

# Block Watch Program

Neighborhood Watch, Block Watch, Town Watch, Crime Watch -- No matter the name, it's one of the most effective and *free* answers to crime. Watch groups are the foundation of community crime prevention and are often the steppingstones of community revitalization. In the simplest of terms, a neighborhood watch is homeland

security at its most local level. It's an opportunity to empower residents to become active in their own community.

Law enforcement believes in "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" and working with groups to facilitate Block Watch Programs, by bringing together residents and law enforcement to

improve safety and prevent crime. Safety improves when neighbors watch out for

each other by reporting suspicious activity and in progress crimes to 9-1-1. Crime prevention occurs when the opportunity for crime is removed and neighbors work together for a safer environment.

The following information will help you establish a Block Watch Program in your neighborhood. There is no single right way to organize a Block Watch Program. The extent and concerns within your community as well as the commitment level of the neighborhood residents will determine the success of your group.

## How does Block Watch work?

Block Watch organizes and extends what you are probably already doing on an informal level. We tend to know and watch out for our neighbors next door, but neighbors at one end of the block may not know the neighbors at the other end of the block. Organizing a Block Watch makes this attitude of watchfulness more systematic and provides a block map with neighbors' names and telephone numbers that can be used in case of an emergency.

Block Watch is simple to create and can improve the security of your neighborhood while also increasing your sense of community.

## Is Block Watch a lot of extra work?

Block Watch doesn't require you to perform any special tasks, attend lots of meetings or take on extravagant responsibilities. You don't have to patrol the neighborhood or tell your neighbors every aspect of your business. Block Watch just involves being alert and vigilant as a part of your everyday life.

All it requires is that you and your neighbors be familiar enough with each other to know who belongs in the neighborhood and who doesn't, which cars are a part of the neighborhood, and which aren't, recognize when something suspicious is going on and be a little more observant of changes in your surroundings. Block Watch is simply watching out for one another!



For Emergencies, CALL 9-1-1

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## TIPS

- Neighbors Helping Neighbors!
- Take photos and inventory your belongings.
- Have fun with your neighbors.
- For in progress crimes call 9-1-1.

## Roles of Block Watch

- ◆ Block Watch Coordinator—Crucial to the success of the program, the main person who oversees the Block Watch for your area, conducts the meetings and works with Captains for meeting agendas.
- ◆ Block Captain—recommended for every 10-15 houses, in some small areas the Captain/Coordinator are one in the same, they distribute information to members.
- ◆ Block Watch Members— residents who are motivated, willing and able to mobilize and participate in the program.
- ◆ Law Enforcement Liaison— your contact at the police department who can help guide the group or answer questions.

## Organizing Your Neighborhood Watch

- ◆ Talk to your neighbors, Recruit and Organize as many neighbors as possible!
- ◆ Meet informally to discuss current problems, expected results and get a commitment to work together to form a Block Watch.
- ◆ Select a Coordinator and or Captain, who will coordinate your Block Watch group.
- ◆ Select a date and location for the first Block Watch meeting and inform your neighbors, along with the Law Enforcement Liaison who can guide the group in the first meeting or provide ideas for meeting topics.

### Meetings

Meeting frequency can be chosen by the group, the idea is to ensure ongoing neighborhood relationships!

- ◆ Have attendees introduce themselves as new members may join each meeting.
- ◆ Develop a “Team Attitude” by discussing the issues and concerns of the area and ways to combat it.
- ◆ Select dates, times and locations that are convenient for most the participants.
- ◆ Discuss specific topics, as a group decide what qualifies as suspicious activity and when to call into 9-1-1 or the Block Captain.
- ◆ Meetings can also be fun, have game nights, BBQ’s, Ice Cream Socials, any way you choose to interact with your neighbors.

## Other Tips and Tools

Block watch is a group of neighbors working together to make their community a safer place to live.

- ◆ Attend meetings and get acquainted with your neighbors.
- ◆ Keep the member list updated and easily accessible.
- ◆ Be observant, reports suspicious behavior.
- ◆ Educate your neighborhood about crime prevention.
- ◆ Do Not physically confront suspicious people, CALL 9-1-1.
- ◆ Ask those who seldom leave their homes to be “window watchers”, and look out for children playing in the area and report any unusual behavior.
- ◆ Encourage residents to beautify areas and make homes as burglar resistant as possible.

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