

Safety/Security – January 2024

Bottom Line Up Front:

- Black Ice
- Watch Speed on Side Roads
- Clearing Vegetation from Road Signs
- Politics, Politics, Politics
- Quick Answers to Security Survey Questions
- Security Fund
- CAC – Next meeting January 10.

Black Ice: You wouldn't know it by recent temperatures, but we can expect cold weather this winter. When the ambient temperature is at or below freezing (32° F), pavement dampened by dew, fog, or precipitation can acquire a glaze of ice that is not always visible. Test your brakes while going slowly in the neighborhood to see if the road is icy. Be mindful that even on sunny days, elevated roadbeds, bridges, roadways in shadow, or the edges of curves may be slick even when the rest of the road seems clear. Drive cautiously and defensively. If you skid, ease off the throttle and steer into the skid – do **NOT** mash on the brakes, even if they are anti-lock. Final note: Clear all windows before you drive – you can't avoid what you can't see.

Side Road Speed: I have noticed an uptick in speeds on our side roads of late. I frequently see and hear cars accelerate once they turn onto Bushnell or Ft. Raleigh Drives and I've fielded neighbors' concerns about Virginia Dare and Vanderbilt, as well. We all have a lot on our minds these days, let's not let drop driver situational awareness from the list. Speed limit is 25 MPH throughout Croatan. Perhaps, we can also reduce those rolling stop sign speeds.

Clearing Vegetation Overgrowth from Road Signs: If you have not already done so, now is the time of year to clear any vegetation that obscures road signs from being visible to drivers. This includes "No Parking" signs but especially "Stop" signs. If they're on your property, they're your responsibility. The city will clear them following a 3-1-1 call, but the homeowner may be charged for the effort.

Politics: As we enter what is expected to be a contentious campaign season, let us respect each other's right to support the candidate(s) and issue(s) of one's choice. Please refrain from removing, destroying, or defacing campaign signs. If you place a sign in your yard, please be mindful not to block the view of drivers who need to see past that sign for oncoming traffic.

Quick Answers to Security Survey Questions: Without getting too lengthy, I will attempt to respond to some questions asked by more than one resident on the security survey. Please bear in mind that for everyone desiring one thing, there is usually someone desiring the exact opposite – think: on-street parking, speed tables, etc. We cannot please everyone. Here goes:

- We will request more patrol officer focus on side street speed and parking. (When you do park – even at home - remember that you cannot block a sidewalk or park in such a way as to allow your vehicle to protrude into the street.)
- If you know of a “No Parking” sign or crosswalk markings that have been worn away or destroyed due to wear and tear, weather, or careless driving, you should bring it to the attention of Virginia Beach 3-1-1. Follow the path: <https://virginiabeach.gov> → Public Safety → Report a Problem → and subsequent prompts. Location, location, location and “just the facts” are keys to a quick response. Photos help.
- Penalties for speeding, passing stopped school buses, crosswalk violations, etc. are the same in Croatan as elsewhere in the city. Key to any citation, however, is that an officer has to witness the violation.
- The CCL Board will converse with our attorney, but we do not think that we can direct Short-Term Rental (STR) owners to contribute to the security fund. We will try to identify those STR owners who have voluntarily contributed, but if someone owns more than one STR and contributes, how is that to be counted? ‘T’ain’t as easy as it sounds.
- CCL does not collect data on crimes that haven’t occurred because such a metric is impossible to calculate. As for the crimes that have happened - reports of burglaries, attempted burglaries, vandalism, squatting in vacant homes, firearm violations, underage drinking, etc. can be found in back editions of the CCL Newsletter.
- Patrol hours are increased during the summer. We request a patrol car for Halloween and seek daytime patrols during the autumnal holidays to deter porch pirates. However, police are “all in” for vacation season-holidays and large events (think: July 4th, SITW) when all of their time off is cancelled and double shifts are routine. Regrettably, this does impact patrol officer availability on those days/weekends.

Security Fund: The overwhelming response to the Security Survey indicates that Croatan residents want to continue the services of our off-duty police officers. As CCL President Mike Kelly wrote, our need to sustain these patrols at a competitive rate has increased our annual Security Fund requirement to \$20,000. Think of this as a cooperative insurance policy for our neighborhood of high-6 and 7-figure homes. Among 99 residents responding on whether to keep, decrease, or increase the number of patrol hours, a convincing 90 percent voted to keep or increase the number of hours. Please contribute what you can, when you renew your CCL membership. (Even non-CCL members can contribute). Thank you.

Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC): The next CAC meeting will be held on January 10, 2024 at 7:00 PM in the conference room of Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad #14, 740 VB Blvd (17th Street). Please park on the east side of the building. CAC meetings are open to all.

Have a safe and healthy New Year.

M. C. “Connie” Agresti,
CCL Safety and Security Director