

# Neighborhood Watch Program

## Getting Organized

When a group decides to form a Neighborhood Watch, it:

- Contacts the police department for help in training members in home security and reporting skills and for information on local crime patterns
- Selects a coordinator and block captains who are responsible for organizing meetings and relaying information to members
- Recruits members, keeps up-to-date on new residents and makes special efforts to involve the elderly, working parents, and young people
- Works with local government and law enforcement to put up Neighborhood Watch signs, usually after at least 50 percent of all households in a neighborhood are enrolled

## What Neighborhood Watch Members Look For

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

Report these incidents to the police department. Talk about the problem with your neighbors.

## How To Report

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

## Keeping your Neighborhood Watch Group Active

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

- Organize regular meetings that focus on current issues such as drug abuse, "hate" or bias-motivated violence, crime in schools, child care before and after school, recreational activities for young people, and victim services.
- Organize community patrols to walk around streets or apartment complexes and alert police to crime and suspicious activities and identify problems needing attention. People in cars with cellular phones or CB radios can patrol.
- Adopt a park or school playground. Pick up litter, repair broken equipment, paint over graffiti.
- Work with local building code officials to require dead bolt locks, smoke alarms, and other safety devices in new and existing homes and commercial buildings.
- Publish a newsletter that gives prevention tips and local crime news, recognizes residents of all ages who have "made a difference," and highlights community events.
- Don't forget social events that give neighbors a chance to know each other - a block party, potluck dinner, volleyball softball game, or picnic.