



# Starting a Neighborhood Crime Watch



## Introduction

The police sponsored Neighborhood Crime Watch Program is one of the most effective and least costly answers to crime. Over the years, the program has become a proven method to reduce criminal activity and build a sense of community among neighbors. The people living on a street are most familiar with typical activities and are most likely to recognize when people, places, and things are out of order. The program promotes resident awareness of people and surroundings and reporting suspicious activity to the police.

Crime Watch groups sometimes serve as a catalyst for other community building and revitalization efforts. Once you meet your neighbors and begin working together, you are likely to find out you have more in common than just an interest in safety.

Step	Explanation
<b>Getting Started</b>	<p>A Neighborhood Crime Watch Group in a specific area is initiated when a resident or a group of residents contact the Police Department and express an interest in the program.</p> <p>You may contact your Neighborhood Police Officer (NPO) to initiate the process. If you do not know your NPO, contact the NPO Unit at 972-485-4881 or visit <a href="http://www.GarlandPolice.com">www.GarlandPolice.com</a>.</p>
<b>Schedule a Meeting</b>	<p>The NPO will schedule a meeting with you and your neighbors to explain how the program works. The meeting will likely be held in the evening during the regular work week. Host the meeting as close to the neighborhood as possible to encourage maximum participation.</p> <p>The first meeting will outline the basics of the program and provide information on home security. The officer will provide registration forms to all participants. When the forms are returned to the NPO, you have officially started a Neighborhood Watch</p>
<b>Crime Watch Signs</b>	<p>When a sufficient number of residents from the area participate, the area will be eligible to have Neighborhood Crime Watch signs installed. The cost for the sign and installation is \$25 each.</p> <p>Signs are usually placed along major thoroughfares and residential collector streets. The signs themselves do little to prevent criminal activity, but they are an indication that residents are active participants in crime prevention. Citizen involvement is the key to success.</p>



## Neighborhood Management Starting a Neighborhood Watch

Step	Explanation
<b>Participant Roles</b>	<p>You and your neighbors play a key role in keeping law and order in the community. You decide how much crime will be tolerated in neighborhoods by your action or inaction.</p> <p>Once the idea of a Crime Watch is accepted, the group must choose a coordinator. Whether you choose to take on leadership role or support the team, everyone can participate.</p> <p>All Neighbors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Improve home security. Ensure all doors and windows close and lock properly</li><li>- Keep an inventory of possessions</li><li>- Obtain the phone numbers of neighbors on each side of your residence</li><li>- Report suspicious activity</li><li>- Watch out for unfamiliar vehicles</li><li>- Store lawn equipment and other valuables appropriately</li></ul> <p>Block Captains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Serve as a liaison between the block and the Crime Watch Coordinator</li><li>- Distribute information to the block</li><li>- Maintain contact information for the block</li><li>- Know which families are on vacation</li><li>- Report unusual activity</li></ul> <p>Crime Watch Coordinator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Serves as a liaison between the neighborhood and the Police</li><li>- Distributes information to the block captains</li><li>- Maintains a phone list of members</li><li>- Makes arrangements for meetings</li><li>- Reports unusual activity to the block captains</li><li>- Attends quarterly meetings at the Police Department</li></ul> <p>Law Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Keep Coordinator informed about new programs and materials available to the group</li><li>- Provide information to the Coordinator concerning crime trends and statistics in and near the area</li><li>- Survey homes and businesses at the request of the owners to enhance security</li></ul>



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<b>Planning for Success</b>	<p>Implementing a Neighborhood Crime Watch Program is a worthwhile task and it requires commitment from the neighbors. As a group, you decide how formal the structure will be. With the right planning, success is in within your reach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Choose a consistent meeting date, location, and time.</li><li>- Understand that not every neighbor can attend all meetings. However, a newsletter, e-mail distribution, phone tree, or flyers are good tools to keep everyone informed of decisions, events, and alerts. A regular means of communication is important.</li><li>- Coordinators and block captains must emphasize that crime watch groups are not vigilantes and do not assume the role of the police. The role of neighbors is to be alert, observant, and caring—and to report suspicious activity or crimes immediately to the police.</li><li>- If your crime watch group is not part of a neighborhood association, consider linking with other blocks or forming an association to strengthen your efforts.</li><li>- Include social time in your meetings so that neighbors get to know one another or plan social events outside of the regular meetings.</li><li>- Include everyone - homeowners, renters, couples, singles, senior citizens, young people, and the disabled.</li><li>- Recruit, promote, and evaluate.</li></ul>
<b>Suggestions and Other Considerations</b>	<p>The current NPO Map is located at <a href="http://www.GarlandPolice.com">www.GarlandPolice.com</a> Review the tip sheet on Effective Meetings <a href="#">[location]</a> Provide neighbors with a “Who do I call?” phone list <a href="#">[location]</a> Provide neighbors with a current Garland Neighborhood Management Academy Class Schedule <a href="#">[location]</a></p>