



## FORREST LAKE TOWNHOUSE ASSOCIATION

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### **Guidelines to New Residents** *(version: October 9, 2017)*

## ***Welcome to Forrest Lake!***

*We hope that you will enjoy the unique qualities of Forrest Lake (FL) as much as we do. To ease the entry process we have put together the following guidelines and instructions about our community that may be helpful to you as you take up residence. We wish you a very safe, happy and rewarding life here.*

#### **Facilities**

FL comprises 243 townhouses on a 22 acre site. The area is bisected by Lumberdale Road that dead-ends on the property and is adjoined by West Tidwell St. on the south side. The FL area is completely surrounded by fences maintained at FL expense and the only traffic entry and exit to and from the property is by the Lumberdale/Tidwell intersection. The FL property was built in the 1974/75 period and is currently 84% owner occupied. Most of the small number of renters on the property have lived here for many years. FL grounds include a spacious clubhouse, Olympic size swimming pool, wading pool, 2 tennis courts, many hundreds of feet of footpaths and private roads, and a 3/4 acre lake.

#### **Board of Directors (BofD)**

The FL Board of Directors consists of five positions, each elected by the majority vote of current homeowners. BofD members normally serve for 2 years but may be re-elected for further terms. The BofD may temporarily appoint residents to fill vacant board positions until the term of that position expires at the next election. The BofD is responsible for the direction of management, administrative and budgetary operations at FL. The General Manager reports directly to the BofD. The Annual Meeting of the homeowners takes place in October of each year and additional meetings for specific purposes may be requested by homeowners or scheduled by the Board. All meetings of the Board are announced 72 hours in advance and held regularly on the third Thursday of each month and all homeowners may attend these meetings as observers except for the executive sessions where specific matters concerning are discussed.

#### **Staff:**

The FL staff is currently comprised of a General Manager and three maintenance personnel. All are full time employees. The FL office is currently open Monday through Friday (except public holidays) from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm. Please call to make an appointment if you have a matter to resolve in person. Telephone numbers are: General Manager (713-681-3591); Security guards (see separate section)

#### **Maintenance Fee**

Effective November 1, 2017 the maintenance fee is \$345/month per townhouse, and covers administration, maintenance expenses, landscaping, trash collection, cable TV, water, exterior upkeep of individual houses, and security, etc. The Maintenance fee is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month. A \$34.00 late fee is levied on maintenance payments made later than 10 days after the due date. Also a \$35.00 charge is assessed on NSF checks. Residents who continue to be in arrears for Maintenance fees will have their water supply terminated and a \$35.00 reconnection fee is levied whenever water supply is re-established.

### **Townhouses**

Each homeowner is responsible for all upkeep and repairs within their own property, which is in effect what is above and below their foundation slab. This includes the patio area, fence and gate. The roof is the responsibility of the homeowner for all damage and perils caused by anything other than natural wear and tear. The Association collects funds from monthly dues to provide for roof replacement once every twenty years. The Association is responsible for all common areas including the landscaping outside of the home and patio, and the carports.

### **Patios & fences**

Patio fences are the responsibility of the homeowner and must be kept in reasonable repair. After due warning to the homeowner, FL reserves the right to repair and/or replace any fences not meeting the required standard and to bill the homeowner for the out of pocket expenses. Homeowners must give access to their patio area when required for FL maintenance purposes or for termite inspection. Houston Fire Department regulations forbid open fires adjacent to the house or combustible assets and therefore BBQ grills etc. cannot be operated in patio areas or within 10 feet of house property, fences or storage sheds. The design of any cover installed over the patio area must be approved by the BofD before work commences.

### **Carports & Parking**

Every townhouse has a minimum of two carports adjacent to the townhouse and reserved for their sole use. However, the carport area remains the property of FL, and neither it nor the storage shed is the homeowners property but only allocated for their specific use. Homeowners have the right to have towed any vehicle illegally parked in their reserved carport. On request, the Security Guard can assist in this. Homeowners must not park behind carports or in the entry lanes. Vehicles so parked may be towed. No commercial activities are permitted in the carport areas, FL roads, and grounds. Parking is allowed on the private and public streets in FL but care must be taken not to block the access of other vehicles or fire lanes. These areas are clearly posted and regularly inspected by Houston Fire Department personnel. No vehicle shall remain unmoved on FL private streets for longer than 24 hours. Such vehicles may be towed at owner expense.

### **Grounds**

FL grounds are private property, except immediately adjacent to Lumberdale and Tidwell, which are public streets. All residents have access to FL private grounds but visitors to FL are not permitted on the grounds without a resident also being present. Trespassers will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Footpaths are for pedestrian use only. No bicycles, skateboards, scooters, or skates are permitted on the selected paths, the bridge, pool area, and all other areas wherever signs are posted, but motorized wheelchairs are exempted. Ball games and other activities are also not permitted on the grounds anywhere except tennis on the tennis courts. FL has a contract with a professional landscaping company to provide grounds maintenance. This is usually done on one day per week and includes grass cutting, flowerbed work, shrub pruning, and garden trash removal.

### **Security & Safety**

FL places great emphasis on maintaining good security within its community and works closely with HPD and the Precinct One Constables Office deputies who also patrol in the area. In addition, FL has a contract with an accredited security company to provide security officers for permanent duty in our community on a 7 day-night/week basis. Currently, three security officers are physically based in FL and maintain a presence at the entrance to the property as well as making frequent patrols of the inside fence perimeter and grounds. Night and evening hours are always covered by their operations but their day schedule is varied to provide maximum security to residents. These officers are employees of a security company and are licensed by the State of Texas to meet state regulations and requirements. FL provides the security officers with electric security carts and these enable them to regularly patrol the property during their period of duty. When on duty, all security officers carry cell phones. **To contact security call 713-201-5656.** In addition to the presence of the security officers, FL has installed a series of video surveillance cameras to cover critical areas of our community such as the road entrance from Tidwell and the swimming pool gate areas. These cameras have been useful in providing valuable information to HPD and other law enforcement agencies on potential criminal activities. Their very visible presence at the entrance is also a deterrent to trespassers and other intruder

Forrest Lake security officers DO NOT perform the role of police. While they are licensed by the Texas Department of Public Safety, they DO NOT have the powers and responsibilities of a regular law enforcement officer. The duties of FL security officers are as follows:

1. To Observe
  - a. Monitor activity into and within the FL property
  - b. Be visible (as a deterrent to illegal access)
  - c. Identify problems and potential problems in FL (infrastructure damage, lights out, etc.)
  - d. Identify any problems of bad behavior, adverse trends, etc.
  - e. Identify any failure to observe FL community regulations, pool usage, speeding, parking, etc.
2. To Advise
  - a. Assists visitors to the FL community in locating their destination (unit)
  - b. Identify and deter potential trespassers and require them to leave the property
  - c. Reminding visitors and residents of FL regulations
3. To Report
  - a. Report problems, comments, etc. to the appropriate authority (FL office, FL Board, HPD, etc.)
  - b. Detail action requirements needed

In all cases where a crime is committed (and/or suspicion) on your property and/or if you feel that you are faced with a life threatening situation then FL residents should first call 911. They should then call the FL security officer (Tel: 713-201-5656) and report what they have done. This will alert the FL security officer on duty, if he is not already aware of the matter, and will also allow him to direct police, fire or emergency units when they arrive.

#### **Commercial Activities**

Commercial activities are strictly forbidden on any FL grounds, roads, or facilities. No signs promoting such operations, or other sales or service type activities, such as garage sales, are permitted on FL grounds, roads, or facilities. They will be removed and disposed of without further warning.

#### **Noise and unacceptable behavior**

Since 1975, FL has worked hard at maintaining a high standard of civil conduct among its residents and this has resulted in a unique, convivial, and attractive community. It is the intention of FL to maintain this quality of life. The BofD is diligent in actively addressing any emerging problems in this respect, and maintains a close liaison with our security personnel, Precinct One Constables Office, and the Houston Police Department. As houses in FL are closely situated and in most cases joined to adjacent houses by a common wall, common courtesy, and good judgment dictates that all residents should keep noise levels as low as possible to avoid disturbing neighbors. Loud stereos and car radios are not permitted in FL and action will be taken against repeat offenders.

#### **Clubhouse**

The FL clubhouse is situated in the center of the lake. The General Manager's and the maintenance crew's offices are also located in the clubhouse that is tastefully decorated and furnished and also contains a refrigerator and kitchen facilities (but no cooking permitted). On request to the General Manager, the clubhouse is available to any resident for private functions and parties. A \$150.00 charge is made per event and a \$300.00 deposit is required to ensure satisfactory cleanup. The resident renting the clubhouse must be present during the entire rental period and is responsible for conduct of guests and any clean up required. Guests at a clubhouse event are not permitted to use the pool or the pool area.

#### **Trash Pickup**

FL has a contract with a professional trash removal company for trash pick-up twice a week from each house. Homeowners should put their household trash in plastic bags and place in the bins at the back of their townhouse storage area. No items of food or other waste products should be placed in the trash bin except in a sealed plastic bag. Heavier or larger items should be stacked in the same area but care must be taken not to block vehicle access. There is a limit to what our trash removal company can and will remove so individual homeowners are responsible

for the removal and disposal of all very large items such as furniture, carpet rolls etc. Bins adjacent to the tennis court area are for Maintenance use only and residents should not use these.

#### **TV Cable**

FL has a contract with Comcast Cable to provide services. The cost of the Comcast Expanded Basic package is currently included in the maintenance fee. If additional channels are desired then these must be negotiated with Comcast Cable by the individual homeowner.

#### **Pets**

Pets are permitted in FL but must not be a nuisance to neighbors. Excessive dog barking and vocal cats, particularly at night, are considered a nuisance, and residents are required to take remedial action. Pets must be on a leash at all times outside the house and are not allowed to roam freely on the grounds. Homeowners are responsible for cleaning up any deposits left by their pets on the grounds. To comply with City Health and Safety regulations, these rules will be strictly enforced.

#### **Lake**

One of the attractive features of FL is the 3/4 acre lake. This contains several species of fish, turtles, and other aquatic life and plants. No fishing, boating, or swimming is allowed in the lake.

#### **Pool**

FL has an Olympic sized main pool and a smaller wading pool. Except as advised by notices on the entry gates the pool is open daily for most of the year from 7:00 a.m. to 10 p.m. The pool area is normally closed one day a week (usually Mondays, but check notice) for cleaning and refurbishing. In accordance with Houston City Health and Safety regulations, no food or glass containers are allowed in the pool area and all children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult (18 or over). FL visitors may only use the pool if accompanied by their host FL resident and residents should not exceed more than four guests per townhouse and at least one resident of this must be present. Access to the pool area is by an electronic key card (two to each homeowner) and gates must remain in the locked position except during entry and exit. No lifeguard is provided at the pool and residents and their guests use it at their own risk. All posted regulations must be followed.

#### **Fireplaces**

Many FL townhouses have fireplaces that if not properly maintained can be a hazard. Residents are recommended to have these inspected each year prior to the winter season.

#### **Mailboxes and delivery**

A mailbox is provided for each house in the mailroom located adjacent to the General Manager's office. The U.S. Post Service (USPS) also provides parcel lockers for larger parcels they deliver to FL and which will not fit in the mailbox. These boxes and lockers are the property of the USPS. Any complaints on their operation and service should be addressed to that organization. The parcel lockers are located in the area close to the tennis courts.

#### **Homeowners Insurance**

Forrest Lake is not a condominium complex but is a neighborhood of townhomes. Each townhome owner owns the ground and portion of their building including exterior walls, foundation, windows, doors and roof.

Homeowners are required to carry complete homeowners insurance that would provide for the repair and/or full replacement of their portion of the building including the exterior walls and roof should a catastrophic event occur including natural disasters. To ensure that all residents maintain adequate insurance coverage a current copy of insurance must always be on file in the office (most insurance companies will send directly to Forrest Lake with each renewal).

#### **Flood Insurance**

Since being built in 1975, Forrest Lake has have never experienced any actual flooding within the community. However; all homeowners are recommended to obtain special flood insurance coverage under the appropriate Federal sponsored program as normal home insurance does not cover flood conditions.

A portion of Forrest Lake was for the first time designated by FEMA in 2007 (along with thousands of other properties in Houston) as now being considered in the floodplain. Because Forrest Lake has never experienced flooding even during extreme events like Tropical Storm Alison the board made the decision in March of 2009 to contract with a licensed land surveyor to conduct an elevation survey of each home. The survey results indicated that the homes that are in the new floodplain fall just slightly below to above the “flood” elevation. Elevation Certificates were made available to all homeowners for a low fee. Because the homes that are in the new floodplain fall just slightly below to above the “flood” elevation the certificate should allow for a discount on flood insurance. Contact the General Manager if you need a copy of the Elevation certificate.

Please visit [www.forrestlake.com](http://www.forrestlake.com) and navigate to the “Documents” page to view various documents, amendments to By-Laws, resolutions, and policies not included in the printed copy of the By-Laws.