

Neighborhood Watch

Information Handbook

A Guide to Establishing a Neighborhood Watch in Your Community

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Dear Resident,

It is my honor and privilege that I welcome your efforts in making the community a safer place. As it has been shown, Neighborhood Watch programs are one of the most effective means available for keeping crime out of neighborhoods. It relies on the best crime fighting tool ever invented, a good neighbor.

Neighborhood Watch programs unite the Upland Police Department with local organizations and individual residents in a community-wide effort to reduce crime. Neighbors working together with the Upland Police Department are a formidable crime fighting team. Be a good neighbor and make your community safer by starting a Neighborhood Watch Program.

DARREN GOODMAN, Chief of Police
Upland Police Department

Reasons for Neighborhood Watch

Crime Prevention

Disaster Preparedness

Build a Stronger
Community

What is Neighborhood Watch?

Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program enlisting the active participation of residents in cooperation with the Upland Police Department to reduce the incidence and fear of crime and improve the quality of life in their communities. In it you will get to know and work with your neighbors, and learn how to:

- Recognize and report crimes and suspicious activities
- Protect yourself, your family, and your property
- Protect your neighbor's family and property, and
- Identify crime and disorder problems in your area and work with the Upland Police Department to solve them.

The National Sheriffs Association created the National Neighborhood Watch Program in 1972, with financial assistance from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, to unite law enforcement agencies, private organizations, and communities in a massive effort to reduce residential crime. Since its establishment, Neighborhood Watch has developed thousands of such local residential crime prevention programs in which individual residents work to 1) make their own homes and families less inviting targets for crime, and 2) cooperate with law enforcement through block and neighborhood groups to control crime throughout the community.



Why Neighborhood Watch?

It is everyone's responsibility to make sure our community is safe. If you have ever fallen victim to crime, the shock, anger and helplessness is not easily forgotten. To protect ourselves we must look out for one another. Ask yourself: Is your neighborhood ready to resist crime? Or is it a target?

Chances are good that a home burglarized today is located in a neighborhood where one vital prevention tool is missing: an active Neighborhood Watch group. This community-based organization of residents working together with law enforcement has become the key to preventing burglary and crime nationwide.

The prevention of crime, particularly crime involving residential neighborhoods, is a responsibility that must be shared equally by law enforcement and residents. The fact is the impact on crime prevention by law enforcement alone is minimal when compared with the power of individual residents working with law enforcement and with each other. Neighborhood Watch is based on this concept of cooperation, and nationwide statistics prove that it works. When residents take positive steps to secure their property and neighbors learn how to report suspicious activity around their homes, burglary and related offenses decrease dramatically.

There are obvious benefits of Neighborhood Watch volunteers and their communities have experienced throughout the years such as:

- Crime reduction
- A better quality of life
- A greater sense of security, responsibility, and personal control
- Build community pride and unity
- Preparing for helping ourselves and others in our community
- Provide law enforcement agencies with volunteer support year round
- Residents become the extra "eyes and ears" of law enforcement personnel and therefore reduce law enforcement's burden

Since the establishment of Neighborhood Watch, however, thousands of residents who want to take intelligently planned action to decrease crime statistics in their areas have discovered that they have a ready, willing and highly qualified partner in their local law enforcement agency. These residents now know that their agency would rather work with community members to prevent crime than spend time and manpower investigating it after it occurs.

It is a fact of life that relationships in many of today's communities have become less personal than they were years ago. Families are more transient, children have more activities that take them and their parents away from home and there are more families with both parents working. The once-familiar sight of families visiting with each other on front porches while keeping a watchful eye on children and activities in the neighborhood is a rarity in most communities today. This trend away from personal contact in the neighborhood and the decrease in time families spend at home are two of the essential ingredients that make communities ripe for crimes of opportunity.

Starting a Neighborhood Watch

A Neighborhood Watch group is easy to start. Have a meeting with your neighbors and don't forget to invite a local law enforcement representative. Neighborhood Watch programs are built upon successful relationships between law enforcement and the community. Remember this is your Neighborhood Watch group and law enforcement is there to support and assist you. It is your responsibility to maintain interest and keep the group running smoothly. Building a strong Neighborhood Watch program is not an overnight process: it takes patience, planning and dedication. However a successful program will keep a community strong and protected and when a crime or emergency happens, they will be better prepared.



Five Steps to Building a Successful Neighborhood Watch

Step 1: Recruit and Organize as Many Neighbors as Possible

Talk with your fellow neighbors about their concerns regarding crime and safety in the area. Discuss and create awareness among the neighbors or potential volunteers about a particular concern or general issue affecting the neighborhood. The primary concern in the initial phase of forming a Neighborhood Watch is to collect all the information and develop a strategy to raise the level of awareness about the identified issues. Get the word out about the identified problems or concerns and begin to recruit and select individuals who want to form the "core" group of the new Neighborhood Watch effort. This core or planning group will be responsible for recruiting others, meeting with local law enforcement and building the Neighborhood Watch Program.

Step 2: Contact your Local Law Enforcement Agency and Schedule a Meeting

Once the community concerns or neighborhood issues have been identified and the core group has been established, the residents should meet with representatives of their local law enforcement agency in order to learn how the public and law enforcement can work together to build a partnership, create and sustain a Neighborhood Watch group, and resolve the community issues. Law enforcement officials will be able to help residents to formalize their Neighborhood Watch. They can also provide information, literature, training and a host of other important assets to help in building a new group.

Step 3: Discuss Community Concerns and Develop and Action Plan

One of the first meetings should address and prioritize the concerns, issues or problems that have been identified. All too often, new groups do not have a defined mission or specific goal and find themselves with no clear guidance or direction. Numerous activities may occur, but due to a lack of focus, they may not resolve the real issues. After the community's concerns have been identified and prioritized, the group will turn its attention to developing specific strategies to address these needs. Develop goals with specific objectives and realistic milestones. A plan of action should be adopted and implementation strategies should be designed that will not only guide the plan, but also provide a means to assess and evaluate its effectiveness.

Step 4: Hold Regular Meetings and Train on Relevant Skills

Once the new Neighborhood Watch group has been formed, and goals and objectives have been determined, the Watch leaders and volunteers should schedule meetings where they can receive training and hone their skills in crime prevention and community policing. Local law enforcement can provide a number of training programs that will help the residents work together to protect themselves and their communities. Depending on the type of activities that the group will undertake (whether neighborhood patrols, cleanup days, crime prevention seminars, vulnerability studies), residents can offer a variety of important crime and quality of life services once they receive the proper training and instruction.

Step 5: Take Action Steps

Take active steps in the community so everyone is aware about the Neighborhood Watch. Have a kickoff event to encourage others to get involved, start a Neighborhood Watch newsletter, and continue training. Most importantly keep the group active and enthusiastic. Maintain communication between group members and the law enforcement liaison.

Organizing Your Neighborhood Watch

There is no single right way to organize a Neighborhood Watch group. No matter how your Neighborhood Watch is set-up, the organizational structure must take into account the needs of the community and law enforcement. A traditional Neighborhood Watch group will include a law enforcement liaison Officer and a Neighborhood Watch Block Captain who lives in the community and Watch Members. One of the final steps in forming and organizing a Neighborhood Watch is the designation of leadership. These individuals will be responsible for the planning and coordinating activities. Watch leaders may be formal leaders elected by their peers or informal leaders who are simply the first to volunteer. As a Neighborhood Watch becomes more advanced, the members might form an advisory or executive board to make decisions for a larger area/group. It doesn't matter how your group is set-up, as long as your community members are excited and effectively addressing the identified problems.

The Law Enforcement Liaison

The Upland Police Department has Officers who act as liaisons with the community and serve to establish strong partnerships. The officer in charge of all Community Outreach programs will provide a link that will unite the Upland Police Department with the community it serves. The officer will monitor crime trends in your areas and identify ways to lower crime and address quality of life issues in the city.

The Neighborhood Watch Block Captain

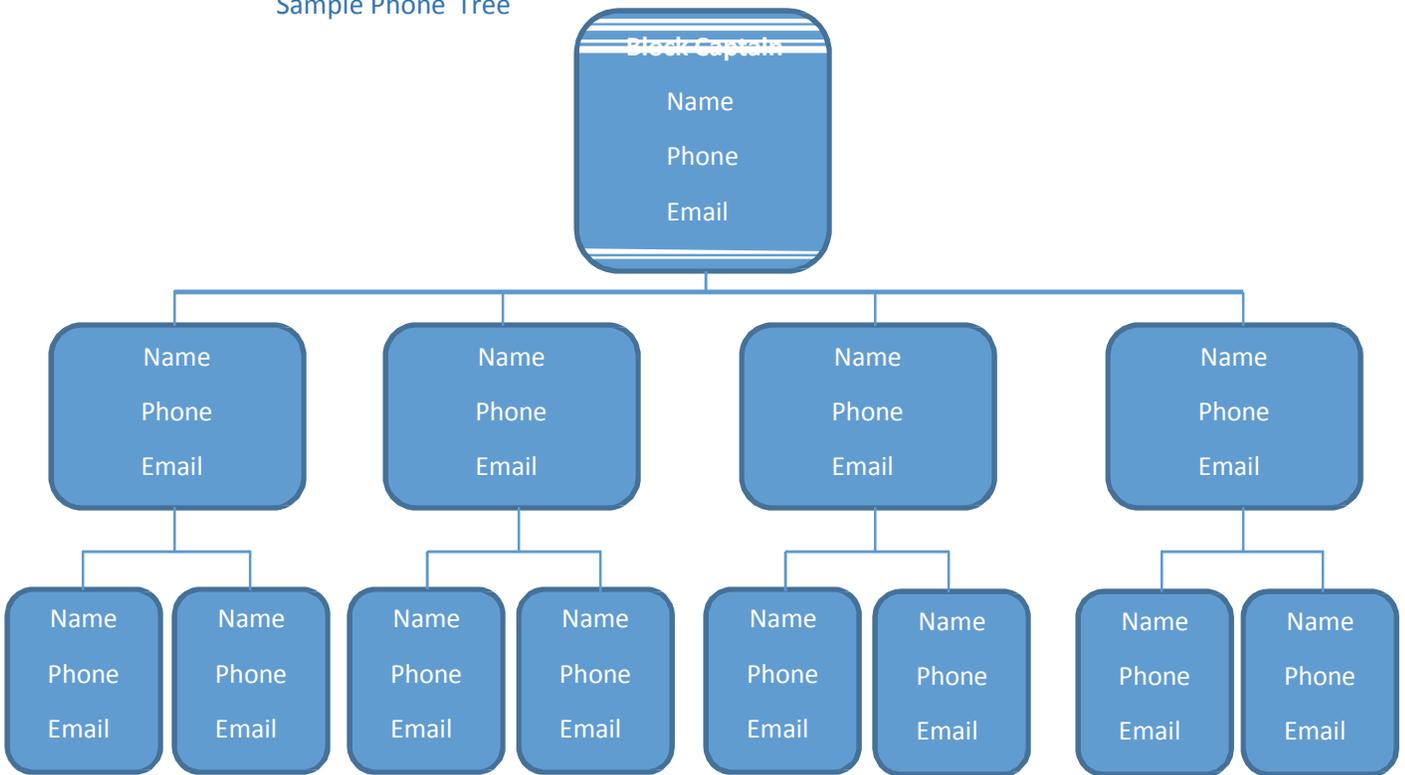
The Block Captain's job is crucial to the success of your program. This may be just the right job for a retiree or other individual who has extra time at home. This person's responsibilities may include:

- Expanding the program and maintaining a current list of participants and neighborhood residents, including name, addresses, home and work numbers, email addresses, and vehicle descriptions.
- Acting as liaisons between Watch members, Officers, civic groups and Block Captains.
- Arranging neighborhood crime prevention training programs.
- Obtaining and distributing crime prevention materials, such as brochures, stickers, and signs.
- Involving others to develop specific crime prevention projects.
- Visiting and inviting new residents to join, notifying them of meetings and training sessions.
- Contacting each neighbor as often as possible to discuss possible crime problems, needs for assistance, and suggestions for program improvement.

Phone Tree

Phone trees are a great way to share information and build a sense of community in the neighborhood. They can expedite emergency information. Neighborhoods can be divided into small, workable areas using streets or natural boundaries. Each group prepares a chart (which is continuously updated) that includes the names, phone numbers, and email of all members. A Block Captain or other designated person can contact law enforcement for updated information that can be relayed. Each individual listed on the tree knows whom he/she is to contact should an emergency or other important information need to be disseminated in a hurry.

Sample Phone Tree



Neighborhood Maps

A neighborhood map is a powerful tool on a simple sheet of paper. Along with a phone tree, a map can give residents information on where everyone in the neighborhood lives and also put landmarks and distance from house to house into perspective. The map will familiarize Neighborhood Watch members with families living in the neighborhood as well as address any potential dangers during an emergency.

- The map should indicate N, S, E, W.
- Label all streets inside and connecting the neighborhood.
- Draw squares for homes and list full names, address, phone and email.
- Identify seniors and/or neighbors with health or mobility problems who may need special attention.
- List the make, model and license plate number of vehicles at each home. Help neighbors by letting them know which vehicles belong there during daytime hours.
- If a household won't participate, list only their address on the map.
- Make note of the people who are Block Captains.
- List the Police contact name and number.
- Give a copy of the map to everyone who participates.
- Create your map in any way – by hand, computer, etc. You can even use google maps to help you.



Planning and Conducting Meetings

Traditionally, Neighborhood Watch was always about having meetings to discuss crime in the neighborhood, but as Neighborhood Watch has changed, so have meetings. The key to planning a successful Watch meeting is organization. Neighborhood Watch leaders should be aware that participants are volunteering time out of busy schedules and should work to ensure efficient and informative meetings. Meeting leaders should have facilities prepared prior to the meeting, start and finish on time, and thank participants for attending.

Some meetings require a face-to-face gathering. By meeting in person, you are able to establish, build, and maintain personal relationships with the people with whom you are working. By holding a meeting, you are able to educate and share valuable information with attendees. You will be able to “read” your audience in order to focus on things that are important to the group as a whole. Meetings allow those in attendance to discuss ideas and make group decisions. By meeting in person and talking together, new ideas can be generated and the group will focus on issues and information important to the group as a whole.

Inviting Neighbors

You want to get as many neighbors together as you can. How you invite them is important. Think of it this way: what would make someone get off the couch after a long day at work to come to a meeting with a group of strangers? Most people don't even know what a Neighborhood Watch is. They might think it means committees, meetings, or having to pay money.

- Make your invitation simple and clear. Mention a recent crime as incentive.
- Deliver the invitation in person if possible. Face-to-face is more effective than leaving a piece of paper on a doorstep.
- Ask if they could spare “only one hour” to talk with other neighbors about how to fight crime in the neighborhood.
- Get a couple of neighbors to walk with you to help deliver invitations.
- Plan an activity for children near the meeting, perhaps ask a responsible teenager to watch them. Mention this on the invitation to encourage parents to attend.
- Offer other incentives, food or door prizes.

Meeting Logistics

It is important to select a date and a time for your meeting that is convenient for most of the people invited. You will not be able to accommodate every person, but you should try to appeal to the majority. For example: If your meeting consists of mostly working professionals, then you will not want to interfere with their business day. You might schedule the meeting in the evening, just after work so that they can attend.

You should also select a location convenient for the majority of the group. Club houses, neighborhood schools and faith-based organizations often provide meeting space for groups such as Neighborhood Watch. Remember to use the partnerships you have developed in the community. Invite people from your partner organizations or ask to use their facilities for meetings.

Facilitating a Meeting

- Be warm and friendly, making a point to say hello to everyone.
- Consider holding an informal social time before or after the meeting.
- Consider providing name badges. This will help with introductions as well as help the instructor to encourage participation.
- You might also want to consider an icebreaker exercise in the first couple of meetings.
- Begin and end on time.
- Stick to the schedule you set – it helps establish your credibility in being able to control the meeting.
- Set ground rules, such as time allowed for speaking and adhering to the agenda.
- It may be appropriate to take minutes.
- Stay focused on the task at hand to ensure the meeting fulfills its purpose.
- Encourage polite discussion allowing everyone an opportunity to participate.
- Clearly summarize decisions made and issues that require consensus/voting.
- Direct conversations about disagreements so that they do not spiral out of control.
- Allow each person time to speak without dominating the discussion.
- Remember to listen for what is not being said.
- Try to find and resolve sources of confusion, hidden agendas, and emotions.
- As meeting comes to a close, set the date, time and place for the next meeting. If you meet on a regular basis, use this time to remind your group of the next meeting. If you know the topic and purpose of the next meeting, this would be a good time to generate excitement for that meeting.

After the Meeting

After the meeting, review how the meeting went and how it could be improved. Effective meetings will not disappoint those in attendance because it will show Neighborhood Watch values busy schedules, but encourages people to stay involved. The Neighborhood Watch Block Captains should distribute minutes (or make them available) including details about action items and assignments, persons responsible, and timeliness. Each Block Captain should follow-up with people who did not attend to see if they had questions about anything discussed. This will encourage people to stay involved, even if they can't attend meetings.

Maintaining Watch Groups

One of the biggest challenges to Neighborhood Watch is maintaining momentum after the problems are “solved.” When Neighborhood Watch groups organize around safety concerns, enthusiasm is usually high and participation good. A few months later, the excitement dies down and communication often drops. In order to maintain a strong group expand the focus of your Watch group. It is important to find other activities to keep your group engaged.

Be Creative

Information Sharing

- Write your own Neighborhood Watch newsletter or email newsletter. Keep people up to date on crime or other subjects of interest.
- Form a team to actively recruit new members or encourage previous members to attend. Lack of attendance can sometimes be a lack of information. If neighbors are informed about safety and security issues they may be more willing to attend.
- Expand Neighborhood Watch concerns beyond crime prevention to include quality of life issues and fun activities to build community spirit.

Exercise Walking Groups

- It’s easier to pursue fitness with a companion. Arrange time with some of your neighbors to run, walk, or bike regularly. While doing this you may notice subtle changes in your neighborhood and unusual activity.

Dog Walking Group

- Walking your dog with neighbors on a regular basis allows you to build a stronger community while making your presence known to those that would threaten the safety and security of your neighborhood.

Garage Sale

- Pitch in together and buy an ad for a neighborhood/block sale. You can use the money to purchase signs, radios, and vests for your Neighborhood Watch group.

Neighborhood Clean Up and Landscape Trimming

- Rent a dumpster for a weekend. Neighbors can share tools and expertise to help one another. End the day with a barbecue or night of desserts and socializing amongst one another.

Start Up Training Sessions

- Start and participate in training sessions given by volunteers or your local law enforcement agency.

Block Parties, Pot-Luck’s, and Barbecues

- Get together every 3-6 months to ‘reconnect’, keep it fun and light.

Local Interest Groups

- Community service groups could share what is happening with your group.

Recognizing Your Volunteers

People need to feel appreciated when they give up time for their community. In order to keep Watch group members involved and excited, take time out to recognize them. There are two basic forms or recognitions: formal and informal. Formal recognition often occurs in an organized setting such as a recognition dinner, reception etc. Informal recognition includes simple things such as a thank you note. Use the form of recognition that will best motivate your volunteers. There are also two types of recognition: awards and rewards. Awards are such things as certificates or plaques, often seen in formal settings, such as conferences or town meetings. Rewards are a type of recognition that are often seen in an informal setting and can be more of a thank you gift for services. Some suggestions for rewards are a gift certificate for volunteer service or a gift for participation. They may also include a job promotion or an opportunity to learn a new skill by training.



Neighborhood Watch Skills – Using Your "Eyes and Ears"

Once you have established a strong Watch group, it is important to start building skills needed to make your group a success. While Neighborhood Watch exists for more than just crime prevention, it is important to build the skills necessary for preventing crime as well as preparedness for natural/man-made disasters. Schedule training sessions with your law enforcement liaison or other law enforcement agencies that might have training courses.

Observation Skills

Most people go through the day without even noticing everyday events. However beginning to recognize what is normal around you is the first step in recognizing what is not normal. Although law enforcement officers are trained observers, sometimes they find it difficult to explain to the community what to report and when to report it. While patrolling the streets, officers get used to looking for activities or events that seem out of place or are not part of the regular or ordinary routine. Officers may not be able to articulate specifically what is unusual, but they are keenly aware that something is awry. Officers sometimes refer to this phenomenon as a "sixth sense" or "street smarts." And they instinctively know when something is not right and they should investigate. Community members should know they have the ability to recognize unusual events as well. It is a matter of practicing Observations Skills to make them stronger.

In order to understand how to properly observe people, vehicles and incidents that may affect us, we should begin by learning what types of things to observe. You should pay attention to things like:

- Physical setting – Specific location, time of day, day of week
- People – What do they look like? (Height, Weight, Ethnicity, Gender, etc.) How many are there?
- Specific Items – What is important?
- Routines – Did you notice any recurring patterns or routines? How often did they occur? Who was involved?

One of the keys to a successful Neighborhood Watch program is recognizing the importance of using good observation skills to keep your neighborhood safe. Practice looking at a picture of someone to know how to describe them. Clothing is important, but look for things that cannot be changed, like skin or eye color, hair, scars, moles, tattoos, height and weight. Properly observing vehicles is similar to observing individuals. You always begin with the basics, such as the make and model of the vehicle. Identify the vehicle as a Ford, Chevrolet, Dodge, Honda, Mercedes, Volvo, etc. Then identify the type of vehicle (such as an SUV, pickup truck, etc.), as well as the specific model if possible (such as Corolla, Accord, Expedition, etc.) To remember license plates: write it on paper, on your hand, or even scratch it in the dirt! License numbers are useful only if they are correct. Never hesitate to say, "I'm not sure." With a vehicle description, even a partial license plate can be valuable.

What is Suspicious Activity?

All too often individuals are confused about what they should report and why, so it is important to train residents through a variety of reporting activities. Often residents ask officers “Why should I get involved?” or “How am I going to benefit by reporting suspicious activity?” Although the answers may seem obvious, it must be clearly communicated to the public that they are an essential component in protecting our communities. Sometimes our residents receive mixed signals regarding what to report and when to report it. Other times they simply do not know what is expected of them. It is important to learn specific definitions and details to provide Watch volunteers with clear and concise information. Begin with defining “suspicious activity.” Suspicious activity can refer to any incident, event, individual or activity that seems unusual or out of place. Some common examples of suspicious activities can include:

- A stranger loitering in your neighborhood or a vehicle driving the streets repeatedly.
- Someone peering into cars or windows.
- A high volume of traffic going to and coming from a home on a daily basis.
- Some loitering around schools, parks or secluded areas.
- Strange odors coming from a house, building or vehicle.
- Open or broken doors and windows at a closed business or unoccupied residence.
- Someone tampering with electrical, gas or sewer systems without an identifiable company vehicle or uniform.
- Persons arriving or leaving from homes or businesses at unusual hours.
- Multiple persons who appear to be working in unison and exhibiting suspicious behaviors.
- Signs of forced entry or tampering with security or safety systems.

The effectiveness of the police efforts is enhanced by active participation on the part of residents. By calling to report suspicious persons or activity, you not only aid the police you make your community a safer place to live. Some people fail to call because they are not aware of activities that might be suspicious. Others may notice suspicious activity and hesitate to call for fear of being labeled a “nosey neighbor.” Still others take it for granted that someone else has already called. Always report suspicious activity and all crimes because police don’t know there’s a problem unless they are told.

Knowing What and How to Report

There are four general categories to consider when determining what to report 1) suspicious activities; 2) people and vehicles; 3) illegal activities; 4) unusual events or incidents, dangerous situations.

By reporting these types of activities and situations, residents can make their communities safer and more secure, reduce violence, minimize victimization, reduce crime, and improve the overall quality of life. Community members must also be instructed on how to report suspicious activity. To report suspicious activities, crimes in progress or possible terrorist activities, simply

- Dial 9-1-1 and call the police department.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator what happened and the exact location.

- Provide a detailed description of individuals or vehicles.
- Remain on the phone and stay calm.
- Be prepared to answer follow-up questions.

One idea for a creative Neighborhood Watch meeting is to visit the local 9-1-1 Dispatch center. If someone is willing to take your Watch group or even the Block Captains around the center, community members will understand the fast pace of a 9-1-1 call center.

This will emphasize the need for clear reports of suspicious activity. Some 9-1-1 centers won't accept non-emergency calls; they will give another number to call. During one of your first Watch meetings you should find out all the local numbers to call for non-emergency calls to police. Only serious and legitimate calls should be made to 9-1-1, no matter what. Teach children how to respect the 9-1-1 system and how to use it if they are alone. Children learn by "doing" but practice on a toy phone only. Encourage them to be good community members; help them learn to watch for trouble and how to get help when needed.

When to Call 9-1-1 and When Not!

Call 9-1-1 is an important communications tool for emergencies. However, some individuals call 9-1-1 in non-emergency situations. This can delay the dispatch operator receiving a call from a person needing help. It is important that not only your group but all residents understand when to call and when not to call 9-1-1.

When to Call

- Medical emergency (examples: chest pain, extreme shortness of breath, uncontrolled bleeding).
- Motor vehicle accident.
- Fire.
- When a life is in danger.

When Not to Call

- The power is off.
- Asking for directions.
- Asking for telephone numbers of others.
- Requesting to speak with a particular officer.
- Inquiring as to the time and day.
- Inquiring about community activities and locations.

Community members only serve as the extra "eyes and ears" of law enforcement. They should report their observations of suspicious activities to law enforcement; however, residents should never try to take action on those observations. Trained law enforcement should be the only ones ever to take action based on observations of suspicious activities.

Additional Neighborhood Watch Activities

Preparing for Disasters

Use partnerships with government agencies, nonprofit organizations and your local fire department to find out about the classes and training they offer in first aid, CPR, fire suppression, and disaster preparedness. These trainings are essential to keeping your community safe and allow residents to take control of their own safety. Most of these organizations will be thrilled to participate and your Neighborhood Watch group will be excited about the different types of training.

Beautification Projects

Your group can organize an effort to remove graffiti, trash, abandoned autos, and other unsightly nuisances from your neighborhood community. Community pride can be enhanced even in impoverished areas by working to make the area more attractive and livable. Research has indicated that improvements of this type can have measurable effects on reducing actual crime as well as the fear of crime among community members.

Fundraising

Some Neighborhood Watch groups seek grants from city and private groups. But fundraising by Neighborhood Watch members can be an excellent way to increase operating funds and increase involvement. Fundraising opens doors for activities. In addition the group becomes stronger as a vision is created through the goals that are achieved as a community.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Neighborhood Watch groups can seek the training and advice from local government agencies or law enforcement to better safeguard their homes through environmental design.

- *Natural Surveillance* – “See and be seen” is the overall goal when it comes to CPTED and natural surveillance. A person is less likely to commit a crime if they think someone will see them do it. Lighting and landscape play an important role.
- *Natural Access Control* – Utilizes the use of walkways, fences, lighting, signage and landscape to clearly guide people and vehicles to and from the proper entrances. The goal is not necessarily to keep intruders out, but to direct the flow of people while decreasing the opportunity of crime.
- *Territorial Reinforcement* – Creating or extending a “sphere of influence” by utilizing physical designs such as pavement treatments, landscaping and signage that enable users of an area to develop a sense of proprietorship. Public areas are clearly distinguished from private ones. Potential trespassers perceive this control and are thereby discouraged.

- *Maintenance* – The “Broken Window Theory” suggests that one “broken window” or nuisance, if allowed to exist, will lead to others and ultimately to the decline of an entire neighborhood. Neglected and poorly maintained properties can be breeding grounds for criminal activity.

Operation Identification

This is nationwide crime prevention program where property is marked or engraved with a special number. This is called an owner applied number (OAN) and it can be used to report stolen items. Burglars usually avoid marked items because they are hard to re-sell and if caught with the items, it leads to successful prosecution of the criminal and a return of the property to its rightful owner.

- Mark valuables with driver’s license number or state identification number or for a business, state tax ID number.
- To make sure nobody changes the OAN, put the two letters of your state at the start and end it with DL, ID, and Tax ID number, whichever applies.

It’s a good idea for community members to make a list of their property, including CDs, DVDs, videos, computers, televisions, and any other items of value. The list should be kept in a safe place and when possible photos should be taken.



Preventing Crime and Building a Safer Community

Through Neighborhood Watch Programs, determined residents are decreasing their chances of becoming victims. Alert participants are making things hard for potential criminals by:

- Arranging for home security inspections by crime prevention officers to identify security vulnerabilities.
- Upgrading locks, security hardware, and lighting; and installing alarms when security inspections show particular hazards.
- Training family members to keep valuables secure and to lock doors and windows when leaving home; it is a good practice to keep doors locked whether anyone is at home or not.
- Asking neighbors to watch for suspicious activity when the house is vacant.
- Marking valuable property with an identifying number to discourage theft and help law enforcement agencies identify and return lost or stolen property.
- Organizing block parent and block watch groups to assist children, the elderly, and other especially vulnerable persons if they appear to be distressed, in danger, or lost.
- Meeting in neighborhood groups with trained crime prevention officers to discuss needs and crime prevention strategies.
- Developing neighborhood telephone tree systems for quickly alerting each other about criminal activity or disaster in the area.
- Developing programs that train residents to prepare and respond to natural and/or man-made disasters.

Additional Resources

Social media is a great way to share information with your neighbors. You can create a Neighborhood Watch Facebook or Twitter group and set it to "private" where only those people who are part of your watch team are permitted access. Other sites are directly geared for Neighborhood Watch programs including nextdoor.com and nixle.com. Both offer the ability to communicate and receive information with your neighbors and local law enforcement.

Social Media Sites

- Facebook.com
- Twitter.com
- Nixle.com
- Nextdoor.com

