C___ A A A _ E
A SAFET G IDE

Finding the perfect apartment is a near impossibility. Price, space, facilities, roommate expectations and landlords are only a few concerns. Safety and security are often forgotten and only emerge as a priority after the lease is signed or, even worse, after you are a victim. The USF Police Department Crime Prevention Unit provides this guide to assist you with making a more informed decision.

FINDING A SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD

A quiet street with shade trees is not necessarily the best street to live on. The only way to evaluate a neighborhood is to do your own research.

- Approach the immediate neighborhood or block from all directions in a one-mile radius. Check at night as well as during the day. Notice how well lit the area is at night. Look at the condition of homes/buildings and watch for such things as the presence of abandoned vehicles or trash not picked up. Disrepair signals a deteriorating area, ripe for crime. Look at how much activity there is. What kind of people do you see? If there are gangs or youth loitering in the area, you may have a cause for concern.

- Knock on doors and introduce yourself to prospective neighbors. Ask if there are crime problems in the neighborhood. This is a good way to size up the people who live there. If they won't even answer the door, they may be fearful.

- Contact the police agency that serves the area where you intend to rent and inquire about speci c crime rates. Ask the person you are talking to if he/she would want to live in that area or have a relative live there.

- The USF Off-Campus Housing Of ce (813-974-7613) may be able to assist you with locating off-campus housing to suit your needs

LANDLORD INTER IE

Interview the landlord and ask:

- What security advantage is there over other apartments in the area?

- How many and what type of crimes have occurred in or near the area (murder, rape, armed robbery, burglary, theft)?

- What measures have been taken in the last two years to upgrade property security?

- Is there an active Crime Watch Group? If so, what is the name and telephone number of the coordinator?

- What type of exterior door and lock(s) does the apartment have?

- Are there Security Guards on duty after dark?

- Will the apartment be re-keyed before I move in?

- Who-other than the occupant(s)–is authorized to have keys to the apartment.

- Are there telephone jacks in each room?

- Are there locks on all bedroom doors?

- Are workout rooms or computer labs under camera surveillance or do they have combination locks for added security?

DOORS: HAT TO LOOK FOR

- Are all outside doors solid core or metal-clad in construction?

- If hinges are on the outside, are the pins the non-removable type?

- Do all outside doors have deadbolt locks?

- Do sliding glass doors have screws in the frame that prevent the doors from being lifted up and out of the tracks?

- Do sliding glass doors have a secondary security device (Charlie bar or dowl)?

ABO T STRIKE PLATES

A strike plate is found on the doorframe where the lock catches and it should have an extended surface area. The strike plate itself should be embedded in the door's frame and 2 x 4 studs with 3-inch wood screws.

DOOR LOCK T PES

- Double Deadbolt – requires a key to operate it from both sides

- Single Deadbolt – requires a key on the exterior and thumb-turn on the inside.

- The bolts in each of these shold have a 1-inch throw into the door jam.

LANDSCAPING: HAT TO LOOK FOR

Does the landscaping create "blind spots" which allow someone to stand our crouch unobserved by your window? Shrubs or other plants around the apartment should be trimmed back to allow for a clear view of all windows and doors. These items should be kept less than 2 feet tall or below the lower edge of your window.

E TERIOR DOOR T PES

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E TERIOR LIGHTING: HAT TO LOOK FOR

- Are all entrances well lighted?

- Do lights turn on automatically at night?

- Do they all work properly? Are they protected or placed at a height that will not allow the casual removal or bulbs?

- Are the parking lots well illuminated?