

## **CRIME PREVENTION AND STATISTICS IN WEST LANE PLACE AND SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS/SUMMER 2021**

Over the past several years, incidents of all kinds of crime have occurred more and more often throughout our country. While there are many theories of why this is happening, the surge is undeniable. Some cities have recorded double and sometimes triple criminal activity since 2020. As of June 2021, homicides within Houston city limits have increased by 35% over 2020. Some large neighborhoods in Houston can afford to hire patrol officers to help manage this criminal activity. In our smaller neighborhood of West Lane Place, concerned residents have been volunteering to drive through our streets to spot suspicious activity, but we have no paid patrol.

The more crime we face, the more we need to know about how to protect ourselves, our homes, families and neighbors. Until I volunteered to write this article, I had no idea what kinds of resources each of us has at our fingertips. With the help of **Captain McMahon of River Oaks Patrol (ROPO)**, I found valuable information on websites that each of us can access readily and which are noted in detail in this article. Captain McMahon also offered the following tips:

1. **Be aware of anyone who may be following you by checking your rear view mirror frequently.** If you suspect you're being followed, **do not turn into your driveway** but rather make turns that lead the suspicious vehicle AWAY from your home. **Be careful not to wind up in a dead end street!!** This effort may be especially important after you visit surrounding eateries like those in the Galleria area, River Oaks District, along Mid Lane, Highland Village, etc. or make expensive purchases in a public area where criminals may be on the look out and follow you home.
2. **Update your alarm systems** with newer 4G OR 5G cellular transmitters and use a system like the Alarm.com app that allows you to arm/disarm remotely.
3. Make sure your **exterior cameras are working and are up to date.** If you don't have cameras, consider adding them to your existing security systems.
4. When you enter your garage, **stay inside your locked car door until the garage door is completely down.** Have a plan in case you are faced with robbery.
5. **Plan in advance how you/your family should handle a robbery,** being held at gunpoint, protecting your valuables, etc.
6. **Have your home inspected for security and possibly receive an insurance discount.**
7. **Check the Nextdoor.com site for crime info** which can be very timely and helpful. It's a tool that's for more than lost pets, sale items and airing opinions!

**(DIY Crime Prevention – continued from West Lane Place News, July, 2021) by Barbara Staley)**

Much is written these days about taking responsibility for your own safety and that of your family, neighbors and friends. Here are some additional websites to help further that effort.

**ACCESS HPD SITES FOR INFORMATION ON CRIME STATISTICS, CRIME PREVENTION AND OTHER TOPICS**

<https://www.houstontx.gov/police/cs/index-2.htm>

1. Once in the website you will see on the right side of this screen options to select from **POLICE DEPT LINKS**. You can find information on both crime statistics and crime prevention.
2. The Police Department Link on this site regarding **statistics is easier to track** by using the instructions below in the **HOW TO ACCESS LEXISNEXIS CRIME MAPS** and creating a customized tracking tool based on the kinds of crimes and the radius from which you are interested in capturing statistics.
3. The Police Department Link **on prevention** is very useful for a number of situations that you may want to read more about. On this site scroll down and select **Crime Prevention Materials** and begin to find those topics that are of interest to you. Unfortunately there are many choices!
4. Topics include burglary prevention in your home and for your vehicle, Cyber safety, pedestrian safety awareness, personal safety tips, purse theft prevention, robbery prevention and the list goes on!

**HOW TO ACCESS LEXISNEXIS COMMUNITY CRIME MAPS - <https://communitycrimemap.com>**

1. Once you open the first page of this site, there will be a large US map with some of Canada and Mexico included.
2. Find Texas, click on Houston. Ignore the colorful map and find the block in the upper right hand part of that screen entitled **“sign up for crime alerts”**.
3. Click on this block. From there a screen will appear which will allow you to create a customized Neighborhood Watch Report Subscription. You can select the radius you want data from, the frequency you want information and kinds of crimes being committed and where. Knowing what activity is nearby will help you avoid trouble and prepare for it if it comes your way.

**REPORT ALL CRIMES TO HPD!!** Police patrol the areas that have the highest crime. We need to make HPD aware of every incident that occurs so they will patrol our neighborhood regularly!

**Let's join together and keep our eyes and ears open to keep everyone safe!**

Barbara Staley