Neighborhood Watch Manual

USAonWatch - National Neighborhood Watch Program

USAonwatch.org

Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice

City of Redmond
WASHINGTON

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More Information: 425-556-2545

This manual has been created for citizen organizers and law enforcement officers that work with community members to establish watch programs. The material contained within covers a number of topics and provides suggestions for developing a watch groups. However, please incorporate topics and issues that are important to your group into your watch.

Grant Statement:

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Chapter 1

USAonWatch

The National Face of Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood Watch is one of the oldest and best-known crime prevention concepts in North America. In the late 1960s, an increase in crime heightened the need for a crime prevention initiative focused on residential areas and involving local citizens. The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) responded, creating the National Neighborhood Watch Program in 1972, to assist citizens and law enforcement. In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, strengthening and securing communities has become more critical than ever. Neighborhood Watch programs have responded to the challenge, expanding beyond their traditional crime prevention role to help neighborhoods focus on disaster preparedness, emergency response, and terrorism awareness.

In 2002, the NSA in partnership with USA Freedom Corps, Citizen Corps, and the U.S. Department of Justice launched USAonWatch, the face of the revitalized Neighborhood Watch initiative, which represents the expanded role of watch programs throughout the United States. USAonWatch empowers citizens to become active in homeland security efforts through participation in Neighborhood Watch groups. Many neighborhoods already have established watch groups that are vibrant, effective, and can take on this expanded role with ease. For neighborhoods without thriving groups, the renewed emphasis on emergency preparedness and response may provide the right incentive for citizens to participate in Neighborhood Watch in their community.

The foundation of the Neighborhood Watch program is the information, training, technical support, and resources provided to local law enforcement agencies and citizens. The training program is designed to build the capacity of law enforcement officers assigned to work with community groups by providing specific instruction on topics important to Neighborhood Watch. In addition to training, Neighborhood Watch has developed a new Toolkit that contains such items as posters, flipbooks on target hardening for the home, and presentations for the community.

To learn more, visit www.USAonWatch.org and browse the site. Check out the Resource Center, visit the Neighborhood Watch partners, subscribe to our electronic newsletter, or register your Watch group.

What is Neighborhood Watch?

A Neighborhood Watch program is a group of people living in the same area who want to make their neighborhood safer by working together and in conjunction with local law enforcement to reduce crime and improve their quality of life. Neighborhood Watch (NW) groups have regular meetings to plan how they will accomplish their specific goals and assign responsibilities to group members. Neighborhood Watch is homeland security at the most local level. It is an opportunity to volunteer and work towards increasing the safety and security of our homes and our homeland.

Neighborhood Watch empowers citizens and communities to become active in emergency preparedness, as well as the fight against crime and community disasters.

Activities conducted by Neighborhood Watch groups across the country are as diverse and varied as their volunteers and the neighborhoods they represent. Some groups mobilize to patrol neighborhoods, other distribute crime prevention information, while business assessments or home security surveys are conducted by others. Where disorder problems are the primary focus of Neighborhood Watch members, volunteers mobilize and conduct neighborhood clean-ups, or work with faith-based organizations to assist with the homeless and mentally ill who wander the streets. As law enforcement officers learn the needs of their various Neighborhood Watch groups and the dynamics of their volunteers, they can tailor activities and responses to meet the ever-changing needs of their citizens.

Program History

For almost 70 years, NSA has been committed to the safety and security of America's communities. NSA took crime prevention concepts a step further by making a national initiative – the National Neighborhood Watch Program. The program was developed in response to a multitude of requests from sheriffs and police chiefs across the country. Law enforcement leaders were looking for a crime prevention program to incorporate citizen involvement, and address the increasing number of burglaries taking place, especially in rural and suburban residential areas.

Funding was sought and obtained from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration part of the U.S. Department of Justice, and thus, the National Neighborhood Watch Program was born. The first two years of the program were devoted to disseminating information on the nature and volume of burglary, and providing information on how to secure residential property and make it less vulnerable to break-ins, also known as target hardening. From there, it evolved to promoting the establishment of ongoing local neighborhood watch groups where citizens could work in conjunction with their law enforcement agencies in an effort to reduce burglaries and other neighborhood crimes. The creation of "Boris the Burglar" arose as the symbol of crime prevention in neighborhoods.

Throughout the years, Neighborhood Watch has grown from an "extra eyes and ears" approach to crime prevention to a much more proactive, community-oriented endeavor. Neighborhood Watch groups are now incorporating activities that not only address crime prevention issues, but which also restore pride and unity to a neighborhood. It is not uncommon to see Neighborhood Watch groups participating in neighborhood cleanups and other activities which impact the quality of life for community residents.

In 2002, USA Freedom Corps was created under President Bush's initiative to build a national culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility. USAonWatch was established in partnership with the Department of Justice as an expansion of the Neighborhood Watch program to empower citizens to become directly involved in their community to prepare for all hazards. USAonWatch is one of five program partners of Citizen Corps, a national effort to encourage citizen involvement. Following the hurricanes of 2005, a new initiative for emergency preparedness and service swept the country. Neighborhood Watch groups are a way for law enforcement and citizens to work together not only for disaster preparedness but for all hazards and encourage citizens to volunteer in their communities.

Many Names, One Concept

After the National Sheriffs' Association kicked off the National Neighborhood Watch program, it was left to local law enforcement agencies to create local groups. Depending on the needs of the local communities, as well as the desire of the sheriff or police chief, Watch groups were started with different names and logos. However, the concept of crime prevention through citizen involvement remained constant. Today the National Sheriffs' Association and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), U.S. Department of Justice recognize that although a group might be called "crime watch," "block watch," "business watch," or simply use the name of the homeowners' association, it is still "neighborhood watch." By revitalizing the National Neighborhood Watch program as USAonWatch, all groups committed to reducing crime and making a difference in their communities belong to one national program regardless of the name or logo on the neighborhood sign.

Benefits of Neighborhood Watch

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

- a reduction in crime
- a better quality of life
- a greater sense of security, responsibility, and personal control

- building community pride and unity
- preparing for helping others and ourselves in our community
- providing law enforcement agencies with volunteer support year round
- becoming the extra "eyes and ears" of law enforcement personnel and therefore reduce law enforcement's burden

Who is Involved in Neighborhood Watch?

Any national initiative or program requires contributions at multiple levels, from the federal government to sheriffs to individual citizens. The National Sheriffs' Association is working with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, and the U.S. Department of Justice to form new Neighborhood Watch groups and revitalize existing groups. In order to reach the citizens, local law enforcement agencies have been given a charge to involve the people in their community. Anyone and everyone can be involved in a Neighborhood Watch group.

National-Level Partners

The Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice works with the National Sheriffs' Association to provide administrative and financial support to the Neighborhood Watch program. This support is used to produce and distribute products and materials that help create and enhance Neighborhood Watch programs across the nation. By mobilizing Americans to take action, crime and terrorism can be reduced.

State and Local Law Enforcement

Local law enforcement agencies are charged to reach out to their communities to form local partnerships that will assist in the development of new Neighborhood Watch programs and enhance existing programs. By partnering together, crime can be prevented or reduced, and the overall quality of life can be improved. Law enforcement officers include sheriffs' deputies, police officers, and any other sworn law enforcement officer.

Law Enforcement Liaison

A law enforcement liaison is the law enforcement officer or deputy specifically assigned the responsibility of establishing and supporting local Neighborhood Watch groups. The liaison will guide Neighborhood Watch leaders to make decisions that will be best for their group. The officer will train Neighborhood Watch leaders, block captains- and members in areas ranging from setting goals to how to report suspicious activities. The liaison should also be involved in facilitating community-wide Neighborhood Watch activities.

Community Members

Neighborhood Watch members have several responsibilities. One of the most important things a member can do is to remain active. An active member will help create and maintain a level of excitement about the program and will help recruit more members, leading to a higher level of crime prevention. It is the responsibility of members to stay informed about issues in their neighborhood and community. This information should be shared with others to keep members motivated and to prevent the group from becoming stagnant.

Chapter 2

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. NW 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.

- Begin to talk to your neighbors to gauge interest. If they don't understand what NW is, use the flyer at the end of this manual "Reasons for Neighborhood Watch" to explain the benefits
- Contact your local law enforcement agency. Many police departments and sheriff's offices have established programs or an officer assigned to NW. Call and tell someone you are interested in starting a group. They may have ideas or suggestions for starting a successful group. If an officer is not trained in NW, invite them to attend your first meeting and you can learn together.
- Don't be discouraged by low attendance or lack of interest. Not everyone will be interested in joining your Watch group right away or understand the need for the group. Continue to invite everyone and update neighbors who aren't involved. As the group grows, more will want to join!

Five Steps to Building a Successful Neighborhood Watch

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 more ready. Keep these Five Steps in mind when starting your group.

The 5 Steps

Step 1: Recruit and organize as many neighbors as possible.
Step 2: Contact your local law enforcement agency and schedule a meeting.
Step 3: Discuss community concerns and develop an action plan.
Step 4: Hold regular meetings and hold training on relevant skills.
Step 5: Implement a phone tree and take action steps.

Step 1

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. Citizens may want to collect data from a variety of sources, including police reports, personal observations, or media reports. In some cases, once the factual information on the issue is collected, other concerns may emerge and help to demonstrate the need for an active Neighborhood Watch. One example of this might be a situation in which citizens do not feel safe because of the large number of young people who seem to congregate in a single area and then roam the streets. Once information is collected about this problem, other concerns such as underage drinking, drug use or property crimes may be revealed. The primary concern in the initial phase of forming a NW is to collect all of the information and develop a strategy to raise the level of awareness about the identified concerns or issues. Once the data is collected, the organizers can format the information in order to be able to disseminate it to their targeted group of residents or potential NW volunteers. Letters, flyers, emails or even billboards can be used to spread the message about the concern and to mobilize people to form a NW group. In some communities, depending on the issues, the local media may help to spotlight the concerns and help to mobilize the citizens. Get the word out about the identified problems and begin to recruit and select individuals who want to form the "core" group of the new NW effort. This core group will be responsible for recruiting others, meeting with local law enforcement, and building or revitalizing the Neighborhood Watch program.

Step 2

Once the community concerns or neighborhood issues have been identified and the core group has been established, the citizens 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 such as police officers or sheriff's deputies will be able to help the citizens to formalize their Neighborhood Watch. Law enforcement officers can provide information, literature, training and a host of other important resources to help in building the new group. The new or revitalized group should register with USAonWatch to become part of the national initiative against crime and terrorism, and local efforts can be initiated to develop and build beneficial partnerships.

Step 3

One of the first meetings should address and prioritize the concerns, issues or problems that have been identified. Citizen volunteers may take the initiative to address some of these concerns, while for others the police or sheriff's department may want to implement crime reduction strategies. Conduct a meeting on strategic planning and identify the concerns and resources available. All too often, new Watch 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

Once the new or revitalized Watch group has been formed, and goals and objectives have been determined, the Watch leaders and citizen 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 citizens 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, or vulnerability studies for business assessments), citizens can offer a variety of important crime and terrorism prevention services once they receive the proper training and instruction.

Step 5

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

Chapter 3

Organizing Your Neighborhood Watch

There is no single right way to organize a NW group. Depending on local law enforcement and their requirements, there might not be a lot of choice. No matter how your NW is setup, the organizational structure must take into account the needs of the community and law enforcement. A traditional NW group will include a law enforcement officer or liaison to the group, an area coordinator who lives in the community, block captains spread throughout 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 Watch becomes more advanced, the members may form an advisory or executive board to make decisions for a larger area. It doesn't matter how your Watch group is setup, as long as your community members are excited and effectively addressing the identified problems.

The Law Enforcement Liaison

Traditionally, designated sworn officers or their non-sworn public service counterparts are assigned as liaisons or coordinators for Neighborhood Watch. Often these individuals are selected because of their previous crime prevention experience or training. Some Watch officers and coordinators are chosen because of their desire to reach out and work with the community, while others are selected because of their communication skills or abilities to plan, organize and mobilize others. In some situations the officer may have no prior NW experience and the community must help the officer understand the importance of NW.

A law enforcement or public safety officer who has been assigned as a liaison to assist, enhance, and support Neighborhood Watch efforts in the community should:

- Learn about the history of the Neighborhood Watch.
- Collect general information on the community or communities where he or she will be responsible for overseeing its implementation.
- Examine the geography of the area and any natural neighborhood boundaries.
- Examine the demographics of the population (especially any emerging trends).
- Examine the culture of the communities that the Neighborhood Watch groups will be serving.
- Collect data on the crime, disorder and quality-of-life issues in the general community.

It is important to note all of the information being gathered is general in nature. This foundational information should provide the officer with an understanding of what the Neighborhood Watch is and where the programs are going to be offered, enhanced, or expanded.

The Block Captain

Block captains are recommended for every 10-15 houses, and they should be directly involved with their immediate neighbors. The block captain's responsibilities may include:

- Acting as liaison between block residents and the coordinator.
- Establishing a "telephone chain" by compiling and distributing a current list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of block participants.
- Visiting and inviting new residents to join; notifying them of meetings and training sessions.
- Establishing an "Operation Identification" program.
- Contacting each neighbor as often as possible to discuss possible crime problems, needs for assistance, and suggestions for program improvement.

The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator

The Coordinator'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 names, addresses, home and work telephone numbers, email addresses, and vehicle descriptions.
- Acting as liaison between Watch members, officers, civic groups, and block captains.
- Arranging neighborhood crime prevention training programs.
- Obtaining and distributing crime prevention materials, such as stickers and signs.
- Involving others to develop specific crime prevention projects.
- Encouraging participation in "Operation Identification," a nationwide program in which personal property is marked legibly with a unique identifying number to permit positive identification if valuables are lost or stolen.

Citizens' Advisory Board

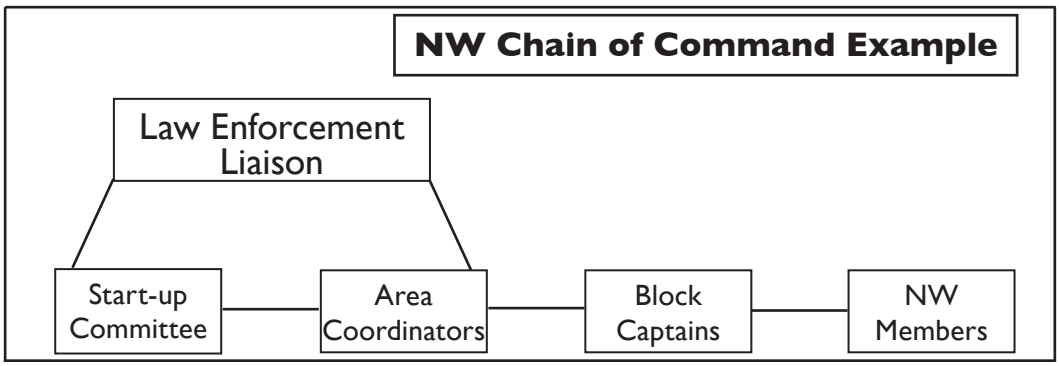
Some law enforcement agencies and cities running large NW groups have arranged for a group of citizens to oversee the NW groups in a certain area. This is a good idea if the NW plans on fundraising or if the number of groups is too overwhelming for the law enforcement liaison. The Board's responsibilities are:

- Neighborhood Watch group start-up assistance in other areas.
- Information, processing, training, and recruiting of groups in non-represented areas.
- Maintain communications between the Neighborhood Watch groups and the Board.
- Organize advisory committees as needed.
- Support and organize fundraising efforts in the community.
- Maintain a relationship with law enforcement.
- Bring emerging issues in the community to the attention of law enforcement and other government officials.

Neighborhood Watch Members

In some neighborhoods, the need for a proactive Neighborhood Watch program will be evident because of the well-documented crimes or the acknowledged disorder that occurs in the community. In these neighborhoods, residents are usually ready and willing to mobilize and participate in the NW program. They often need little external motivation. The focus in these areas is usually more on leadership and organization. However, in other neighborhoods the incidents or offenses may be less well known and the level of awareness among the residents may need to be increased. Under these circumstances the responsibility for raising the level of awareness falls upon the law enforcement liaison as well as the area coordinator.

The responsibility for the recruitment of volunteers usually falls to the Block Captains or Area Coordinators, but in some instances the officer may have to instruct these leaders on how to recruit new members. Once a core group



of Neighborhood Watch volunteers has been identified, specific members may volunteer to take on leadership positions. In some instances, certain individuals may be reluctant to take on specialized roles within the group. The law enforcement officer may wish to interview and select certain key individuals to lead specific efforts.

Phone Trees

Phone trees are a great way to share information and build a sense of community in the neighborhood. Phone trees 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 and phone numbers of all members. A Block Captain or other person is designated to be contacted by the police or sheriff's office. Each individual listed on the tree knows whom he or she is to contact should emergency or other important information need to be disseminated in a hurry.

When do you use the phone tree?

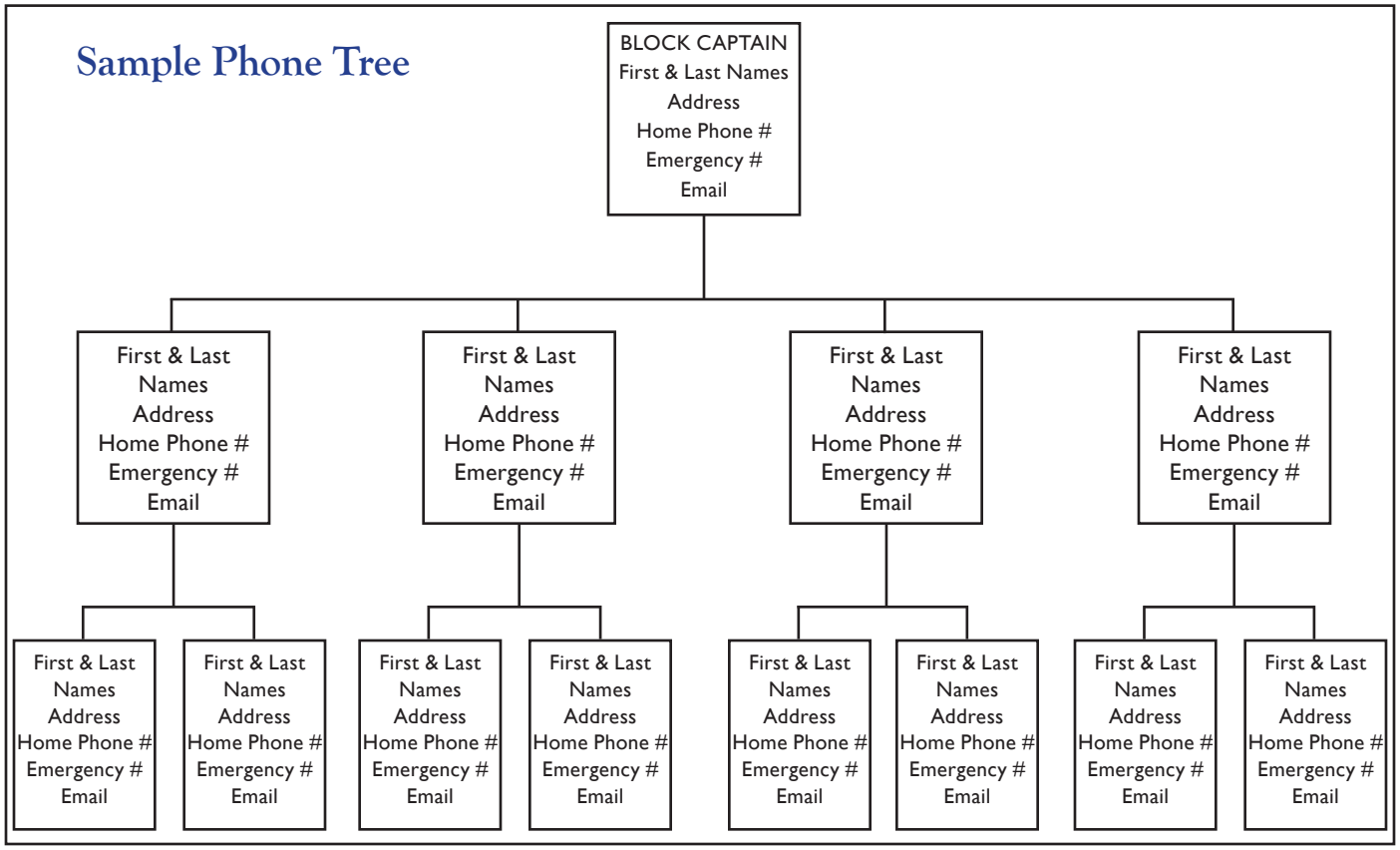
- After calling 911, alert your neighbors to an emergency in progress or that one has just occurred such as a cougar sighting, hazardous material spills, major traffic accidents, acts of nature, etc.
- To control rumors about crime in the neighborhood that you have verified or found false.

Why should the Phone Tree be used?

- When someone has urgent information to share (e.g. prowler in the area), they activate the telephone tree by calling the name at the top – the group representative.
- When you receive a call, call the next person listed under your name. If he or she is not home, call the next listed person down until you get an adult at home.
- The last neighbor to receive a call, calls the representative to confirm that they have received the message.
- It is best to practice the telephone tree on a periodic basis so that problems in the process can be fixed.
- Email can be used for not-in-progress crimes, meeting announcements, and general information.

Email

Nowadays email is one of the best ways to get in touch with your neighbors. Your group can organize an email list much like that of a phone tree. When an issue in the neighborhood comes up you can contact residents in a fast and efficient way with email. However, keep in mind that some people still do not have internet access at home.



Your group will have to decide who will maintain and update the email lists and what information should be included. Recommendations include: meeting reminders, information on crime in the neighborhood, business related directly to the group, and information law enforcement has asked the group to share. Information that should not be shared includes: chain emails, personal information about a neighbor, or news articles unrelated to the group.

**A number of companies have email/web communities that can be created just for your Neighborhood Watch. If you are interested in using the resources because it might be a good fit with your group, conduct a web search. Neither, the National Sheriffs' Association or Bureau of Justice Assistance recommend nor support any of the web-based online communities.*

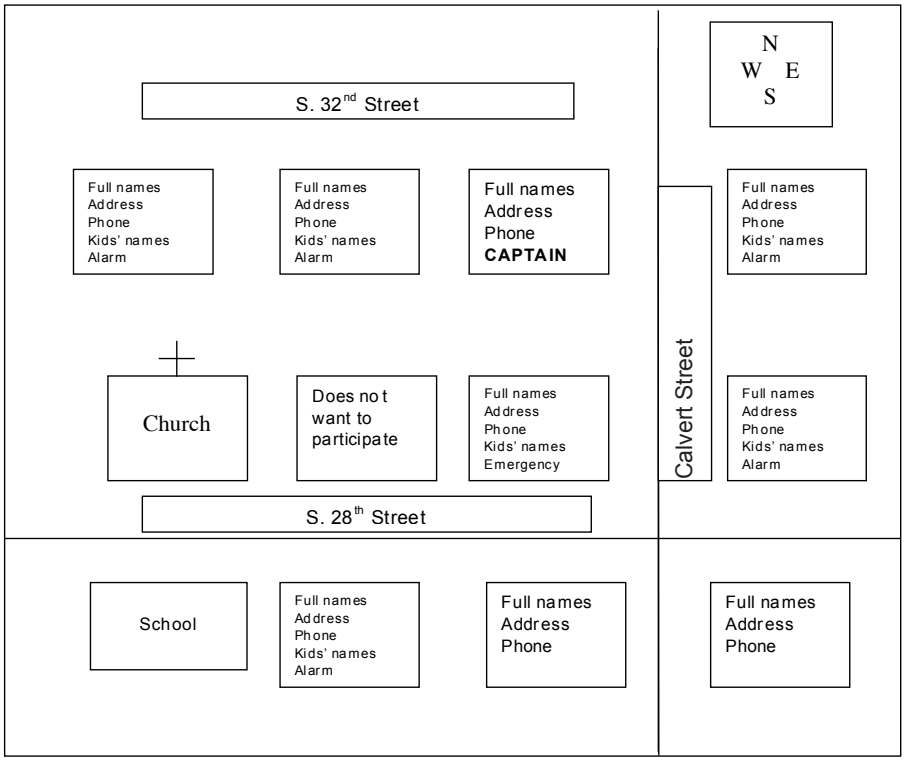
Neighborhood Maps

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 NW 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.
- Consider adding children's names, work numbers, and out of state emergency numbers.
- If a household won't participate, list only their address on the map.
- Make note of the people who are captain and co-captain(s).
- List the police contact name and number.
- Give a copy of the map to everyone who participates.
- Create your map by hand, computer, etc.

**Some free internet mapping programs or aerial photos might be helpful. To find them conduct an internet search for your street, town, and state.*

Make maps simple, start with N at the top, draw lines for streets and squares for houses, and fill in the information. If there's not enough room, just fill in the address then list names and numbers on the back. Or simply number the homes starting with "1" then list the address, name, and phone numbers on the back. Divide neighborhoods of 50 or more homes into "areas" because if a Watch group is too big, it can fall apart with only a few people to manage it. Each area could have a color or a name and its own area captain. This way, no one person has too much to handle. One area captain might serve as chair of all the area captains and be the one who is the contact for the police department. In large neighborhoods, everyone should get a master map as well as one of their own area.



Chapter 4

Planning and Conducting Meetings

Keep meetings fun, short and productive!

Traditionally, Neighborhood Watch was always about having meetings to discuss crime in the neighborhood, but as NW has changed, so have meetings. The key to planning a successful Watch meeting is organization. NW 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 the 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 Block / Crime/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 an incentive to attend.
- Deliver the invitation in person if possible. A face-to-face introduction 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.
- Don't put invitations in postal mail boxes—it's illegal.
- Get a couple of neighbors to walk with you to help deliver invitations.
- Plan an activity for children near the meeting, perhaps ask a teenager to watch them. Mention this on the invitation to encourage parents to attend.
- Offer other incentives: food, door prizes, or a chance to "win" money off rent or homeowners' dues.
- Consider using one of the online social networking tools (Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc) to facilitate communication and encourage neighbors to participate.

Sample Meeting Flyer

USAonwatch.org

Neighborhood Watch Meeting

What: Monthly Meeting
Where: Brad and Chandy Moore's House
8846 Clearwater Drive

When: Monday, June 12, 7:30 pm

Why: Topic: Observation Skills
Guest Speaker: Officer Ritchie

Directions: From I-10, exit Calgary Trail and make a right. Take your first left onto Clearwater. 8846 is third house on the right.

Refreshments and desserts will be served.

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(date)
Contact: Public Information Office, 555-5555

SHERIFF'S OFFICE HOSTS NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH FORUM

The Sheriff's Office will hold a Neighborhood Watch Forum on Tuesday, March 21 at O. Henry Middle School, 2610 W. Tenth St., from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. The meeting is designed to organize crime watch groups and form partnerships with law enforcement to fight crime in neighborhoods.

Residents will have the opportunity to meet Central Division representatives and discuss ways to curb crime in their communities. Future meetings will be held to form groups in other command districts.

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 on their way home. If they make it all the way home, the chances of your getting them to leave again are reduced. On the other hand, if you are planning a meeting for a group consisting primarily of work-at-home individuals, another time would probably be better, perhaps a time when their children are still in school. Try to establish a regularly-scheduled meeting day and time. You might meet once a week or once a month, at an interval that best fits the needs and availability of the group.

You should also select a location convenient for the majority of the group. If you are conducting a Watch group meeting you should probably hold the meeting in the neighborhood. However, if you are holding a community-wide meeting for your block captains a more centralized location would be better. 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. You should ensure the location has the required and desired facilities—space, seating, public access, restrooms, climate control, technical equipment such as microphones and a/v support (if needed), perhaps even kitchen facilities. This of course all depends on the size of your group.

Facilitating a Meeting

At the 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 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.

The Meeting Facilitator should:

- 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 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 the 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 NW values busy schedules, but encourages people to stay involved. The NW coordinator or block captains should distribute minutes (or make them available) including details about action items and assignments, persons responsible, and timelines. 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.

Ssmple Meeting Agenda

Neighborhood Watch Meeting Agenda

The success of a Neighborhood Watch group is directly related to the ongoing participation and support from each member of the group.

Meeting chaired by: A volunteer until election of officers

5:45pm	**Welcome and Sign-in**
6:00 pm	**Call to order**
6:00-6:10	**Introductions**
6:10-6:15	**Overview of Neighborhood Watch**
6:15-6:25	**Discussion of Neighborhood Issues**
6:25-6:40	**Crime Prevention Presentation**
6:40-6:45	**Issues for next meeting**
6:45-6:50	**Date, place, and time of next meeting**
6:50 pm	**Adjourn/Refreshments**

Alternatives to Meetings

With overbooked schedules and new ways to communicate, it may be beneficial to maintaining your watch to occasionally hold non-traditional meetings. If you can accomplish the same purpose without meeting in person, consider more time-efficient alternatives such as email, phone, online chats, creating a Facebook page, utilizing Twitter to update neighbors, and/or electronic newsletter.. If you are simply relaying information to others and feel that the information is not important enough to call a meeting, consider a flyer or some other sort of publication that can be mailed or distributed to group members. Respect each group member's time. If the information provided in person at the meeting is important and valued, then a meeting is appropriate.

Fundamentals of Meeting Planning

What do you project to be the outcome of your meeting?

What are you going to do at your meeting?

_ Present a subject?
_ Have questions and answers?
_ Have a business meeting?
_ Problem solve?
_ Socialize?

Set your agenda

_ Introductions
_ Reading of minutes from last meeting
_ Old business
_ New business
_ Next meeting date, time & location

How long the meeting will run?

Start time_____ Finish time _____
(No matter how late you get started—stick to the ending time)

Publicize the meeting

_ Newspaper
_ Post flyers
_ Mailing lists
_ Personal invitation and phone calls are most effective

What will be your next step after this meeting?

_ Decide this before the meeting ends – where will you go from here?
_ Ask for committees if needed and set them up tonight
_ Set the next meeting date before everyone leaves

Maintain integrity

_ Follow-through on what you commit to
_ Print minutes to the meeting and run in a newsletter or mail to members

Possible equipment checklist

_ TV/VCR
_ Overhead
_ PowerPoint projector
_ Working electrical outlets
_ Lighting
_ White board/chart pack and stands
_ Felt pens/dry erasers
_ Masking tape or adhesive for newsprint
_ Microphone
_ Podium
_ Water for speaker
_ Refreshments
_ Chairs & seating arrangement for good visibility

Public Speaking Tips

Move around the room

Have charisma

Show excitement

Be a role model

Speak loudly and at a good pace

Start fast and project energy

Make eye contact with everyone

Avoid Time Wasters

Cell phone and pager

Interruptions

Socializing during the meeting

Fear of decision-making

Drop-in attendees

Creative Meeting Topics

- Personal Safety
- Rape Prevention
- Safety for the Hearing Impaired
- Street Safety
- Child/Stranger Safety
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
- Home Security
- Water Safety/Boat Safety
- Awareness & Patrol Techniques
- Observation
- First Aid/CPR
- Animal Control
- Dogs—What to do if attacked
- Scams
- Internet Crimes
- Parent to Parent
- Landlord/Tenant Training
- Cultural Awareness/Diversity Training
- Restorative Justice
- Peer Courts
- School Resource Officer
- Community Policing
- Volunteer Programs
- Emergency Preparedness
- Traffic Team
- Patrol Aspects
- Search & Rescue
- Detectives
- Arson Investigations
- Hazardous Materials
- Truck & Train Spills
- How to be a Witness (DA's Office)
- County Commissioner
- District Representatives
- District Attorney
- Defensive Driving
- NW Patrolling
- Terrorism Awareness & Prevention Presentation
- Teen Vehicle Safety
- Juvenile Crime Prevention
- Conflict Resolution
- Children Services to Families
- Local Fire Station
- Forest Ranger
- Domestic Violence
- Victims Assistance Programs
- Sexual Assault Services
- Red Cross
- Mediation Services
- Helping in Schools
- Parole & Probation
- Sex Offenders
- Gang Awareness
- Drug/Narcotic Awareness
- Car Failure
- NW Guidelines/Purpose

Additional Neighborhood Watch Activities

Fire Prevention & First Aid

Use partnerships with local government agencies and nonprofit organizations to hold training on fire safety skills and first aid training. These trainings are essential to keeping your community safe and allowing citizens to take control of their own safety. Most of these organizations will be thrilled to participate and your 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

Celebrate Safe Communitiee

Take time to Celebrate Safe Communities (CSC) by organizing a local celebration during the first Thursday to Saturday of October. Help America's communities Take A Bite Out Of Crime®! CSC is a partnership of NSA, BJA, and the National Crime Prevention Council. CSC is designed to spotlight communities' crime prevention efforts, enhance public awareness of vital crime prevention and safety messages, and recruit year-round support for ongoing prevention activities that help keep neighborhoods safe from crime. This initiative will help local communities organize safety-focused events. Local CSC activities held in October to coincide with Crime Prevention Month will help Americans of all ages recognize that a safer community is no accident and that crime prevention is everyone's business every day of the year.

Triad

In an increasing number of communities, older residents and law enforcement participate in Triad, a cooperative crime prevention initiative. Working together, the police department(s), sheriff's office, and senior leaders devise strategies to reduce crimes against the elderly – and to deal with the sometimes exaggerated fear of crime, which affects some elderly persons. Triads also sponsor reassurance efforts for lonely or isolated seniors. Triad may bring forth capable leaders to Watch groups and more sets of eyes and ears to observe suspicious activities in a community.

Fundraising

Neighborhood Watch is a community-based group. While law enforcement should support the group's efforts, usually the local sheriff's office or police department does not have the funding to support anything beyond the salary of the NW officer and perhaps a few signs. It is not necessary to have enormous funds to operate a strong NW program, the most important asset of NW is a strong community. However signs, brochures, and meeting supplies invoke cost. If the local law enforcement agency doesn't provide as much funding as a group may desire, the Watch group can explore alternative methods. Some NW groups seek grants from city and private groups. But fundraising by 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 action and goals are achieved as a group.

ID Theft

Identity theft is a huge issue for community members. When a person's identity has been compromised through a social security number, credit card, or driver's license it can be a daunting task to clean up and make sure the victim is protected from future attempts. For information and to download materials on fighting ID theft, visit the National Crime Prevention Council's website at www.ncpc.org. This site has tips on preventing ID theft, creating awareness of how identities can be stolen and free brochures to distribute to community members. Holding meetings on preventing ID theft is a great way to encourage excitement for NW and show new members how NW is not just about crime prevention for the home.

Citizen Patrols

Many NW groups choose to use Citizen Patrols on foot or in vehicles to keep their community safe. Patrols may be effective for your group, but you should discuss it with your law enforcement liaison. Two or more individuals, often

from the same family, patrol during designated tours of duty and may detect suspicious activity not noticed by stationary observers. Lost children, stranded motorists, stray dogs, damaged street signs or traffic signals, wandering cattle, and automobile accidents are often discovered by citizen patrols.

Patrol members should be trained by law enforcement. It should be emphasized to members that they do not possess police powers and they shall not carry weapons or pursue vehicles. They should also be cautioned to alert police or deputies when encountering strange activity. Members should never confront suspicious persons who could be armed and dangerous. Patrol members can be equipped for their duties. For example, flashlights or searchlights are necessary for night patrols. Many mobile patrols use cell phones or two-way radios to contact a citizen-manned base station, which in turn contacts law enforcement officials when necessary. Remember your partnerships and ask for donations from local businesses.

Safe Houses for Children

A safe location such as the McGruff House or Block House is identified by bright stickers on windows and doors which indicate that the occupants are block parents willing to help a frightened or pursued child if needed. Ideally, the adults participating in a block house program are either retired or otherwise not employed out of the home and available for assistance during the day. After your agency has conducted a background check on juvenile and adults in the home, there is a clear understanding about the types of assistance a block parent should and should not attempt to render to a child in distress. Signs and stickers should be displayed only when the block parent is in the house and within hearing distance of the doorbell. Officers should have a list of authorized safe houses and check neighborhoods periodically to ensure that only authorized homes display the signs. Contact your law enforcement liaison for more information.

Please review Chapter 8 for activities related to emergency preparedness, and natural and man-made disasters.

Chapter 5

Revitalizing & Maintaining Watch Groups

One of the biggest challenges to Neighborhood Watch is maintaining momentum after the problems are "solved." When NW groups organize around safety concerns, enthusiasm is usually high and participation good. A few months later, the excitement dies down and communication often sags. 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. The newly revitalized USAonWatch program embraces this idea by encouraging partnerships and viewing NW in an all-hazards approach.

- Develop an email newsletter. An electronic newsletter will save copying and mailing costs, can provide essential information, and often may be linked to your local law enforcement agency's homepage.
- 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 NW concerns beyond crime prevention to include quality of life issues and fun activities to build community spirit.

Be Creative

Information Sharing

Write your own Neighborhood Watch newsletter. Keep people up to date on crime or other subjects of interest. (Never advertise in newsletters about individuals leaving town until they are back from their trip.)

Exercise or Walking Groups

It's easier to pursue fitness with a companion. Arrange 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.

Garage Sale

Pitch in together and buy an ad for a big neighborhood 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. Cap the day with a barbecue or a night of desserts and visiting.

Winter Emergency Planning

Develop a game plan for emergencies. Who has a gas stove? Four-wheel drive vehicle? Does anyone have special needs? Identify your neighborhood resources.

Start Up Training Sessions

Start and participate in training sessions given by volunteers. Some suggested topics are observation skills, what observations to report to police, first aid training, community disaster training, etc..

Creative Pot-Luck's or Bar-B-Ques

Get together every 3-6 months to 're-connect', keep it fun and light.

Local Interest Groups

Politicians and 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 of 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. The awards type, such as certificates or plaques, are often seen in formal settings, such as at 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.

Group Activities

- Help neighbors trim bushes and trees for better visibility.
- Help remove graffiti right away.
- Invite the fire department to talk about fire prevention and disaster preparedness.
- Get each neighbor to make their house numbers easy to see at night.
- Help each other reinforce door frames, hinges, and locks for windows.

Chapter 6

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 NW exists for more than just crime prevention, it is important to build the skills necessary for preventing crime as well as terrorist activity, and preparedness for natural/man-made disasters. Schedule training sessions with your law enforcement liaison or other law enforcement agencies that might have training courses. The National Sheriffs' Association offers skill building training through the Neighborhood Watch Toolkit. Your local law enforcement may already have a Toolkit you can borrow for your meetings. Also look for other resources such as your state crime prevention association or the National Crime Prevention Council who may hold training in your area.

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 citizens 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 observation 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 pictures of people to know how to describe them. Clothing is important, but look for things that cannot be changed, like skin or eye color, tattoos, scars, moles, 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 both the type of vehicle (such 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?

Anything that feels uncomfortable or looks out of place.

What is Suspicious Activity?

All too often citizens are confused about what they should report and why, so it is important to train citizens through a variety of reporting activities. After reviewing this section, participants will be able to advise citizens specifically on the appropriate who, what, when, where, and how of reporting. Often citizens 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 citizens 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." Officers should know the definition of suspicious activity and be able to properly communicate this definition to Watch members and other concerned citizens. Suspicious activity can refer to any incident, event, individual or activity that seems unusual or out of place. Some common examples of suspicious activities include:

- A stranger loitering in your neighborhood or a vehicle cruising 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.
- Someone 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 and sheriffs' offices efforts is enhanced by active participation on the part of citizens. 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 "nosy 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.

Report:

- Suspicious activities, people watching vehicles
- Illegal activities
- Unusual events or incidents
- Dangerous situations

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; and 4) unusual events or incidents, dangerous situations.

By reporting these types of activities and situations, citizens 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 or sheriff's office.
- Tell the call taker 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 NW meeting is to visit the local 9-1-1 dispatch center. If someone is willing to take your Watch group or even the Area Coordinators and 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 the 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 citizens; help them learn to watch for trouble and how to get help when needed.

When you have an officer attend a meeting you might suggest they go over what happens to the information provided to 911 and when not to call 911.

When to Call 911 and When Not!

Calling 911 is an important communications tool for emergencies. However, some citizens call 911 in non-emergency situations. This can cause the dispatch operator to miss a call of a person needing help. It is important that not only your groups but all citizens understand when to call and when not to call 911.

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 to the hospital.
- 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.

For more information about when it is appropriate to call, please contact the non-emergency number of your local law enforcement and ask for an officer to discuss the topic with you.

REMEMBER:

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, citizens 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.

Neighborhood Watch Observation Notes

Stay calm
Remain alert to your surroundings
Begin with the basics
Move to the specifics
Broaden your perspective
Add detail

Post-observation activities:

1. Write down your observation as soon as possible.
2. Note the date and time.
3. If activities appear to be unusual, suspicious, or illegal, call for assistance and take the appropriate action according to your agency's policies and procedures.

Date: _____ Time: _____ Observer: _____

Observation: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Notes:

Physical Setting – specific location

_____
_____
_____

People – What do they look like? How are they acting? How many are there?

_____
_____
_____

Specific Items – What aspects are important?

_____
_____
_____

Routines – Did you notice any recurring patterns or routines? How often did they occur? Who was involved?

_____
_____
_____

Chapter 7

Establishing Partnerships

One of the foundations of the revitalized USAonWatch-National Neighborhood Watch program is an emphasis on partnerships. Potential partners can be any formal or organized group that a NW group partners with to improve safety, security, and quality of life. NW partners can be citizen groups and/or city or regional government agencies. These groups provide information, resources, and support. They help broaden the scope of NW groups and help to coordinate responses for neighborhood issues. To ensure successful partnerships, Area Coordinators and Block Captains should remember communication, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration techniques.

Communication – The agreement to share thoughts, ideas and information. Communication need not require face-to-face interaction, but can be accomplished through letters, telephone calls, reports, or email. Communication requires a message, sender, and a receiver.

Coordination – This is critical to creating and sustaining partnerships and citizen involvement. The amount or nature of interaction can cover a range of activities such as arranging for Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) or helping to arrange an event.

Cooperation – This occurs when two or more communicating individuals or groups agree to help each other with tasks.

Collaboration – An intense level of partnership based on a model of sharing power for attaining a common goal.

Watch programs seek to improve the safety and security of everyone in the community. Below are a few organizations that your group may want to partner with, in addition to a local law enforcement agency.

Some potential partners could be:

- Businesses
- Schools and day care centers
- Faith/Community-based organizations
- Communications companies
- Hospital and medical providers
- Local government
- Other neighborhood groups
- Citizen Corps councils
- Local fire, EMS, and police
- Parks and Recreation
    - Code Enforcement
    - Public Works
    - Health and Social Services
    - Local news media

Identifying Resources

Think about your NW program and the community surrounding you. Partnerships aren't just important for training and activities, but also financial assistance, personnel, and materials.

- Financial resources can include both individual and outside agency resources.
- Personnel resources can include items as such as individual skills or possessions.

- Materials can range from items such as training materials to building materials.
- Training resources can come from individuals or outside agencies (i.e., local law enforcement agency).
- Organizations that can serve as resources include social service agencies and civic groups such as Kiwanis or Rotary. These groups can provide everything from speakers to volunteers.

Building partnerships within your community can add strength to your NW group. Don't limit yourself! Be creative when looking for partners and resources. Law enforcement officers should be aware that there are a wide range of both public and private organizations that are available to support and enhance the efforts of Watch groups.

Citizen Corps

The mission of Citizen Corps is to harness the power of every individual through education, training, and volunteer service to help make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters. After September 11, 2001, America witnessed a wellspring of selflessness and heroism. People in every corner of the country asked, "How can I help?" Citizen Corps was created to answer these questions through public education and outreach, training, and volunteer service. Citizen Corps Councils help drive local citizen participation by coordinating Citizen Corps programs, developing community action plans, assessing possible threats, and identifying local resources.
www.citizencorps.gov

There are five Citizen Corps Program Partners. These partners expand the resources and materials available to states and local communities by offering resources for public education, outreach, and training; represent volunteers interested in helping to make their community safer; or offer volunteer service opportunities to support first responders, disaster relief activities, and community safety efforts.

Volunteers in Police Service

The Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers. VIPS serves as a gateway to resources and information for and about law enforcement volunteer programs. Funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, VIPS is managed and implemented by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.
www.policevolunteers.org

CERT

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. Using their training, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event and can take a more active role in preparing their community. The program is administered by Department of Homeland Security (DHS). **www.citizencorps.gov/cert**

Medical Reserve Corps

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) strengthens communities by helping medical, public health, and other volunteers offer their expertise throughout the year as well as during local emergencies and other times of community need. MRC volunteers work in coordination with existing local emergency response programs and also supplement existing community public health initiatives, such as outreach and prevention, immunization programs, blood drives, case management, care planning, and other efforts. The MRC program is administered by Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). **www.medicalreservecorps.gov**

Fire Corps

Fire Corps promotes the use of citizen advocates to enhance the capacity of resource-constrained fire and rescue departments at all levels, whether volunteer or career. Citizen advocates assist local fire departments in fire safety outreach, youth programs, and administrative support. Fire Corps provides resources to assist fire and rescue departments in creating opportunities for citizen advocates and promotes citizen participation. Fire Corps is funded through DHS and is managed and implemented through a partnership between the National Volunteer Fire Council, the International Association of Fire Fighters, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs.
www.firecorps.org

Chapter 8

Neighborhood Watch's Expanded Role

Emergency Preparedness and Homeland Security

One of the newer elements of Neighborhood Watch is the expanded role that now includes awareness and reporting of possible terrorist activities. Since September 11, 2001, the federal government has issued heightened states of alert for local law enforcement, and has urged Americans to remain vigilant for the threat of new terrorist activities. The need for strengthening and securing communities has become more important than ever. For 35 years Watch groups have worked successfully to address crime prevention issues and to restore pride to neighborhoods. Now they face a new challenge: helping local residents become a critical element in the detection, prevention, and disruption of terrorism. Although government agencies assume most of the responsibility for detecting and preventing terrorism, preparedness is the job of the individual citizens as well. Disaster can strike quickly. Whether a disaster is a natural event, a technological event, or an act of terrorism, the importance of preparedness is the same.

Preventing Terrorism

The unique infrastructure of NW brings together local officials, law enforcement, and residents for the protection of the community, making NW an excellent program for promoting both citizen awareness and preparedness in the war against terrorism. To strengthen communities and effectively respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, or any type of disaster, community members should know how to start or join a NW, create a Disaster Preparedness plan, and recognize and report the signs of terrorism.

Six months after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, a national poll showed that already 60% of Americans felt that the primary responsibility for their security didn't rest with themselves but with law enforcement. While law enforcement doesn't have all the answers to Homeland Security, one thing is certain: residents are the key to building safer communities and helping protect themselves.

Terrorists use fear to get attention and show the seriousness of their intent and to leave victims with an unforgettable

impression. Their hope is to cause panic and serious disruption of services and everyday activities goes far beyond the impact of the immediate victims. By attempting to demoralize us, the terrorists seek to attack our national psyche by shocking or paralyzing us into inactivity. As part of a successful terrorism awareness and prevention strategy, we must not only know what terrorists do, but also learn about who they are and what they believe. Being aware of this and more importantly, who they target, allows us to use our resources most effectively and efficiently to address their threats and attacks.

By practicing the following common sense guidelines for observing and reporting, you can actively increase safety and security against a potential terrorist act — and everyday crime and violence.

Most people will not run into terrorists or extremists in their daily routine but some have and will. Law enforcement needs the active involvement of citizens to report suspicious activity. Without leads, there are no investigations.

NW Activities Related to Homeland Security

- Make sure community members know what kind of suspicious activity to look for and how to report it to law enforcement. Invite a representative from your local law enforcement agency or emergency management office to speak with your Watch group.
- Develop a neighborhood evacuation plan. Create a neighborhood directory with phone numbers and email addresses for all community members, noting contact information and plans for children and seniors who may be alone during emergencies.
- Encourage members to develop an individual emergency preparedness plan and share this plan with the entire family.
- Develop a preparedness kit and have supplies for sheltering in place.
- Discuss local warning systems and how to find information on evacuation routes, schedule, and temporary shelters in an emergency.
- Discuss potential terrorist targets in your community (e.g. power and chemical plants, airports, bridges) and the consequences of the attack.
- Discuss how to report suspicious terrorist activity. Usually NW members are trained to report to local law enforcement, but in the case of terrorism it might be more appropriate to report to a local Federal Bureau of Investigations office. Check with your NW officer to find out what is best for your jurisdiction. Also, local emergency agencies will give directions to citizens regarding what to do via the public emergency broadcasts.

Disasters: Are you Ready?

Check with your local fire department to find out about the classes and training they offer in first aid, CPR, fire suppression, and disaster preparedness. CERT (Community Emergency Response Teams) includes extensive training for citizens on disaster preparedness for the neighborhood. Some of the subjects include:

- Disaster first aid.
- How to triage and set up medical areas.
- How to fight fires and turn off gas lines.
- How to inspect buildings and mark them after inspecting.

The first step is making sure your family is safe and you have what you need to stay safe and healthy for the duration and aftermath of a disaster. Supplies must be ready because you usually don't get much warning or time to gather and pack supplies. If you wait, you may not find much in the stores after everyone else scrambles for food, medical supplies, batteries, and water. Make it a family activity to get emergency supplies together. Children can rotate supplies to keep water, batteries, and food fresh. You should practice fire escape plans and disaster evacuation plans a couple of times a year. This way, if the "real" thing happens, your family will be calm and levelheaded. Use old suitcases to pack disaster clothing and personal items; they are easy to grab in a hurry. Ask your fire department for a list of items needed for disaster kits. Individuals with disabilities need to plan for special needs. For example, they should have a pair of work gloves attached to the underside of their wheelchair in case they have to roll through debris, broken glass, etc. Don't forget to plan for the supplies your pets will need. Your Watch group should have a list of residents who will need assistance.

Disaster Preparedness Kit

While it may not be fun to think about a disaster occurring in your community, the chances it may happen are possible and the type of disaster varies from where you live. However, your Watch group can make Disaster Preparedness fun by holding a meeting to educate on evacuation plans, then take the time to create Preparedness Kits together. Have each household buy items in bulk, then share with each other in order to reduce costs. Don't forget to use the partnerships you've developed and see if local businesses or government agencies can donate supplies to you.

Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation.
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air, and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place.
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries.
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- First aid kit.
- Whistle to signal for help.
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food).
- Local maps.

Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:

- Prescription medications and glasses.
- Infant formula and diapers.
- Pet food and extra water for your pet.
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification, and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container.
- Cash or traveler's checks and change.
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov.
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants, and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper. When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe, or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Fire extinguisher.
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items.
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, and paper towels.
- Paper and pencil.
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children.

Ready America

Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed.

Through its Ready Campaign, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security educates and empowers Americans to take some simple steps to prepare for and respond to potential emergencies, including natural disasters and terrorist attacks. Ready asks individuals to do three key things: get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses. All Americans should have some basic supplies on hand in order to survive for at least three days if an emergency occurs. The previous section listed basic items that every emergency supply kit should include. However, it is important that individuals review this list and consider where they live and the unique needs of their family in order to create an emergency supply kit that will meet these needs. Individuals should also consider having at least two emergency supply kits, one full kit at home and smaller portable kits in their workplace, vehicle, or other places they spend time.

For more information on preparing your family and community for a disaster check out the www.Ready.gov website. There are tips to prepare for particular disasters affecting your area as well as downloadable forms and checklists.

Take some time to explore the USAonWatch web site for information and materiels regarding pandemic flu preparedness and other topics on preparedness that can be beneficial to your group. It is important for your group to be prepared for all hazards due to the reduced access with first responders in the event of a community disaster. A number of printable resources that can assist a group in organizing and preparing for all hazards, along with recommendations son other important resources, can be found at USAonWatch.org.

Chapter 9

Basic Home Security

The original purpose of NW was to increase awareness in communities about ways to protect homes from burglaries. Although NW has expanded over the years, protecting homes is still a priority. Since most burglaries and thefts are crimes of opportunity, the more obstacles that we put in place to protect ourselves, the less the chance of our being victimized. In sports, the more defenses a team has, and the better that defense is, the less likely the opponent will be to score. In target hardening, we want to increase our "defense" by identifying multiple methods that you can employ to protect yourself and stop the criminal. Some are common sense methods that cost little or no time or effort, while others may be more complicated. The number of home burglaries is still high and community members should do everything possible to prevent burglaries. When a person falls victim to an attack on their home they feel vulnerable and usually do not recover the stolen property. Law enforcement can help citizens protect their property not just to keep crime rates low, but also to increase the likelihood of recovering stolen property.

Basic Home Target Hardening Techniques

When developing a target hardening program to protect against home burglaries, law enforcement can suggest a variety of options. Target hardening can range from the purchase of elaborate alarm systems with every possible type of monitor, to buying a dog that announces the arrival of anyone at your door. NSA offers a Target Hardening course through the Neighborhood Watch Toolkit, or you can contact your local law enforcement for assistance in developing strategies. These techniques are designed to assist homeowners in protecting their property by using simple, cost-effective crime prevention methods. These include using appropriate doors, locks, windows, lighting, appearance, alarms, and garages, and provide some helpful hints that range across several categories of safety and security.

Assessing the Structure

When scanning a home, you begin your home burglary risk assessment with the front door and work your way around the house. Start at the entryway of the house or apartment and observe the door, the locks, nearby windows, entry area lighting, and the general appearance of the home, as well as other features such as whether an alarm system is present. Next, move counterclockwise around to the side and back where you may encounter a garage, shed, or other areas that need to be secured.

Doors

As the primary point of entry for many burglars, the first item to inspect is the front door. Hollow-core or poorly fitting doors can mean trouble, as can front doors that are not equipped with proper deadbolt locks (at least one inch). All exterior doors should be metal or solid wood

and have strong door hinges on the inside of the door with hidden or non-removable pins. Officers should recommend homeowners install good quality deadbolt locks on all exterior doors and on any doors that open to attached garages.

Locks

Recommend homeowners install strong, reliable deadbolt locks extending at least one inch when in the locked position. They may also want to consider deadbolts with reinforced strike plates and extra long mounting screws to anchor the lock. Finally, if there is a change in home ownership, recommend all locks be changed immediately to avoid the possibility that extra keys to the house may be in the hands of unknown individuals. High quality security locks are available at most major market retailers and hardware stores.

Windows

After doors, windows are the next most-utilized access points, yet they are often overlooked by both law enforcers and citizens alike. Windows can be broken, pried open or lifted from their tracks, or can have their panes removed by thieves. It is important for your windows to have locks on them. Though placing nails or pins in a double hung window can be a fire hazard it can provide extra security when away. You might want to have a professional window expert come out and talk to you about the security of your windows or what you can do to make them more secure.

Lighting

Although lighting is often considered decorative, a well lit house can expose individuals attempting to conceal themselves and commit criminal acts. Officers should discuss the use of both interior and exterior lighting. A lighting audit should be completed after dark to be certain you are evaluating artificial illumination and not daylight. It is okay if the night is bright due to moonlight. At least two people will need to work together so you can check for things like color recognition/identification. Working in pairs is also a good idea for reasons of personal safety. In areas less lighted at night you might consider motion detector lighting or sensor lights.

Alarms

The mere presence of some alarm systems may deter potential burglars. Alarm company signs placed in the yard, stickers on the windows, and visible contacts or keypads are often enough to cause the average burglar to think twice before trying to break in. Since burglary is a crime of opportunity, the potential thief may decide to move on to a location that does not have an alarm system. There are many types of alarm systems on the market including monitored, non-monitored, audible, wireless, sound-based, motion-based, etc. In many jurisdictions, alarm permits must be purchased and there may be penalties for false alarms. The purchase of an alarm system and its accompanying service or monitoring fees can be a major financial commitment, and is one that should be thoroughly researched by the homeowner.

Garages

When it comes to security, the garage is one area of the home that is commonly overlooked. Many garages have electronic garage door openers that give the homeowner a false feeling of security. Another often ignored element of the garage is the door that connects the garage to the house. If this door is not kept secure, then anyone entering the garage can enter the house. In order to increase garage security and house security, residents should always lock the doors connecting a home to an attached garage. They should not rely on an automatic garage door opener for security. At home, people should always park their cars in the garage with the garage door shut. If a burglar notices a pattern where the garage door is left open, or cars are normally parked in the driveway whenever someone is home, then a closed garage door or no cars in the driveway may be a giveaway that no one is home. Consistency in leaving the cars in the garage behind closed doors will keep from tipping off the burglar that the home is unoccupied. Besides, leaving the garage door open allows strangers to see whatever belongings are stored in the garage. It's a good idea for homeowners to install automatic openers that will allow them to stay in their cars until safely parked in the garage.

* For those without garages it is important that valuables are not left easily seen in the car and that the car is locked while in the driveway.

Exterior Appearances

Making sure your trees and bushes are trimmed and don't provide secluded shelter for a robber is important. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) refers to how to use various crime prevention techniques while maintaining or improving the appearance of the property. Some lessons borrowed from CPTED may include: using fences, walkways, and shrubs to direct visitor access; limit entry or call attention to individuals who have deviated from the designated pathway; planting thorny bushes around windows to make illegal entry more difficult; trimming shrubs and trees that could conceal criminals; cutting back tree limbs that might allow thieves to climb into windows; and using landscaping designs that provide maximum visibility to and from the house. Contact your law enforcement liaison to request an officer certified in CPTED to analyze the homes in your community.

Operation Identification (Operation ID)

Operation ID is a 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. Operation ID has shown dramatic results in reducing burglaries and theft. Burglars usually avoid marked items because they are hard to re-sell.

- Mark valuables with driver's license number (DL) or state identification number (ID) or – for a business – state tax number (TX).
- To make sure nobody changes the OAN, put the two letters of your state at the start and end it with DL, ID, or TX – whichever applies.
- Never use your social security number. Don't engrave paintings, antiques, or any item you may want to sell.
- Hang Operation ID decals near your doors. This lets burglars know that property inside has been marked and won't be easy to re-sell.
- Decals and stickers may be available from police agencies or you can purchase them from the National Sheriffs' Association.

Engravers are inexpensive tools that can save you thousands of dollars. Pass the hat to buy a neighborhood engraver to share. If you sell engraved items, etch one line through your number so it's still readable. Initial it and give the buyer a bill of sale describing the item.

Property List

It's a good idea for community members to make a list of their property, including CDs, DVDs, videos, and any other collectible items. The list should be kept in a safe place. A list saved on the computer is no good if the burglars steal the computer too! People should take photos of expensive items, such as jewelry, and fill in a "Property Inventory Form" (available through Neighborhood Watch) to help police return any recovered property. Finally, it is imperative to remember that maintaining current and adequate insurance coverage is very important.

Personal Property Identification Record

If you are a victim of a burglary it is important to know the serial numbers of the items stolen. Without positive identification made possible by a serial number – or a unique number which you may engrave on your property – you may not be able to prove you are the rightful owner if the item is recovered. In addition, having a good record of your valuables makes it easier to report missing items to insurance companies for replacement.

Take a few minutes and record the description, serial numbers, and value of those items which are most likely to be stolen. Many are listed on this form. You should also take pictures especially of jewelry, silver, and antiques. Keep your property record and pictures safe along with insurance papers.

Credit and Charge Cards

Company	Card Number	Company	Card Number

Household and Personal Items

Item	Brand Name	Model #	Serial Number	$ Value
Television				
Television				
VCR				
CD Player				
Stereo				
MP3 Player				
Microwave				
Computer				
Computer				
Printer				
Watch				
Watch				
Camera				
Camera				
Video Camera				

Automobiles, Motorcycles, Bicycles, Etc.

Make	Year	Model	Serial Number	License Number	$ Value

Reasons for Neighborhood Watch

Basic Crime Prevention

Practice crime safety measures that eliminate opportunities for criminals. Encourage others to join in crime prevention efforts. Aid others when they become victims of crime. Work for a better and safer neighborhood through protecting and honoring the rights of others.

Disaster Preparedness

Learn skills to prepare for man-made and natural disasters. Local, state, and the federal government do a lot to prepare for disasters but citizens have to be ready to care for each other. Encourage citizen involvement in preparation and planning.

Build a Stronger Community

Get to know your neighbors. In our fast-paced world we don't spend enough time learning about our neighbors. Watch groups give community members a reason to get together and talk about making their community a better place. Neighborhood Watch Activities are a fun way for community members to get to know each other while making a difference.

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