

Parker Plaza NEWSLETTER

A Monthly Newsletter for Residents of the Parker Plaza Condominium

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IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Main 954-458-5111
Security..... 954-458-5111 (ext. 1)

OFFICE HOURS

Mon.- Fri. .....9:00 am - 4:30 pm





Condominium Association Inc.
2030 S. Ocean Drive
Hallandale, Florida 33009
www.parkerplazaestates.buildinglink.com

Don't be Polite When it Comes to Security



One World Trade Center in New York City, has a security system that cost $20 million to purchase and install in 2008. Nonetheless, in 2016 a New Jersey teenager managed to get in and roam about for two hours. Everyone knows the security dangers in that scenario. Maintaining secure areas is a problem because people are so nice. They let their colleagues into the building, even when they are not sure they know the person. The most common causes of unauthorized entry into a building are piggybacking or tailgating.

Tailgating and piggybacking Tailgating occurs when one person properly enters a secure door but another follows, unbeknownst to the first person. Piggybacking is different because the piggybacker gets permission. The piggybacker actually asks for access (Hey! Hold the door!). Sometimes, people just hold the door for the person coming behind them.

The habit of courtesy.
Holding the door for someone is a deeply ingrained habit. If that person is carrying something large, like computer equipment, it is virtually seen as a requirement to hold the door. But that is a typical ruse. "If you ever used your access card to get into a building, then held the door open so someone who looked like he might work there can enter, you have participated in a security breach," says Mark Borto, CEO of Boon Edam, the leading manufacturer of security entrance solutions in North America.

Quoted in Bloomberg Businessweek, Borto also says, "The best access control systems in the world can be defeated by exploiting the fact that people are nice and will allow others to follow them through doors." Simple courtesy seems benign but it puts everyone at risk.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

How To Get Through A Multi-Day Power Outage



It does not take a wildfire or a hurricane to leave a house dark for days. A summer thunderstorm, an ice storm, or an overtaxed grid can do it -- and a little planning turns a dangerous ordeal into a manageable inconvenience.

Start with food and water. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, an unopened refrigerator keeps food safe for about four hours, and a full freezer holds its temperature for roughly 48 hours, or 24 if it is half full. Keep the doors shut, and when in doubt, throw it out. Store at least one gallon of water per person per day. Light the house with flashlights, not candles, which are a leading cause of house fires during outages. Keep phones charged, and add a power bank and a battery-powered radio so you can still reach family and follow the news.

The deadliest mistake is bringing a generator too close. According to Ready.gov, generators, camp stoves, and grills must run outdoors only, at least 20 feet from any window, door, or vent -- never in a garage, even with the door open. Their exhaust carries carbon monoxide, an invisible gas that kills hundreds of Americans a year. Never heat a home with a gas oven, for the same reason.

Plan ahead for anyone who depends on electricity. Have a backup for power-dependent medical devices, know that refrigerated medicines such as insulin should be replaced if an outage runs long, and check on older neighbors, who are the most vulnerable when the heat or air conditioning stops.

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Preparedness Includes Your Wallet

Emergency planning usually brings to mind flashlights and bottled water, but disasters are also financial events -- and a few quiet steps now can speed a recovery later.

Start with cash. According to Ready.gov, when the power fails, ATMs and card readers fail with it, so keep a modest amount in small bills somewhere safe.

Check your insurance before you need it. Federal officials point to a fact that surprises many homeowners: standard homeowner policies typically do not cover flood damage, which requires a separate policy through the National Flood Insurance Program -- and that coverage usually takes 30 days to take effect.





PATRICKJAIMEZ PA

Mobile (786)-277-7355
patrickjaimez@gmail.com
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WHAT AN AIR CLEANER CAN – AND CANNOT – DO



An air cleaner can be a big help for people with allergies, but there are some things it won't do. It will not lower the radon in your basement, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. It will not fix a mold problem, and it will not do much about the fumes from fresh paint or a new carpet. No air cleaner removes everything. What a good one will do is pull particles out of the air: pollen, dust, pet dander, mold spores, wildfire smoke.

The number to look for is the CADR, or clean air delivery rate, verified by the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers. It tells you how much clean air the machine delivers per minute, with separate scores for smoke, dust and pollen. AHAM's rule of thumb: the CADR should be at least two-thirds of the room's square footage. A 300-square-foot bedroom wants a CADR of 200 or better. Buy a true HEPA filter, which traps 99.97 percent of particles down to 0.3 microns. Be wary of "HEPA-type" and "HEPA-like," which mean almost nothing. Add an activated carbon layer if odors are the problem. Skip ozone generators -- the EPA warns that ozone irritates the lungs and does a poor job on pollutants anyway. Look for CARB certification, California's ozone safety standard.

Cigarette smoke is the hard case. The visible haze is particles a HEPA filter can catch, but the smell is a gas that slips straight through -- only activated carbon adsorbs it. No purifier can pull the smell out of walls, curtains and upholstery. Then check these two costs: replacement filters, which can run $50 to $100 a year, and noise. A loud one is a nuisance.

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