

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Neighborhood Watch, Block Watch, Town Watch, Crime Watch – whatever the name, it's one of the most effective and least costly ways to prevent crime and reduce fear. Neighborhood Watch fights the isolation that crime both creates and feeds upon. It forges bonds among area residents, helps reduce burglaries and robberies, and improves relations between police and the communities they serve.

- **Any community resident can join – young and old, single and married, renter and homeowner.**
- **A few concerned residents, a community organization, or a law enforcement agency can spearhead the effort to organize a Watch.**
- **Members learn how to make their homes more secure, watch out for each other in the neighborhood, and report activities that raise their suspicions to the police or sheriff's office.**
- **You can form a Watch group around any geographical unit: a block, apartment, park, business area, public housing complex, or office.**
- **Watch groups are not vigilantes. They are extra eyes and ears for reporting crime and helping neighbors. Neighborhood Watch helps build pride and serves as a springboard for efforts that address community concerns such as recreation for youth, childcare, and affordable housing.**

Forming a Neighborhood Watch is a challenge. Here are a few tips to get your group started.

- **Select a coordinator and block captain who are responsible for organizing meetings and relaying information to members.**
- **Recruit members, keeping up-to-date on new residents and making special efforts to involve the elderly, working parents, and young people.**
- **Contact the North Neighborhood Police Center for help in training members in home security, reporting skills and for information on local crime patterns.**

Things for Neighbors to be aware of in the neighborhood:

- **Someone screaming or shouting for help**
- **Someone looking into windows and parked cars**
- **Unusual noises**
- **Property being taken out of closed businesses or houses where no one is at home**
- **Cars, vans, or trucks moving slowly with no apparent destination, or without lights.**
- **Anyone being forced into a vehicle**
- **A stranger sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child**
- **Abandoned vehicles**

Report these incidents to the North/East Neighborhood Police Center. Talk with your neighbors about the problems or concerns you have in the neighborhood.

How to report concerns in the neighborhood:

- **Give your name and address**
- **Briefly describe the event – what happened, when, where and who was involved**
- **Describe the suspect: sex, race, age, height, weight, hair color, clothing, distinctive characteristics such as beard, mustache, scars, or accent**
- **Describe the vehicle if one was involved: color, make, model, year, license plate, and special features such as stickers, dents, or decals**

It's an unfortunate fact that when a neighborhood crime crisis goes away, so does enthusiasm for Neighborhood Watch. Work to keep your Watch group a vital force for community well being.

- **Organize regular meetings that focus on current issues such as drug abuse, bias-motivated violence, crime in schools, childcare before and after school, recreational activities for your people and victim services.**
- **Organize community patrols to walk or drive around streets and apartment complexes and alert police to crime and suspicious activities and identify problems needing attention. For more information call (951) 826-8721.**
- **Adopt a park or school playground. Pick up litter, repair broken equipment, or paint over graffiti.**
- **Don't forget social events that give neighbors a chance to meet with other neighbors – a block party, potluck dinner, volleyball or softball game, or a picnic.**

Please call the North Neighborhood Police Center at (951) 826-8721 if you need assistance or are interested in Neighborhood Watch.