



THE SARATOGAN

SPRING 2015

Saratoga Continues to be one of the Safest Cities in the Country

Keeping Saratoga a safe city continues to be vitally important to residents, City Council Members, and the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office. A safe community has a positive impact on the health and well-being of its residents. And the efforts of everyone involved has been recognized in recent years. Saratoga was named the "Safest City in California" in 2013 and the 12th "Safest City in the United States" in 2014.

The City has contracted with the Sheriff's Office for public safety services since Saratoga's incorporation in 1956. This partnership has been rewarding for the City in multiple ways. The Sheriff's Office provides all the basic services that an internal police department would—such as patrol, traffic enforcement, and investigations—with additional crime analysts, technology services, and other valuable law enforcement services on a more affordable and as-needed basis.



In spring 2014, the City Council approved the addition of a second traffic safety officer to further public safety efforts. The officer adds an additional 1,800 hours of traffic enforcement in the City with an emphasis on schools, particularly during drop-off and pick-up times.

Collaboration between residents and the Sheriff's Office is key in preventing crime and catching criminals. The Sheriff's Office has hosted crime prevention forums to educate residents about recent crime trends and pass along information on how to better protect themselves. Residents have then taken this information and passed it along to neighbors and friends through email listservs and social media sites like Nextdoor.com.

This issue of *The Saratogan* contains some safety tips from the Sheriff's Office, information on how to start a class through the Recreation Department, and upcoming community events. Also read about:

- How to help prevent home and vehicle burglaries, as well as how to report suspicious activity
- The City's online communication tools, such as Nextdoor.com, Facebook, and YouTube
- AlertSCC and Saratoga's Community Emergency Response Team



Saratoga's Public Safety Recognitions

Safest City in California ~ November 2013 ~ SafeWise.com

12th Safest City in the U.S. ~ February 2014 ~ NeighborhoodScout.com

2nd Safest City in California ~ June 2014 ~ Movoto.com

Burglary Prevention

Staying Safe in Saratoga

Everyone wants to keep their home and possessions safe, but no neighborhood is safe enough to be crime free. One of the simplest ways to keep burglars out is to keep exterior household doors locked at all times; and never hide a key outside.

Just like doors, all windows should be secured and locked when not in use or anytime no one is home. This includes upstairs windows. Blinds and curtains should be closed when no one is home or after dark to avoid advertising any expensive property and purchases.

Having a well-lit home can also help deter criminals. The Sheriff's Office suggests having exterior, motion-activated lighting at a home's front door, side yard, and back yard. Installing timers on interior lights and setting them to turn on at random times during the day and night can ward off burglars, the Sheriff's Office says.



Alarm systems are also important. Be sure to test them regularly and update all contact information—including an emergency contact—with the alarm company. An emergency contact can be a family member, friend, or trusted neighbor.

The emergency contact should have access to the home (i.e., gate or alarm code and keys to the home) and knowledge of the property so they know if anything is out of place or missing. Residents can also request patrol checks when going on vacation to make sure their homes are being watched while they are away.

The Sheriff's Office has similar tips to prevent vehicle burglary. Always lock a vehicle's doors and activate the alarm. Don't make it easy for criminals by leaving wallets, electronics, or other valuable items in the vehicle and in plain view. These are just a few tips. For more information, visit www.saratoga.ca.us/stayingsafe.



Neighborhood Watch

A neighborhood watch program can be an important part of a safe neighborhood. Residents can inform the Sheriff's Office of crimes in progress or suspicious activity, while neighborhood watch members can also use phone trees and online listservs to communicate crime trends and patterns in their area.

Visit the National Neighborhood Watch Institute website at www.nnwi.org, or call (888) 669-4872, to order a "How to Start and Maintain a Healthy Neighborhood Watch Program" handbook. It walks readers step-by-step through the creation of a neighborhood watch group.

Reporting Suspicious Activity

Be A Good Witness



Know your location and the location of the suspicious activity. Addresses and cross streets are very important. Always allow the dispatcher to ask questions before hanging up. Explain what's happening and why the activity is suspicious. Give as much detail as possible. Share information, such as the person's gender, approximate age, height and weight, race, hair color, eyes, and any other distinguishing features.

See A Vehicle?



If there is a vehicle involved, remember the acronym "CLAMMS." The C = color of car, L = license plate number, A = additional distinguishing features (stickers or body damage), M = make (Ford, BMW, Honda), M = model (2-door, 4-door, truck, SUV), S = state of license plate if not CA. Try to see how many occupants are in the vehicle and the last direction of travel.

Call It In



Always report suspicious activity to the Sheriff's Office. Residents know best who or what belongs in their neighborhoods. Deputies will always respond to investigate suspicious activity calls. Report the incidents immediately because time is of the essence. Call 911 or the Sheriff's Office non-emergency number at (408) 299-2311.

ON THE WEB



The City of Saratoga uses a variety of online tools to communicate with the public. All the sites are interwoven as the City shares information across each platform, and all are connected at their center by the City of Saratoga.



CITY OF SARATOGA'S WEBSITE

www.saratoga.ca.us

The City of Saratoga's website is at the center of the City's online communication with the public. Everything from video of City Council meetings to the City's budget, news alerts to meeting agendas, and event permit information to Council Member contact information are all posted and updated on a daily basis.



FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/CityofSaratoga

Facebook allows the City to be more "social" and engage with residents to strengthen relationships and build community. The City uses Facebook to share a variety of information, photos, and videos. Posts include Commission openings, photos from community events, and updates on City projects.



NEXTDOR

www.nextdoor.com

Nextdoor.com is a neighborhood group on the web. The City is able to post information to all Saratoga residents on the social media site or post directly to a specific neighborhood that might be affected by an upcoming road closure or community meeting. Residents can also share news with each other through posts on neighborhood sites, which the City cannot see.



TWITTER

[@CityofSaratoga](https://twitter.com/CityofSaratoga)

Twitter gives the City an additional avenue to send out information—in 140 characters or less. The City is also able to educate residents on relevant news and information by retweeting posts (or "tweets") from other local organizations, such as the Sheriff's Office, West Valley College, and the San Jose Mercury News.



YOUTUBE

www.youtube.com/CityHallSaratoga

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a video may be priceless. The City has taken advantage of the popular video-sharing website by posting videos about upcoming projects ("Prospect Road Improvements Project"), educational videos ("Garbage, Recycling & Green Waste"), and where the City stands today ("2014 State of the City Address").



VIMEO

www.vimeo.com/cityofsaratoga

Like YouTube, Vimeo is a video-sharing website that the City uses to post videos. One huge perk for Vimeo viewers: no advertisements before a video starts.



Be Prepared for an Emergency



Be prepared and informed when an emergency happens.

AlertSCC is a free and confidential way for Saratoga residents to receive emergency warnings directly to their mobile devices, emails, and landlines. The Santa Clara County emergency alert system provides information and instructions for multiple emergency situations, including:

- Flooding, wildfires and possible evacuations
- Public safety incidents, such as crimes that affect your neighborhood
- Post-disaster information about shelters, transportation, and supplies

Sign up at <https://alertscb.bbcportal.com> or download the AlertSCC app directly to a mobile device.

Residents can also prepare to help their families and neighborhoods during an emergency by signing up for the Saratoga Community Emergency Response Team, known as CERT. Learn basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and team organization. For more information on the program, visit www.saratoga.ca.us/cert.



Ask Our Staff featuring Michael Taylor

Have a question? Send your question(s) to bbabcock@saratoga.ca.us or (408) 868-1275.

Q: I'm interested in offering a class through the City of Saratoga's Recreation Department. What do I need to do to become an instructor?



A: The process of becoming an instructor, whether offering a class or program, begins by proposing a course or activity to the Recreation Department. We will then contact you and schedule an interview. We'll work with you to finalize the dates, times, fees, locations, class descriptions, and other relevant information.

The Recreation Department has a detailed packet of information for those interested in becoming an instructor. Simply call us at (408) 868-1250 or e-mail me at mtaylor@saratoga.ca.us, and we will be happy to help you out!

The Recreation Department has more than 100 independent contractors teaching a variety of classes. Our programs strengthen community relationships and improve the quality of life in Saratoga. We strive to provide a wide array of programs for all ages and interests that offer opportunities to grow, learn, relax, and be active.

Michael Taylor is the Recreation and Facilities Director for the City of Saratoga. Information about the Recreation Department can be found by visiting www.saratoga.ca.us/recreation.



To learn more about *The Saratogan*, make comments, suggest story ideas, or just ask a question, contact Brian Babcock at bbabcock@saratoga.ca.us or 408.868.1275. You can also find *The Saratogan* online and sign up for email alerts at www.saratoga.ca.us/saratogan.