

CHAPTER 6. RESIDENT PARTICIPATION AND OCCUPANCY POLICIES

36. THE ROLE OF RESIDENTS IN PROJECT SECURITY. The importance of the role of residents in controlling crime and vandalism cannot be overemphasized. No security program can succeed without the support and cooperation of at least a large majority of the residents themselves. Their role begins with individual responsibilities for their own self-protection and, of course, for observance of the law and other community standards. A major dimension of the role of residents is the potential of residents' organizations to participate in the planning and implementation of a security program. Management should take the lead in showing residents what they can do to improve security, and in bringing them into a productive relationship with other key participants in the security program. Once this start is made, residents can usually be expected to assume a considerable degree of initiative and responsibility, although Management should provide continuing support and guidance.
37. INDIVIDUAL SELF-PROTECTION. Among the types of potentially effective self-protective measures which may be employed by individual residents are the following, all of which should be stressed in a program of resident education.
- a. Informal resident surveillance in the course of daily activities can be one of the most effective of all security measures. However, opportunities for resident surveillance are often limited by design features, the large number of residents, high turnover in the resident population and fear of retaliation by offenders. Moreover, such surveillance is of little worth unless linked to a well-understood system which will produce ready response by the Police Department or security personnel.
 - b. Reporting procedures to be used in the event of observance of crime, vandalism, and suspicious behavior, should be clearly understood by all residents. Where police assistance is warranted, the resident should first contact the Police Department directly, and even small children should know when and how to call the Police Department emergency telephone number. Primary reliance should not ordinarily be placed upon security personnel or other Management staff to respond with force or to relay reports to the Police Department.
 - c. Keeping doors locked might seem too obvious a measure to deserve mention, but resident carelessness in this respect is in fact one of the most significant and most common of residential security deficiencies.

- d. Residents' temporary absences render their dwellings highly vulnerable to burglary and vandalism. Such measures as leaving lights and radios on and arranging for stoppage or pickup of newspapers and mail lessen the appearance of vacancy. While it may be desirable for a resident to inform Management and neighbors of the absence, it is unwise to spread the news widely.
- e. Cash and checks are among the most attractive targets for crime, and should not be kept on the resident's person or in the dwelling, except to the extent necessary. For lower-income people, use of normal banking facilities may be a problem. See paragraph 51 below.
- f. Admission of strangers calls for caution on the part of residents. Where lobby doors are kept locked, residents should not open the door for persons whom they cannot identify as legitimate callers. Peepholes or other "interviewer" devices should always be used before opening the door of the dwelling unit itself. Keys to dwelling unit doors should be carefully controlled, and their loss should be promptly reported to Management, so the lock can be changed.
- g. Movements in and around the property require due caution, particularly during night-time hours. The elderly, the disabled, and unaccompanied women are particularly vulnerable to criminal attack, and should be aware of the locations and times of greatest danger. Arrangements for companions may be the best solution.
- h. Confrontation with criminals should be among the subjects of security education programs for residents. For example, where robbery is involved, the safest reaction is usually to yield valuables without struggle. While self-defense may be warranted in some situations, aggressiveness may provoke bodily harm.
- i. Identification of property of types which are the most attractive targets for theft may deter burglary or at least facilitate police investigation. At the minimum, residents should maintain a list of valuable items, including descriptions and serial numbers of such items as television sets, radios, cameras, and typewriters. In some localities, an "Operation Identification" program is sponsored by Police Departments, and other local organizations, providing for valuable items to be marked with special devices, thus further easing the problem of identification if theft should occur.

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- j. Mutual assistance among neighbors can significantly contribute to security. A resident who is at home

throughout the day can keep an eye on the dwelling of neighbors who are at work. Younger residents can accompany elderly persons on shopping trips. Suspicious incidents can be checked out with neighbors.

- k. Conduct of guests is a responsibility of resident hosts, who should make sure that guests understand both the standards and procedures adopted for the security of the premises.
- l. Supervision of children is an individual resident responsibility, and parents should take special pains to educate their children about security standards and procedures.

38. RESIDENT ATTITUDES AND STANDARDS. To the extent that residents are apathetic about security, or are themselves prone to condone or commit crime and vandalism, the very foundation of a residential security program is imperiled. Efforts to build a positive security climate among residents, though among the most difficult aspects of the subject, should therefore pervade the entire security program. The crux of the matter is building a sense of community among residents. Everything which contributes to community cohesion--even ordinary social gatherings--is directly relevant to security. Anonymity is an obstacle to security, and one of the prime aims of a security program should be encourage residents to become acquainted with their neighbors. Positive peer-group pressures should be encouraged. Even where there is only a small number of community-minded residents, they can be encouraged to form the cadre for a growing circle of resident leadership.

- a. Apathy among residents should be one of the prime targets of a comprehensive security program. Apathy is often the product of resignation. A campaign to demonstrate that real improvement in residents' daily lives can be achieved is necessary to break this cycle. Such a demonstration in an area other than security may serve as the initial catalyst for the vital spark of hope from which resident concern and involvement can then be developed.
- b. Self-interest is the most powerful motivation for positive resident attitudes and standards. Residents' own interests, rather than the interests of Management, the police, or other parties, should be the paramount theme of any security education program for residents.
- c. Fear of crime may be well-founded, but can seriously impair resident participation in a security program. Means must

therefore be found to break the cycle by which the threat of crime creates fears which in turn contribute to an even greater threat of crime. Where good reason for fear exists,

it is obviously unwise to encourage a false sense of security. The best approach is to impart a clear understanding of what the actual threat is, and the degree of caution which is realistically warranted. As various elements of a security program are successfully implemented, residents should be made aware of them, so that the cycle of fear can be reversed, building successive steps of community morale upon successive steps of reduction in the threat from crime. Both Management and the residents' organization should systematically combat inaccurate rumors about crime and vandalism.

- d. Fear of retaliation can significantly hinder resident cooperation, especially in large projects with a high degree of anonymity. Such fear may be amply justified, and where this is so, the only satisfactory remedy is to provide effective protection against retaliation. A resident who may be fearful of reporting a suspicious incident to the police may nevertheless be willing to channel a report through Management or the residents' organization, provided the confidentiality of the source is preserved. This can be facilitated by encouraging Management personnel who regularly work on the premises (e.g., office and maintenance staff) to become widely acquainted with residents and to respect residents' requests for anonymity in reporting offenses and suspicious behavior.

39. RELATIONS BETWEEN RESIDENTS AND POLICING PERSONNEL. A major problem, especially in lower income projects, is often that of poor relations between residents and policing personnel (Police Department officers and/or security personnel). Where this is the case, a fundamental task of a security program is to build mutual respect and cooperation among these elements. This should begin with frank discussion among representatives of Management (including the chief supervisor of security personnel), the residents' organization, and the Police Department. These parties should identify the roots of the problem, and plan a course of action which will realistically attack those roots. A useful

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approach is joint sponsorship of meetings for both residents and policing personnel, at which each element can educate the others as to its circumstances and all can air their complaints in an atmosphere of constructive criticism. It is essential that police officers and security personnel make extraordinary efforts to understand residents and their problems, and to explain their own functions, limitations, and problems to the residents. While such educational programs have great potential, they are by no means adequate substitutes for daily operational efforts to create mutual understanding and cooperation.

40. INVOLVING THE RESIDENTS' ORGANIZATION. If a residents' organization does not already exist, security alone may be reason enough to create such an organization. In any event, security should ordinarily be one of the principal subjects of the organization's activities. Some of the specific kinds of activities which a resident organization may be able to undertake, in its role as one of the key participants in a comprehensive security program, are as follows (though this is not an exhaustive list):

- a. Participation in Planning the Security Program. The residents' organization is uniquely suited for gathering much of the factual information which must form the base of Management's planning effort, including relevant facts on residents' characteristics and problems, the capabilities and attitudes of individual residents, and the residents' organization itself. The organization may also be able to assist in building alliances with governmental and nongovernmental agencies. The residents' organization should participate in making planning decisions, organizing security personnel systems, and monitoring security operations.
- b. Participation in Resident Education Programs. The residents' organization is an ideal sponsor for security education programs designed to stimulate resident concern, create better attitudes, and inform residents about specific measures which they can take to combat the threat of crime and vandalism. Newsletters, as well as meetings, are excellent media for the residents' organization to use in carrying out its educational functions.

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- c. Participation in Setting Standards for Resident Conduct. The residents' organization should participate in development of rules of conduct which supplement the basic lease agreement. Such participation places a stamp of resident endorsement upon what might otherwise appear as arbitrary Management policies.
- d. Volunteer Resident Services. Certain tasks involved in a security program can be appropriately administered by the residents' organization. See subparagraph 34b above regarding resident patrols. Other possible volunteer services include clerical tasks and in-apartment CCTV monitoring. Security-related programs such as playground supervision or assistance to elderly or disabled people may be particularly suitable for volunteer resident services.
- e. Support for Management Efforts to Obtain Municipal Services. One of the most useful functions of the residents' organization can be to support Management in its efforts to

obtain additional Police Department services and security-related services of other agencies of local government.

41. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS. A security program can create economic opportunities for residents, both in the sense of full-time jobs within the program itself and in the sense of training for advancement into other jobs. In turn, these types of resident involvement can serve to enhance residents' sense of self-interest in, and commitment to, the security program. For both these reasons, Management should afford residents the maximum benefit of the jobs and other economic opportunities created by the security program. In this connection, see HUD's Instructor's Manual--Career Ladder and Curriculum Guide: Housing Management (April 1973), which includes materials on the following job positions: Resident Security Aide, Resident Security Officer, Security Officer II, and Community Security Aide. This publication is available from the Office of Housing Programs, Special Concerns Staff, HM, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20410.

42. YOUTH PROGRAMS. Most crime and vandalism is committed by young people between the ages of roughly 15-25, although even younger children may cause serious problems, especially in the area of casual vandalism. An effective security program must therefore give prime attention to this age group. In projects housing families with children, the following considerations are relevant:

- a. Parental responsibilities for supervision of children should be heavily stressed in programs of resident education, and in standards for residents' conduct.

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- b. Young residents' participation in planning and carrying out the security program should be sought, preferably by the continuing participation of the young in the activities of the residents' organization.
- c. Lines of communication between Management and young people should be carefully cultivated, and security personnel should be so trained and supervised as to achieve rapport with young residents.
- d. Job opportunities for young people constitute one of the most important means for combatting crime and vandalism.
- e. Recreation for young people is another essential ingredient for the control of delinquency. Particular attention should be given to recreation for teenagers.
- f. Drug abuse among young people should be a matter of especially high-priority action.

- g. Young males, who are the most prone to crime and vandalism, merit special attention. Athletic programs (e.g. Police Athletic Leagues, Little Leagues) are particularly important here. A major concern of a security program should be to provide boys and young men with positive leadership and models of behavior through such programs as Scouting, Big Brothers, Boys' Clubs, and YMCA's. This is not to say that girls and young women should be slighted, but only to emphasize that, from the security viewpoint, programs aimed at young males are of prime importance.
- h. Youth leadership should be carefully cultivated, so as to provide peer-group encouragement for positive behavior and participation in the security program and related activities. For this reason, efforts should be made to enlist the support and participation of young men and women who evidence particularly strong leadership qualities. Employment of those individuals in connection with the security program may be advisable, e.g., as members of a planning committee or as members of a Management security force or resident patrol.

43. FEDERAL CRIME INSURANCE FOR RESIDENTS. Residents of HUD-assisted multifamily housing are among those eligible to purchase Federal Crime Insurance at reasonable premium rates in certain designated states which have a critical crime insurance availability problem and which lack appropriate state programs to provide a solution. The program is currently available in Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and the District of Columbia.

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Other states may be added as they meet program criteria. Residential coverage may be purchased by residents from local property insurance agents and brokers under a combination burglary and robbery package, and policies cannot be cancelled or nonrenewed because of losses. However, as a condition of eligibility, doors and windows must be equipped with locking devices specified by the Federal Insurance Administration. In states where Federal Crime Insurance is available, management and the residents' organization should inform residents about the program and encourage them to obtain coverage. Further information can be obtained from local property insurance agents and brokers in these states, or from the Federal Insurance Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street, S.W., Washington, D. C. 20410.

44. OCCUPANCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

- a. Exclusion of Offenders. It is both permissible and

advisable for Management to adopt and enforce policies aimed at excluding from the project those individuals or families who pose a threat of crime or vandalism. This principle extends to eviction of existing residents, as well as rejection of applicants for initial admission. The residents' organization should participate in developing these policies (see subparagraph 40c above).

- (1) Screening of applicants for initial admission should be the foundation for excluding probable offenders. If possible, home visits or inquiries to the Management of the applicant's previous dwelling should be used to supplement application forms and interviews.
- (2) For the existing resident, particular circumstances may argue for counselling before a decision is made to proceed with eviction. In appropriate cases, the resident should be given assistance and a fair chance to demonstrate a change to responsible behavior, but where Management believes the risk too great, it should take prompt steps to terminate occupancy. The credibility of the security aspect of occupancy policies depends upon firmness as well as fairness.
- (3) LHAs and the owners and managers of HUD-insured rental housing may not establish policies which automatically deny admission or continued occupancy to a particular class of persons, such as welfare recipients or persons having criminal records.

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However, Management may establish standards bearing on whether the conduct of particular families or individuals (in present or prior housing) does or would be likely materially to diminish other residents' enjoyment of the premises or to result in damage to the property. Such a decision must be based on the facts in each case, as related to the actual or threatened misconduct of the individual or family and must take into account all of the relevant circumstances, but may not be based solely upon such factors as police records. Within these legal limitations, there is considerable latitude for management discretion.

- b. Assignment Policies. Another security-related aspect of occupancy policies involves options for assignment of certain categories of residents to particular buildings or dwelling units. Buildings with exclusively elderly populations are virtually free of resident crime and vandalism; in a multistructure project, one technique of proven effectiveness is to provide separate buildings for family and elderly occupancy. Some Managers have found it helpful to assign larger families to low-rise buildings or to the lower floors of high-rise buildings.

- c. Informing Residents about Occupancy Policies. Whatever occupancy policies are adopted, they should be clearly explained to applicants and existing residents. At the least, a copy of the policies should be distributed in written form. It is preferable to list detailed standards of conduct in a set of project rules. The language of such standards should be readily understandable by every resident. As a part of the resident's orientation upon initial occupancy, Management should orally review these occupancy policies. Periodic review at meetings of the residents' organization should be a part of the continuing program of security education.