor your commitment to our country. Thank you to you and your families for your sacrifices so that we may live free.

"Honor to the soldier and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country's cause. Honor, also, to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field and serves, as he best can, the same cause." - Abraham Lincoln

Yours in Community,

**Alan Garfinkel, Esq.**  
**Katzman Garfinkel, Founding Partner**  
**Community Advocacy Network (CAN), Chairman**

The Community Advocacy Network (CAN) is Florida's leading voice for the interests of 60,000 community associations statewide, leading the fight against over-regulation of private residential communities by state and local governments. Each year since its inception in 2007, CAN spearheads important State legislative reforms designed to protect and enhance Florida Community association living. CAN continues to foster financial stability and operational integrity to all common-interest ownership communities statewide.

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