

MOTSSERA

SUBURBS REDUCE CRIME WITH TWO-WAY RADIOS

In a drive to reduce crime in Johannesburg's residential suburbs, Motorola has launched a community blockwatch pilot with the Sandown, Strathavon and Eastgate Residents Association (SSERA). The pilot will run for three months and is already proving successful. The goal is to improve security by using two-way radio technology to increase reaction time if an incident occurs, encourage blockwatch committee members to communicate regularly on suspicious activities and provide a direct link to Secureco, the suburb's appointed security firm. Ten of the Residents' Association committee members have been given a Motorola portable two-way radio and the guards and patrol vehicle each have a Motorola GP380 radio.

"Since using two-way radios, we have virtually no crime in the area," says Trevor Durbach, security co-ordinator for SSERA. "We believe the radios are an essential part of our security system, as they provide us with instant communication and a direct link to the guards patrolling the Sandton, Strathavon, Eastgate area. At the push of a button, we can alert committee members and the guards to suspicious events or incidents immediately. This has resulted in more proactive guarding and improved reaction times - we can now prevent crimes from happening and apprehend criminals more effectively," he says.

"While the batteries offer some eight hours of talk time, they can be recharged in about an hour with a rapid charger. The committee members keep their radios on throughout the night, so we are constantly aware of what is happening in the area and can react rapidly if someone is in danger. We are also able to check on the guards and ensure they have not been injured or fallen asleep while on duty," concurs Warren Dunbar, SSERA Chairman.

In an emergency, victims typically have the option of pressing a panic button, hoping their security company receives the signal and responds timeously. The person activating the panic button has no way of knowing whether the signal has been received and the

security company has no information as to the nature of the emergency, which means both parties are literally working in the dark.

“Two-way radios enable us to provide valuable information to the guards and reaction units, telling them exactly what is happening, where, how many intruders there are, whether they are armed and what backup is required. With the improvement in communication between ourselves and Secureco, we have become more aware of what’s going on in our suburb and are playing a more active role in assisting Secureco to apprehend the perpetrators,” adds SSERA resident Gary Goldberg.

An important factor in the success of the operation is the individuals who use the radios. “If people act irresponsibly and take up talk time with idle chatter, they could seriously jeopardise someone’s safety in an emergency. Users must understand exactly how and when to use the radio and ensure they transmit a clear, concise message,” Durbach notes. “Having said that, the technology is extremely simple to operate which means children can be easily taught how to use two-way radios, improving peace of mind for families in the area.”

According to Grant Sleep, owner of Motorola authorised dealer Genrad, two-way radios are ideally suited to anti-crime initiatives such as this. “The ability to have instant group communication at the push of a button saves valuable time in an emergency – you don’t have to try to remember any telephone numbers or encounter busy signals when dialling. It gives people greater reassurance and they have an instant support group who can assist them in an emergency.

“Motorola has developed two-way radios specifically for the security industry. For example, the lone worker feature prompts the user to respond to a signal at set intervals. Failure to respond will cause the radio to enter emergency mode, thereby alerting the control room. The emergency signalling function allows a user to send a pre-recorded voice message to a particular group of people so that if there is an emergency and the

user is unable to call for help, the group has information about his location and caller status, he explains.

Durbach says the radios will be particularly useful during December – a time when many people go on holiday, leaving empty homes for criminals to target. “We are confident that the current level of crime will remain low, thanks to the two-way radios,” he concludes.

Ends.

Contact details:	Trevor Durbach Security Co-ordinator: SSERA
Telephone:	082 443 2065 Warren Dunbar SSERA Chairman
Telephone:	083 680 9670 Grant Sleep Genrad Communications
Telephone:	(011) 609-4081
Issued by:	Julie Gilbert Third Wave Communications
Telephone:	(011) 804-5271