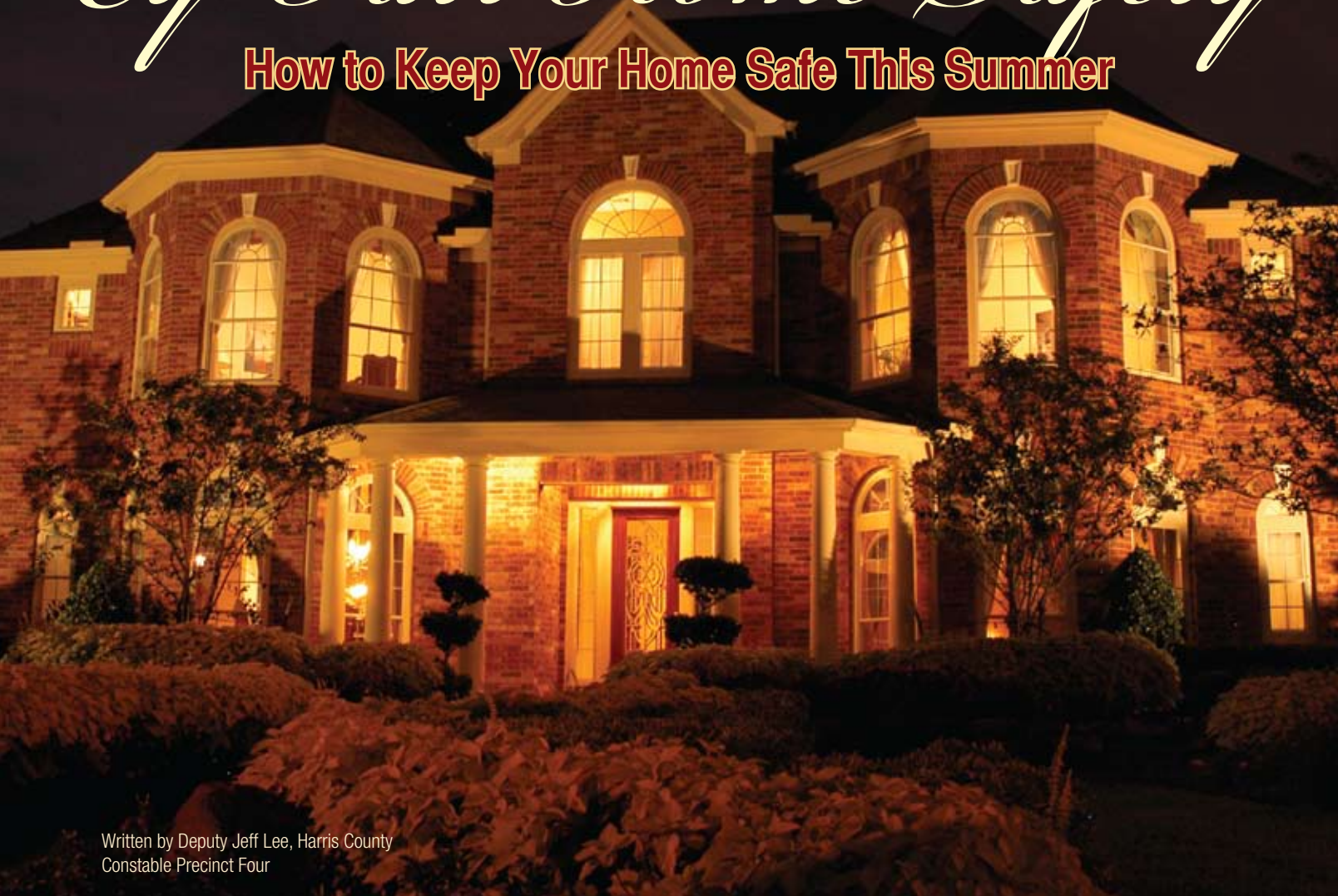


Cy-Fair Home Safety

How to Keep Your Home Safe This Summer



Written by Deputy Jeff Lee, Harris County
Constable Precinct Four

During extended summer vacations, the last thing anybody wants to worry about is the security of their home. But, with little time and expense, you can greatly reduce your home's risk of being burglarized while away.

After eight years of patrolling Cy-Fair with Constable Ron Hickman's office, I know that crooks look for houses that appear lonely, so you need to give the illusion that your house is occupied even though it isn't.

Exterior Protection

For the exterior of your home, I recommend the following:

- Have your yard service trim the shrubs, clean out your flower beds, and mow the yard. If you do the lawn yourself, take care of this before you leave, and pay a responsible teenager to maintain the yard while you are away.

- Stop newspapers and mail. Or, have the teenager pick them up and store them out of public view. Have them remove door flyers as well.
- Prominently display your alarm signs in both the front and back yards. Rear entry is the most common way a burglar will force their way into your home.
- Invite your neighbors to park in your driveway, giving a come and go appearance to your home.
- Ask a neighbor to put one of his trashcans at your curb for pick up. Crooks look for empty curbs on trash days.
- Put a day/night sensor on the front, rear, and driveway lights.

Safe from the Inside Out

To give the illusion that someone is always home, follow these tips.

- Purchase at least two or three timers for lamps in the living room and a few rooms facing the exterior. Set timers so that combinations of lights are on at the same time, as this would be realistic if someone were home.



Dogs can be a deterrent for thieves if they have run of the house

- Leave window blinds closed, affording no view of the contents inside.
- If you have a dog staying home and it's reliably housebroken, let the dog have the run of your house. A confined dog is no danger to a burglar, which makes your home even more attractive when he gets inside.
- Use your house alarm, if applicable.

More Tips

See if your local police department has a vacation watch program. My agency, the Harris County Precinct Four Constable's Office, provides this as a free service and can be set up with a visit to our website. Record the contents and layout of your home before you



Always remember to set your alarm

pack the camera away and keep a list of your valuable's serial numbers. This will help in dealing with the insurance company and assist the police in finding your stuff should a crime occur.

Safety is Comfort

There are many great reasons to call Cy-Fair home, and a more than reasonable expectation of safety and security is at the top of the list. Good sense and heeding suggestions such as these will make for a more relaxing trip, and make coming home as enjoyable as getting away. **CFM**

JEFF LEE is a deputy with Harris County Constable Precinct Four. He, his wife, and three boys have lived in the Cypress area for eight years.

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