



Gatehouse Operations Survey Response #1 (April 22, 2019)

As a follow-up to the recently completed residents' survey, the Shadow Wood Gatehouse Operations Team (GO Team) will present a brief series of communications focusing on the key items noted by the residents.

Before diving into the survey comments, we thought it would be good to introduce the members of the GO Team, because we realize that although they are an integral part of our community, many residents do not know who they are.

Click here for [Shadow Wood GO Team](#)

Surprisingly you will note that there are only 18 people on the team working on a 24/7, 365 basis. This small group is responsible for:

- Patrolling more than 30 roadways while covering 50+ miles multiple times each day.
- Overseeing two gatehouses (Coconut Road and Three Oaks Parkway) through which more than 880,000 vehicles passed last year.
- Processing hundreds of phone calls daily concerning the Shadow Wood community.

The good news is the survey showed that residents are very pleased with the team, giving them particularly high marks in:

- Staff Courtesy – 99% (Satisfied or Very Satisfied)
- Staff Communication – 98%
- Staff Appearance – 98%

Though **Community Patrol** (94%) and **Visitor Access** (92%) were also highly rated, residents' comments showed that there is some concern in these areas. The comments also highlighted **Traffic Safety** as an issue, including the enforcement of the Shadow Wood community's "Rules of the Road."

Our series will focus on these three topics in particular, with a goal of allaying the community's concerns and answering key questions. As part of this, we also hope to clarify the role of the GO Team to better set the community's expectations.

By all measures, Shadow Wood is a safe community, but maintaining this standard requires a continuous effort on the part of all residents and employees. Said another

way; safety is everyone's business. Residents can do their part by keeping their homes, property and vehicles properly secured (locked and alarmed). Another critical element of this effort is the roving Community Patrol.

Reading through the survey comments, it is clear that some residents view the Patrol as having more responsibilities than for which they are trained. This causes both confusion and, often times, frustration. Many view them as a mini police department while others see them as wild animal wranglers and this is simply not the case.

In summary, the Patrol performs many tasks that include but are not limited to:

- Provides a connection between the gatehouses and activity occurring in the community.
- Deters criminal activity with patrol presence in all neighborhoods and common areas by driving marked vehicles.
- Traffic Enforcement – Checks for speeding, stop sign and parking violations, including Fire Code prohibition of parking in cul-de-sacs. Street parking is enforced at night unless notice is given to the gatehouse for a viable reason (i.e. driveway repairs).
- Ensures that all Vendors have ceased working and have exited the community by 6 PM.
- Each 8-hour shift conducts three tours of all neighborhoods and the exterior perimeter of the community for unusual behavior or damages to fencing or walls (50 miles/tour, 450 miles/day).
- Ensures that Williams Rd emergency gate and Commons Club pedestrian gate are operational.
- Observes, documents and notifies residents of safety hazards or dangerous situations such as gas leaks, fires, suspicious persons, vehicles or activity, sounding home alarms, lost persons, signs or trees down, open garage doors (at night)
- Checks all street lighting and submits report to Grounds Maintenance for replacement.
- Observes and reports emergency activity involving EMS, Estero Fire or Sheriff's Dept.
- Storms – Conducts pre-storm check list which includes proper debris removal at home construction sights. Performs post-storm damage assessment in all neighborhoods.
- CPR certified and acts as first responders until EMS arrives.
- Removes unauthorized Realtor signs and enforces community fishing policy.
- The Patrol is mandated to obey all traffic rules within the community including driving within the speed limit. Therefore, when their services are requested, please be patient because they may be responding from the opposite side of the community or they may be in the middle of handling a complaint that must be completed. Additionally, there is only one roving patrol on duty at any given time.

The Patrol acts as another set of "Eyes and Ears" for the community, keeping a vigilant watch for unsafe conditions as residents and vendors go about their daily business. As a part of their patrol, they keep their eyes open for anything unusual. They address issues that they are trained to handle and refer more complicated matters to the appropriate agency, such as the Lee Co. Sheriff's Office or Estero Fire/Rescue.

These referrals are necessary because the Patrol does not have the authority to enter a resident's home or the training to investigate burglar alarms. Although they are trained to perform CPR and use AEDs, they are not trained medical professionals and cannot transport people in their vehicle.

Realizing this, it is imperative that residents **call 911 for all emergencies before notifying the gatehouse staff**. Emergency responders have the ability to enter the community via the Coconut and Three Oaks gates; they also have the ability to open the emergency gate on Williams Road, which can help expedite their response.

Regarding animals (snakes, alligators, dogs, etc.), the Patrol is not trained or certified in the proper removal of these creatures. In many cases they are bound by law not to touch the animals. They may be able to "scoot" some smaller creatures to a safer location, but they will not transport them from the scene.

Lee County does offer domestic animal services (239-533-7387) but does not offer wild animal control. Residents that see a potentially dangerous wild animal (i.e., one that could cause imminent harm) should call the gatehouse staff and they will provide you with the appropriate agency to contact. These include:

- Nuisance alligators – 866-FWC-GATOR (866-392-4286)
- Snakes and other small animals – Dames Pest Control 239-775-8855
- General information - Florida Wildlife Conservation 863-648-3200

Please note that residents are responsible for any costs associated with the removal of nuisance animals. Regardless whether or not an animal control agency is contacted, it is always best to leave problematic animals alone by keeping your distance.

Our goal is to keep Shadow Wood as safe as possible, but we need your assistance. Residents can help by:

- Contacting the appropriate group (Sheriff, Fire, EMT) via 911 for all emergencies.
- Calling the gatehouse only when absolutely necessary for visitor access, instead authorizing guests and vendors by calling the Automated Voice Messaging System at 239-949-0099 or emailing the staff at SWCAGates@gmail.com
- Ensuring visitors and vendors are aware of the ID requirements (valid driver's license) to expedite access.
- Advising vendors that they must exit the community by 6 PM.
- Making sure that resident contact information is accurate (more on this in a future newsletter).

Our next edition will focus on Traffic Safety, until then please follow posted speed limits and traffic controls (e.g., stop signs).

Have a safe, enjoyable spring! *John Grusemeyer and the GO Team*