

Neighborhood Watch

Part 2

National Crime Prevention Council 2006



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Objectives

- Learn how to maintain and strengthen a Neighborhood Watch
- Learn how to expand the scope of Neighborhood Watch
- Explore how Neighborhood Watch can be linked to homeland security and emergency preparedness



Neighborhood Watch Works

- Birmingham, AL.: Prior to Neighborhood Watch, 13 out of 15 neighborhoods had experienced increases in burglaries. After the program was in place, 12 of the 15 had no burglaries.
- Lakewood, CO: Burglaries dropped 77 percent after Neighborhood Watch was implemented.



Neighborhood Watch Works (cont.)

- Cypress, CA: Neighborhood Watch cut burglaries by 52 percent and thefts by 45 percent. The program saved police an estimated \$79,000.



Neighborhood Watch Background

- Neighborhood Watch is a community-based program supported by the National Sheriffs' Association.
- Since its inception in 1972, thousands of communities have created Neighborhood Watch programs.
- These programs have expanded and become major assets in solving neighborhood problems.



Seek Help From Other Organizations

- Talk to other Neighborhood Watch groups in the area.
- Talk with local PTAs, tenants' groups, community service organizations, social clubs, faith groups, public and mental health associations, taxpayers' groups, and homeowners' associations (among others) for help and ideas in sustaining and preserving activities.



Community Assessments

- Ask your local police department or sheriff's office for a map of your area. You can use this both to define the boundaries of your Neighborhood Watch program and to map crime.
- Ask your local police department for statistics on crime in your community and whether it has done any crime mapping or crime analysis of your neighborhood. If so, ask to see the results.



Consider a Neighborhood Assessment

- A neighborhood assessment can provide a “road map” than can be used to address problems and community needs.
- A neighborhood assessment can also highlight other organizations – local government, local civic groups, etc. – that might need to be involved.



Community Assessments

- Collect crime data from police and residents.
 - What types of crimes have been reported?
 - What details are available about these crimes?
 - Do patterns of crime show up?
 - Are there specific “hot spots” where many incidents have occurred?



Community Assessments (cont.)

- What have residents noticed about the community?
- What types of activities have residents noticed? Which are positive, which are negative?
- What can be said about activities of concern? Where, when (what time of day or week)?



Community Assessments (cont.)

- Conduct a survey of residents.
 - Ask about their observations of the neighborhood.
 - Ask about their concerns and things they want to see happen.
- Have responses sent anonymously to one person who compiles the responses.
- Report on the responses at the next meeting. Identify those for which solutions are apparent and those that need investigating. Be sure someone takes notes.



Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a way of looking at changing the environment to increase prevention factors and decrease crime problems. It seeks to strengthen
 - Access control
 - Surveillance
 - Territoriality
 - Maintenance



Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (cont.)

- Local law enforcement agencies frequently have officers on staff who have been trained in CPTED principles. Seek the help of one to coordinate a neighborhood review.
- CPTED seeks to identify problems and strengths by asking such questions as
 - Does this make me feel safe/unsafe? Does it look like someone cares about this space?
 - What make me feel safer in this space? What would tell me that someone is taking care of it?



A Lasting Neighborhood Watch...

- Often communities start Neighborhood Watches because of a dramatic crime or increase in crime. When the problem subsides or is forgotten, the program loses momentum.
- Adopt a long-term attitude from the start – your aims are to empower people to prevent crime, to forge bonds among residents and law enforcement, and to build a base for broader community improvement.



A Lasting Neighborhood Watch (cont.)

- Spell out roles of the group. Consider forming a formal association with bylaws and officers.
- Decentralize planning and work. Establish committees and delegate tasks.
- Keep all members informed, via a mix of personal contact and newsletters.
- Plan for and train new leaders.



A Lasting Neighborhood Watch (cont.)

- Strike a balance between work and pleasure. Address the problems but also have fun as neighbors.
- Involve the entire community.
- Organize meetings that focus on current issues pertaining to children, youth, adults, seniors, and public and private property.



A Lasting Neighborhood Watch (cont.)

- Consider organizing citizen patrols to walk or drive around and alert police to crime and suspicious activity. Talk to local law enforcement about how patrols could work in your area.
- If you do implement patrols, share patrol duties and consult regularly with law enforcement, who should help train patrols.



A Lasting Neighborhood Watch (cont.)

- Don't forget to hold social events that give neighbors a chance to know each other – a block party, potluck dinner, volleyball or softball game, or a picnic.
- Thank people publicly for their hard work.
- Share data (formal or informal) that show Neighborhood Watch has helped reduce crime and improve safety.



What Else Can Neighborhood Watch Do?

- Adopt a neighborhood park or playground and hold a cleanup. Paint over graffiti in the neighborhood.
- Work with local building code officials to bring sub-par buildings up to code.
- Help neighbors install deadbolt locks, window locks, smoke alarms, and other safety devices in new and existing homes and commercial buildings.



What Else Can Neighborhood Watch Do? (cont.)

- Work with parents' groups to start a "McGruff House" or similar block parent program to provide safe places for children to go in emergencies.
- Publish a newsletter with prevention tips, local crime news, recognition of residents' achievements, and news of neighborhood and community events.



Expanding the Scope

- Neighborhood Watch can serve communities in many ways beyond preventing crime.
- It can provide focus for community preparedness, including Community Emergency Response Team training.
- Strong, organized, cohesive neighborhoods are better equipped to recognize terrorism and handle all sorts of emergency situations.



Homeland Security IS Crime Prevention



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Homeland Security

- Crime prevention is terrorism prevention.
- Both help us achieve safety and security.
- Both require action by individuals and neighborhoods.
- Both help us cope with fear.
- Both need planning and organization to be effective.



Homeland Security (cont.)

Neighborhood Watch groups are excellent platforms for community preparedness.

- They are already experienced in teaching residents about prevention.
- They often offer networks of neighborhoods.
- They are accustomed to training residents in various skills.
- They are accustomed to communicating regularly among themselves and with others.



Homeland Security (cont.)

- Neighborhood Watches can develop neighborhood-level plans for residents to help each other in emergencies; they can keep plans current.
- The groups provide excellent focal points for developing inventories of neighborhood skills and equipment that might be needed in emergencies.
- They can tap training for security needs.



An Example

The Pasadena, CA, Police Department matched the old concept of Neighborhood Watch with the new idea of security for the recreational vehicles at the Rose Bowl Parade. Parade Watch, as it came to be known, provided experienced neighbors to monitor RVs along the parade route and notify police of any suspicious vehicles.



An Example

In Stafford County, VA, the sheriff's office identified sites that might be attractive to terrorists, such as reservoirs, train tracks, and bridges. Neighborhood Watches near the sites were invited to get special training in what to report and how to report it with respect to possible threats to these targets. All residents were offered education on preparedness and mitigation strategies.



Disaster/Emergency Preparedness

- A Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a neighborhood team trained by emergency service professionals who respond following a major disaster when professionals are overwhelmed or delayed in meeting immediate needs.



Disaster/Emergency Preparedness (cont.)

- CERT offers 20 hours of instruction and hands-on training in disaster preparedness, first aid, fire suppression, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, team organization, and terrorism awareness.
- <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWEB/CERT>



Resources

The National Crime Prevention Council

1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW

Thirteenth Floor

Washington, DC 20036-5325

202-466-6272

www.ncpc.org



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Resources (cont.)

National Sheriffs' Association

1450 Duke Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

703-836-7827

www.sheriffs.org

www.USAonwatch.org



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Resources (cont.)

National Association of Town Watch

PO Box 303

1 Wynnewood Road

Wynnewood, PA 19096

610-649-7055

www.nationaltownwatch.org

National Night Out - first Tuesday in August



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Resources (cont.)

- Neighborhood Watch Program by the National Sheriff's Association

www.usaonwatch.org

- Citizens Corps

www.citizenscorps.gov



Resources (cont.)

- National Criminal Justice Reference Service

www.ncjrs.gov

- Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)

www.policevolunteers.org



Presenter Contact Information



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