



City of Ocoee Police Department

646 Ocoee Commerce Parkway (407) 905-3160 – Criminal Investigations Division



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Wednesday, October 18, 2017
PIO Contact: Deputy Chief Stephen McCosker
Phone #: 407-554-7192

The Ocoee Police Department has a new community-based initiative called the Be Aware of Residential K9s (B.A.R.K.) alert. The B.A.R.K. alert is designed to assist with heightened measures in officer and pet safety. This is done by empowering citizens with an additional tool that alerts first responders, when responding to calls for service, the presence of household pets. In addition to alerting first responders of the presence of a family dog, the new initiative works as a deterrent to potential burglaries and protect pets.

Through the B.A.R.K. program, the Department will issues residents a B.A.R.K. alert sticker to display on main entry points of their homes such as; gates, doors, and windows in the most visible place. The use of the B.A.R.K. alert sticker is encouraged for households that have residential dogs. The B.A.R.K. alertsticker can be removed and reattached if needed. The presence of the B.A.R.K. alert sticker makes first responders aware of a dog's presence so they can better anticipates the dogs' natural instinct to protect the home.

Ocoee Police Department continues to take action to improve encounters with dogs in the field. Our sworn personnel have received the United States Department of Justice, Police Dog Interaction Training. The officers also have access to animal catch poles, which is a tool that allows officers to humanely restrain an animal. The B.A.R.K. alert sticker is another tool created for residents, to help improve officer awareness of the dogs they may encounter while responding on scene.

The Ocoee Police Department believes the B.A.R.K. alert stickers may also have value as a crime prevention tool. According to the United States Department of Justice, *"On average, burglarized houses are less likely to have dogs than are non-burglarized houses, suggesting that dog ownership is a substantial deterrent."* As most crimes are crimes of opportunity, criminals who are alerted to a dog on the premises may be inclined to find a more vulnerable home.

The B.A.R.K. alert sticker is available to the public at the Police Department lobby or at our community events. For more information about the B.A.R.K. alert call 407-905-3160.



COOEE POLICE DEPT.

B.A.R.K.

alert