



# Office of the Sheriff

Jacksonville, Florida

## Crime Free Hotel/Motel Program



The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office is implementing a citywide program called the **Jacksonville Crime Free Hotel/Motel Program**. The program, which is endorsed by Sheriff John Rutherford, is a partnership between the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, owners, managers and staff of our Hotels/Motels. Our goal is to keep drugs and other illegal activity out of our hotels/motels.

### **Crime Free Hotel/Motel Program Overview**

Hotel/motel properties present a unique challenge for law enforcement. Although their primary function is to house guests for a specific "limited" time period, individuals who may not be able to qualify for an apartment may decide to rent a room for an extended period of time, usually by the month. This type of residential use can create problems for the hotel/motel, and often directly correlates to criminal activity both on the property and within the surrounding community. Although there are certainly legitimate reasons why a person might prefer a long term hotel/motel rental to an apartment rental, when dealing with such a request the hotel/motel manager should consider why the person is unable or unwilling to rent an apartment. Why is the person willing to pay more than apartment rent would be for accommodations that may be less desirable than an apartment in many ways? The answer may be that hotel/motel occupancy better accommodates the person's desire for greater mobility to enhance their criminal activities.

Although long-term rentals can give a property a higher occupancy rate, frequently the cost of this higher occupancy rate is additional criminal activity that makes the property less desirable for legitimate, law-abiding guests. Once this criminal element is introduced, the property may begin spiraling downward as it becomes increasingly crime-ridden and increasingly less desirable for legitimate guests. The situation may eventually reach a point where the only people willing to stay are the criminals perpetuating the property's descent into blight. Such a chain of events results in frustration both for the property owners/managers and the police department, as calls for service increase and the police department's attempts to handle the numerous complaints are to no avail. In addition to on-site criminal activity, numerous arrests involving guests are made off-property, but do not come to the attention of the hotels/motels management.

One innovative approach to this multi-faceted problem is the CRIME FREE HOTEL/MOTEL PROGRAM. This is a new program, modeled after the very successful "Crime Free Multi-Housing Program." Each of these programs has had a significant impact on crime reduction in the areas implemented, and in some areas the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program has resulted in an impressive 60% decrease in calls for police

service. The programs stress increased communications, specific procedures for guest/tenant registration, and additional preventive protocols all designed to assist both the hotels/motels and the police department in combating the criminal activity on these properties.

In short, the purpose of the CRIME FREE HOTEL/MOTEL PROGRAM is to forge a partnership between the police and hotel/motel property managers, and to assist property managers in establishing protocols and guidelines to reduce criminal activity on their properties. This partnership will help you better serve your legitimate guests, by deterring criminals from reducing the value of your property and your business. Reduced crime on your properties may also have the added benefits of reduced liability, reduced maintenance costs and reduced stress for management. We look forward to your active participation in this program.

- The program consists of three phases that must be completed under the supervision of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office.
  - **Phase 1 – Management Training**
    - Property Managers, owners and staff receive four hours of training in the operation of the Crime Free Hotel/Motel Program. Training consists of the following:
      - Crime Prevention Techniques
      - CPTED (Physical Security)
      - Benefits of guest Screening
      - Eviction issues
      - Addressing drug activity on their property
  - **Phase 2 – CPTED Survey**
    - A complete CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) survey is conducted on the Hotel/Motel property.
    - A minimum safety standard must be met to participate in the Crime Free Hotel/Motel Program. The following items are the minimum standards;
      - 180 degree eye viewers in all front doors
      - One inch deadbolts on all exterior doors
      - Minimum of two inch screws in strike plates on exterior doors (exception; steel framed door jambs)
      - Lift and slide protection on windows (accessible)
      - Lift and slide protection on sliding doors (accessible)
      - Adequate security lighting in working order (throughout the property)
      - Properly trimmed landscaping throughout the property (3 and 7 foot rule – bushes and shrubbery trimmed below 3 feet and trees trimmed up to 7 feet)
      - Visible display of property address from the roadway
      - Background checks on All employees

- Positive Photo I.D. of\_Guests
- Key Accountability/Control
- Cash Handling Policies
- \* Crime Free Policy Card Utilized
- \* Confirm Photo I.D. on Credit Card Guests
- \*\*\* Properties may chose to select either the policy card or confirm I.D. on credit card guests to become fully certified. Both are strongly recommended.

- **Phase 3 – Staff Training**

- Crime Prevention
- How to recognize criminal indicators
- Safety

- **Certification**

- Hotel/Motel properties that successfully complete all three phases of the training are permitted to post signs on their properties (see example sign below).
- Certified properties will also be given the following:
  - Authorization to use the Crime Free Logo in advertising and marketing of their property.
  - JSO will place a list of certified properties on the JSO website.
- If a property fails to keep their standards, at our minimum level, their certification will be revoked

## **Sample Certified Membership Sign**



- **Hotel/Motel Benefits**

- Reputation for active management
- More satisfied guest.
- Lower maintenance and repair costs
- Increased property values
- Improved personal safety for guests, staff, and managers
- Peace of mind that comes from spending more time on routine management and less time on crisis control.