

AWARENESS

A simple word but one with great importance for all South Africans.

We are of course referring to an awareness which might help you to avoid theft from your premises or something much more serious. It's probably not the first time that you've been advised to "increase your level of awareness" without any further explanation.

That's not very helpful as it leaves you wondering what you should do. Let's therefore try to explain by using illustrations which though hypothetical, can and do occur.

THE UNEXPECTED VISITOR

Undoubtedly all aggressors fall into this category; they do not make appointments !

Problem is that some friends or service providers also fall into this category.

So what can / should you do ? There are a number of things

Firstly let all your friends and regular service providers know that you will NOT answer the doorbell unless you are expecting a visit. A visit without prior advice is therefore a waste of time, petrol and effort.

If you want to be a little more friendly than that, let your friends know that they are welcome to visit without prior arrangement but they MUST give you call BEFORE they arrive.

Service providers (eg the gas company come to replace the cylinder; the plumber come to attend to your call; the municipal official etc) MUST also advise that they are coming and not just pitch up as and when it suits them. There are many impostors who pretend to be what they are not.

We need to put an end to unscheduled and unfettered access. The more of us that behave in this way, the sooner the entire community of Hermanus will adopt the mind set of avoiding unexpected visits. Make a difference – set the trend !!

BEGGARS

You have undoubtedly had people ring your bell to ask for food or money. Please do NOT fall for this ruse by giving them what they ask for.

If you feel that you ought to help, there are many organizations that run feeding schemes or administer services to the less privileged in our community. Give to them.

If you don't know of any, ask your friends or your church group. It won't be difficult to uncover a long list of organizations in need of help. You'll be surprised at how easy it is to donate.

If you do give at the door you can rest assured that you'll soon have a constant flow of visitors. Most will probably be sincere but it only takes one to put you through a traumatic experience. Why chance it ?

THE ALARM SYSTEM

Most homes have a system and yet the security companies tell me that in at least 50% of incidents, the alarm had not been set. I fail to understand why some folk install an alarm system at a not inconsiderable expense and then fail to use it as they should.

In other cases, the alarm fails to function and the records show that it has never been serviced. Do you buy a car and never change the oil ? Remember to check the remotes too. Remotes work off batteries and these do not last indefinitely

MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

It seems as if a pattern is developing whereby aggressors are pretending to be municipal workers sent to investigate or correct a fault or whatever. An unsuspecting public, gives them access and the rest is history.

I understand that the Mayor wants all municipal officials to carry Overstrand Municipality identity cards. Once this is implemented, insist on seeing the card; till then, ask for the caller's name and phone the municipal department to verify the bona fides. Do NOT invite them in till you've been through this checking procedure

WHO IS AT THE DOOR ?

We said earlier that you might adopt a policy of NOT answering the doorbell unless you are expecting a visitor. However, some might find this policy a little extreme. In this case you need to carefully consider your front door.

Can you determine who has knocked or rung the bell, WITHOUT opening the door ? If you can not, you have a weakness in your security awareness. The only way to correct it is to install an intercom or a trelli-type gate.

CONCLUSION

We hope that these notes have served to help you increase your security awareness but please do not rely on these alone. Consult the experts; contact your security company for further, customized advice.