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NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

MANUAL

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ACQUISITIONS

National Sheriffs' Association  
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## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MANUAL

### PART I - YOU SHARE IN THE RESPONSIBILITY

The prevention of crime -- particularly the prevention of residential burglaries -- is a responsibility shared by law enforcement officials and private citizens. No number of officers, squad cars or police helicopters can effectively combat the problem alone. It is essential that a concerned citizenry join hands with law enforcement in an active joint campaign to reduce residential burglaries. And that's where Neighborhood Watch enters the picture.

Neighborhood Watch is a highly successful crime prevention program that involves citizens cooperating with law enforcement agencies to reduce crime in their neighborhoods. It involves neighbors working with neighbors in a program of mutual assistance. Through Neighborhood Watch, citizens learn how to recognize and report suspicious persons and activities. And best of all, they are encouraged to help in the fight against crime in their community in the most effective way: before it begins!

Throughout America, dramatic decreases in crime have been experienced in communities supporting active Neighborhood Watch programs. Take it from law enforcement professionals like Sheriff James Metts of Lexington County, South Carolina, who said, "We've had a 33 percent reduction in crime here in

the last three years. We think a large part of the credit for that goes to our Watch programs."

Or Police Chief Richard Butler of Kalamazoo Township, Michigan, who found that "burglary and larceny dropped 50 percent in Neighborhood Watch areas. That compares with only a 7 percent drop in an area that wasn't on the program."

These are typical examples of thousands of jurisdictions across the country who have experienced dramatic decreases in burglary and related offenses through Neighborhood Watch programs.

## II. WHY NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

It is a fact of life that many of today's communities have become less personal than they were years ago. Families are more transient, children seem to have more activities that take them and their parents away from home, and there are more families with working mothers.

The familiar sight years ago of families visiting with each other on front porches while keeping a watchful eye on children and activities in the neighborhood is a rarity in most communities today.

The less personal nature of neighborhoods and reduced family presence at home are two of the essential ingredients which make communities ripe for crimes of opportunity and stealth -- particularly burglary.

Burglary is one of the most difficult and prevalent crime problems facing law enforcement today. It also involves a dangerously high potential for injury or death to the victim who comes into surprise contact with the burglar. Burglary is not a crime restricted to urban areas. On the contrary, its occurrence in suburban and rural areas has increased at a rate far in excess of that in urban centers.

Neighborhood Watch programs prove that burglary can be prevented. Watch programs prove that burglary can be prevented. By joining your neighbors in awareness of each other's welfare, you can reduce your vulnerability and thwart a potential burglar.

Neighborhood Watch can prepare your community to recognize suspicious persons, vehicles and activities, and assist you in better safeguarding your property and your valuables. Convicted burglars state that they are simply not prepared to take the added risk in working in Neighborhood Watch protected communities.

### III. GETTING IT GOING

You've heard about Neighborhood Watch. You suspect - or know - that there is a problem in your area. How do you begin?

Be optimistic and positive - and start enlisting some help.

o Form a planning committee:

Nothing complicated - two or three neighbors meeting over a cup of coffee can work wonders in discussing needs, level of interest and problems.

o Contact your law enforcement agency:

Often your local police department or sheriff's office has resources and personnel at hand to assist you. An interested group member can act as a representative to the law enforcement agency. Ask them if a crime prevention officer can help with the assessment of your community problems and needs. See if he can provide crime statistics for your area; but if this information is available, regard it cautiously; crime is typically underreported. Your crime prevention officer will also have at his disposal a list of contacts on both the local and national levels RP that will assist you in organizing and keeping your program going.

o Contact your neighbors:

Simply ask them

- 1) if they feel at risk of being burglarized or being the victim of other crimes
- 2) if they have done anything to protect their homes
- 3) if they would explore the possibility of joining a Neighborhood Watch group - or at least coming to the first meeting.

You may be surprised to learn how many of your neighbors' lives have already been touched by crime!

It is recommended that you conduct a brief crime attitude survey to determine how serious your neighbors feel the crime problem is in your neighborhood and what they have done to protect their households. An example of such a survey is provided in Appendix 1.

#### IV. CONDUCTING A SUCCESSFUL FIRST MEETING

##### Planning for the meeting:

- o Schedule your meeting in a convenient place such as a private home, church, community building, school or library.
  
- o Contact your sheriff's or police department and request that an officer be at your first meeting. Seek a commitment from the chief or sheriff to have an officer work with your group. If possible, have the chief or sheriff address a letter to all Neighborhood Watch members expressing his support. An example is included in Appendix 2.
  
- o Draw a large map of all the streets to be covered by Neighborhood Watch in your neighborhood. Start with a manageable number of homes at first; you can always add other areas.
  
- o Design a flyer or letter of invitation and see that every home gets a copy. A sample is included in Appendix 3.

- o Follow up with a call or personal visit to each home, reminding neighbors of the meeting time. Try to get each residence to commit at least one adult member to the meeting and get a feel for how large attendance will be. Young adult members of the family should also be welcome. They can add substantially to the program.

The first meeting:

- o On meeting day congratulate yourself! Half the battle is over. Arrive early and help everyone become acquainted; introduce the crime prevention officer.
- o Following the officer's presentation, discuss the results of the informal interviews and the crime survey. Inquiring about crimes and incidents in your area can be surprising and can generate commitments to the program.
- o Set clear achievable goals for your program. Your crime prevention officer should have a good feel for what you can expect to accomplish.



- o Get started on a list of the names, addresses, phone numbers and vehicle descriptions of those who will take part in the program. You may also want to include names and ages of children, work and school schedules, and whether there are timers on lights. Some of this information may be considered personal by your neighbors. That's understandable since some of them may have just met. The important thing is that they make a commitment to the Watch effort at this stage and agree to work together.
  
- o Choose high visibility Neighborhood Watch signs and decals to be used; the cost can be divided among households. Your crime prevention officer may assist you in ordering materials, but he may want to postpone this option until a good percentage of the residents agree to participate and ample training has been conducted.
  
- o After the meeting be sure to distribute literature from the meeting to those in the community who were unable to attend. This may encourage them to come to the next meeting.

#### V. PROGRAM COORDINATION

##### The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator

The coordinator's job is crucial to the success of your program.

This person's responsibilities may include:

- o Expanding the program and maintaining a current list of participants and neighborhood residents.
- o Maintaining lists of names, addresses, home and work telephone numbers, and vehicle descriptions.
- o Acting as liaison between Watch members, law enforcement officers, civic groups, and Block Captains.
- o Arranging neighborhood crime prevention training programs.
- o Obtaining and distributing crime prevention materials such as stickers and signs.
- o Involving others to develop specific crime prevention projects.
- o Encouraging participation in the Operation Identification program.
- o Notifying Block Captains of meetings and crime prevention training.

The Block Captain

The Block Captain is directly involved with his immediate neighbors. His responsibilities may include:

- o Providing feedback to block residents and the Coordinator.
- o Compiling and maintaining a current list of block participants, including name, address, etc. and providing copies of such information to each participant.
- o Visiting new residents and inviting them to join. Notifying and encouraging these residents to attend meetings and training sessions.
- o Establishing the Operation Identification program in his area.
- o Contacting each of "his" neighbors as often as possible to determine possible crime problems, needs for assistance, and suggestions for improvement.

## VI. PRACTICAL TIPS

Criminals tend to avoid neighborhoods protected by alert Neighborhood Watch participants. Crime in your area is not inevitable.

The positive attitude of Watch participants like you can make a vital difference in the effectiveness of the program.

### REPORTING SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

Anything that seems slightly "out of place" or is occurring at an unusual time of day could be criminal activity.

---CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY---

about all suspicious activity. Do not worry about bothering them or about being embarrassed if your suspicions prove to be unfounded. Think instead about what could happen if you don't act.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO APPREHEND  
A PERSON COMMITTING A CRIME OR  
INVESTIGATE SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

Not every stranger who comes into your neighborhood is a criminal by any means. There are many door-to-door salesmen, repairmen and servicemen moving around our neighborhoods all the time. But criminals do take advantage of this by pretending to be legitimate workmen.

The police department would rather investigate than be called when it is too late. Your call could save a life, prevent an injury, or stop a criminal act. Be alert.

#### SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY CONCERNING PERSONS

##### CIRCUMSTANCE

##### POSSIBLE CRIME

Going door to door in a residential area, especially if one or more persons goes to rear of residence.

Possible burglary suspects or trespassers.

Waiting or loitering in front of a house or business, if business is closed or house unoccupied.

Possible burglary suspects.

Forcing entrance, or entering your neighbor's house, when it is unoccupied.

Person running, especially if something of value is being carried.

Person carrying property that is not wrapped, at an unusual hour.

Much human traffic to and from a certain residence if it occurs on a daily basis.

Person screaming.

Person loitering around cars or going to cars peering into them, especially in parking lots or on streets.

Person loitering around schools, parks or secluded areas.

Possible burglary, theft or trespassing.

Possible suspect fleeing the scene of a crime.

Possible suspect fleeing the scene of a burglary or robbery.

Possible vice or fence operation.

Possible rape or assault.

Possible car theft.

Possible sex offenders.

Persons offering items for sale  
at a very low price. ;

Possibly trying to sell stolen  
property.

Strangers loitering or driving  
through a neighborhood several  
times.

Possible burglary suspects.

"Delivery Man" with a wrong address  
or one who asks if someone else  
lives there.

Possible burglary suspects.

#### SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY CONCERNING VEHICLES

##### CIRCUMSTANCES

##### POSSIBLE CRIME

Slow moving vehicle, without lights,  
if the course followed appears aim-  
less. This is suspicious in any  
location including residential  
streets, schools, and playgrounds.

Possible burglar, drug pusher, or  
sex offender.

Parked or occupied vehicle containing one or more persons, especially significant if observed at an unusual hour.

Vehicles being loaded with valuables if parked by a business or unoccupied residence.

Abandoned vehicle parked on your block.

Vehicle containing weapons.

Vehicle where someone is being forced into it, especially females or juveniles.

Vehicle where a business transaction is being conducted, around schools or parks.

Possible lookouts for a burglary or robbery.

Possible burglary or theft in progress.

Possible stolen car.

Owner may engage in criminal activity.

Possible kidnapping, assault, or attempted rape.

Possible selling of stolen items or drugs.



Locked vehicle that someone is attempting to forcibly enter, especially in a parking lot.

Possible theft of a car or its contents.

Persons detaching mechanical parts or accessories from a vehicle.

Possible theft or vandalism.

Objects thrown from a vehicle.

Possible disposal of contraband.

#### OTHER SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

##### CIRCUMSTANCES

##### POSSIBLE CRIME

Continuous repair operations at a nonbusiness location.

Possible stolen property being altered.

Open or broken doors and windows at a closed business or unoccupied residence.

Possible burglary in progress, completed burglary, or vandalism.

Unusual noises such as gunshots, screaming or dogs barking continuously.

Possible burglary, assault, rape, etc.

Sound of breaking glass.

Possible burglary or vandalism.

A person exhibiting unusual mental  
or physical symptoms.

Person may be injured, under the  
influence of drugs, or otherwise  
needing medical attention.

#### PROVIDING QUICK AND ACCURATE DESCRIPTIONS

Both time and accuracy are critical in reporting crime or suspicious persons and activities. Use your police or sheriff's department emergency number when reporting a crime actually in progress or a life-threatening incident.

Call the non-emergency number to report crimes which have already occurred, when the perpetrator has left the area, or to report suspicious activity. The information you provide will be kept in confidence. You need not give your name, although this is often helpful.

Write down the details while they are still fresh in your mind:

DESCRIBING EVENTS

- o What happened? Practice your observation and recall techniques and consciously put them into use when observing and reporting a suspicious person, vehicle or event.
- o When did it happen? Make note of the exact time of day the event occurred.

Where did it occur? Note the nearest cross street, home address or landmark in relationship to the event.

- o Are injuries involved? Be prepared to report whether visible or suspected personal injury is involved. Be as specific as possible - this could save a life!
- o Are weapons involved? This information, whether observed or suspected, is essential to responding officers.

DESCRIBING VEHICLES

- o Vehicle license number. Is it from out of state?
- o Type of vehicle, color, and approximate age.

- o Special designs or unusual features, such as vinyl top, mag wheels, body damage, pinstripes, etc.
- o Direction of flight.

#### DESCRIBING PERSONS

Practicing to develop skill in this is a good Watch meeting activity - carefully note:

- o Sex
- o Race
- o Age
- o Height (estimated from eye contact level measured against your height)
- o Weight
- o Hair (color and length)
- o Hat
- o Facial hair (beard/mustache)

- o Shirt/tie
- o Coat/jacket
- o Trousers
- o Shoes
- o Any peculiar or distinguishable mannerisms, physical disabilities, disfigurations, scars or tattoos.
- o Voice characteristics (if available).
- o Direction of flight.

BEGIN THINKING SAFETY

Your Crime Prevention officer can provide you with many home security tips and ways to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of crime - at home or away. But you must also be aware of and alert to the potential risk of crime in order to prevent it. Following are some crime prevention and safety tips that you should be aware of:

SECURITY HABITS

In the home:

A timer or photo electric cell which automatically turns a living room light on at dusk is a good idea..

Leave a radio on with the volume turned low to create some source of noise when leaving the home.

Always close and lock gargage doors.

Secure automatic garage door transmitter in glove compartment of your car.

Keep the shrubbery trimmed near your doors and windows so they can be seen from the street.

Keep your grass cut, your leaves raked, etc., indicating a well cared for and occupied home.

Empty your mailbox or arrange to have it emptied as soon as mail is delivered.

Re-key locks when moving into an apartment or previously owned home.

Keep extra keys out of sight and in a safe place.

Leaving shades or draperies open only helps a burglar in spotting items of value before a burglary.

Never leave a note on the door for anyone explaining why you are not at home.

Never leave doors or windows unlocked.

Never have your marital status or first or middle name on your nameplate or mailbox.

Never hide a key outside. Most hiding places are obvious to burglars.

On the telephone:

Never give personal information (name, age, address, etc.) to a stranger on the telephone.

Never let a stranger on the telephone know you will or will not be home.

Never let a stranger on the telephone know you are home alone. Instruct babysitters never to tell anyone who calls that they are home alone with the children.

Teach children old enough to be left alone never to tell a stranger who telephones that parents are gone. Teach them to say, "My mom can't come to the phone now. May I take a message?"

When going away:

Have a neighbor check your home. Don't cancel your paper or mail deliveries. Have your neighbor pick up your paper and mail every day.

Leave a key with a friend. Ask that the house be checked periodically. Have the drapes opened and closed and turn on different lights so the house appears occupied.

Store all your valuables.

Tell police when you are leaving and when you plan to return. They will check on your house periodically.



Use call forwarding, if available in your area.

Consider having your telephone "put on vacation".

Do not disconnect telephone service. Instead, turn the bell tone to the loudest volume.

Ask a neighbor to put some trash in your trash cans.

Consider inviting friends, relatives, or associates to live in your home while you are away.

Leave "second car" in the driveway or ask neighbors to park in your driveway.

#### Confrontations:

Get in the habit of surveying your home as you approach it. If you find any evidence that someone has broken in do not enter. Go to the nearest telephone and call the police. Should you confront a burglar

the very first rule is - GET OUT OF HIS WAY! Never get between a burglar and the exit, and never try to stop him. It may cost you your life!

If someone is prowling outside your house, make him think that several people are at home. Call to someone, "Dan, there's something outside." Call the police. If it is dark, turn on the lights.

If he has already broken in, retreat and put other doors between the two of you. (It is a good idea to have a deadbolt on an interior door.)

If you can't get out, try to signal a neighbor - throw something through a window, just the noise may frighten a burglar away.

If someone should enter your bedroom while you are in bed, pretend that you are asleep (as long as he doesn't come near you.)

If he is armed, do what he says. If you have children, be sure that they do as he says, as well. Remain calm - he wants your property rather than your life.

Memorize a description of the intruder. When he has left, write it down before calling the police. Don't depend on memory.

#### HOME SECURITY INSPECTIONS

One of the most effective ways to educate your neighbors and help them protect their homes is to arrange for detailed security inspections of their homes. Your Crime Prevention officer will assist you in this effort. He can also provide watch members with home security inspection checklists so that preliminary surveys can be conducted by homeowners or block captains.

Volunteer inspectors should however be carefully screened before being admitted to the program; they should receive intensive training as to how to inspect and what to look for; and they should be required to make a detailed report on each inspection. It might be wise to have homeowners sign a disclaimer relative to these inspections.

The residential burglary security analysis entails in-depth review of particular security risks unique to a residential dwelling: doors, locks, windows, lighting, shrubbery, etc.(1) For homes or apartments, security recommendations range from the "free" things a citizen can do (such as leaving lights on when going out for the evening to give the impression that the premise is occupied) to installation of hardware (such as deadbolt locks on doors). In most cases, all that is really needed are some good modern

locks and old-fashioned common sense. Of course, if a burglar is determined to enter, he probably can; however, he seeks easier targets in most cases. Time is a burglar's enemy. The longer it takes him to enter a premise, the greater his risk of being caught.

Plan for future meetings:

- o Discuss with your Crime Prevention officer topics he can provide for future meetings. Ask if he can return to the community to conduct security inspections of homes participating in the program.
  
- o Elect the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator to head your program. This person will act as liaison with law enforcement officials and volunteer leaders. Retirees and others who have a little extra time at home can make excellent Coordinators.
  
- o Select Block Captains for every 10-15 houses to be the channel for information. Block Captains will encourage new families moving in to join the program and pass information from the Coordinator to members. They will alert residents if a problem develops in the area.

- o It is up to your members how often the group will meet, but to keep the momentum going during the group's start-up phase, it is best to schedule monthly meetings. Some of the most successful Watch programs require attendance by members during the first three to five meetings. These meetings are essential in organizing the participants, supplying them with crime prevention procedures, and reinforcing the Neighborhood Watch concepts and the feeling of commitment to the neighborhood.

## PART II

### I. SHERIFFS AND POLICE CHIEFS

You are the impetus and pacesetter for Neighborhood Watch in your jurisdiction. The program requires your continuous and enthusiastic support.

Ninety-five percent of the Neighborhood Watch groups in the United States are currently receiving assistance from law enforcement agencies. Without your sincere, continuous involvement, needed programs are not likely to get off the ground and interest in existing groups will soon wane and eventually vanish.

In establishing and supporting Neighborhood Watch, you may want to cover the following points:

- o Identify the organizational section, unit and officer(s) who will have overall responsibility for the various Watches in your jurisdiction.
  
- o Select only those officers or deputies who have a strong desire to make a total commitment to the program to act as liaison with Watch Coordinators. Outgoing personalities and impeccable personal reputations are additional qualities desired -- BUT AN UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO CRIME PREVENTION IS ESSENTIAL!

PAGE 2

Insure that all your crime prevention officers are fully trained in crime prevention practices and programs and that they maintain that level of training.

- o If you are the initiator of Watch groups in your area, be prepared to lend whatever manpower and logistical support you can to the effort. From the outset you may want to look at available crime reports and demographic information to determine boundaries for potential Watch groups. Remember that in most cases large rural areas can be adequately covered with relatively few Watch members.

Your agency should not attempt to force Neighborhood Watch schemes upon a neighborhood; rather, they should identify persons who can serve as organizers and coordinators in each individual neighborhood. Civic, professional, social and senior citizen groups can assist you in the identification, selection and motivation of these "leaders;" however, the Neighborhood Watch Project Officer must be prepared to do a selling job, to describe the problem in depth and to explain why the particular assistance of these leaders is essential to an effective, responsive program.

The responsibility for stimulating neighborhood residents to action should rest jointly with the NNW Program Coordinator and the NNW Project Officer.

Their duties should include: organizing neighborhood meetings; promoting the program; arranging for residential inspections and property marking sessions. If practical, initial neighborhood meetings should be held in a private home where the props essential to the discussion of burglary and target hardening are available. Also, the host's gesture of hospitality can be a first step toward acquainting neighbors and getting them to agree to keep an eye on one another's property and on the neighborhood in general. Should a block watch or block parent program already exist, it can be integrated with the Neighborhood Watch Program - in fact, existing block captains or block parents would make ideal NNW Program Coordinators.

Burglary and vandalism reports written by your department should indicate whether a home security inspection had been conducted and what corrective actions the owner or resident had taken. Crime prevention personnel should follow up on all burglaries to persuade the victim to take steps to reduce his vulnerability to future attacks.

- o Of the NW programs surveyed, better than half operate efficiently on shoestring budgets or even no budgets at all. But they will need some help from your agency. Give some thought to the equipment, training, operating space, speakers, liaison officers and crime statistic information you can commit to the program.



Your department should be aware of and make every use possible of those organizations in the community presently involved in crime prevention. You should also be aware of their success in this area and be prepared to incorporate their efforts toward common goals. Among some of the organizations that may be of assistance are:

Scanner Association of North America

Chamber of Commerce of U.S.

Sons of the American Revolution

The General Federation of Women's Clubs

Kiwanis International

American Farm Bureau Federation

Rotary International

Associated General Contractors

Bar Association

P.T.A.

YMCA, YWCA

Urban League

Neighborhood Improvement Leagues

Realtor's Association

Boy Scouts - Explorer Scouts

Optimist Clubs

R.S.V.P. and other Senior Citizen Organizations

These groups can aid in supplying funds, manpower, and most importantly, a platform to spread the word. The sheriff or chief of police should extend a written invitation to the presidents or chief officers of all such appropriate groups to meet and discuss the crime prevention program, its objectives and manner of implementation.

- o Set realistic and achievable goals for programs in your jurisdiction. Identify ways to build and strengthen a strong base of community support for your various Watch groups.
  
- o Once your Neighborhood Watch program is off and running other good things will happen. The enthusiasm for crime prevention is contagious and devoted members will seek additional ways to become more involved. Eighty percent of current NW participants are also involved in Operation Identification. Nearly the same number request home security surveys from their police or sheriff's department.
  
- o Communication with Watch members is crucial to the success of the program. Better than half of the Neighborhood Watch groups surveyed distribute newsletters for members. You can help by providing an ongoing system of getting the word out on crime alerts, crime trends and patterns or other information on criminal activity or safety that affects those in your jurisdiction.

#### BUILDING SECURITY INTO NEW HOMES

Good locks, outdoor lighting and alarm systems can be installed during construction of houses, townhouses and apartments for much less than it will cost a homeowner to add them later.

Your agency can work with county and municipal planning and building code enforcement officials to develop standards for security devices for new single family and multiple family residences. If your community will not include requirements for adequate locks and lighting in its building code, work with builders, realtors and consumer protection groups to persuade builders to consider security when they construct dwellings.

Work with your local locksmiths to stress the importance of security hardware. It is in their best interest - as well as yours and homeowners' - to see that good hardware is used.

Try to get real estate agents to stress the good security features of homes and apartments. Realtors can have considerable influence on builders and apartment building owners.

o Review the "Keeping it Going!" section at the end of this booklet. Most successful Neighborhood Watch groups engage in a wide range of activities beyond passive surveillance. In exploring possible programs for their individual Watch groups members will need your encouragement, support and guidance as well as some commitment of resources. By being prepared to assist them, your department and the community will share in the rewards.

- o As the chief law enforcement officer in your area you will be truly impressed with the initiative and responsibility citizens will assume for "hardening" their neighborhoods against crime if you will encourage them and work with them.
  
- o Communities reporting dramatic decreases in crime after commencing Neighborhood Watch typically offer praiseworthy comments like, "Our Chief (Sheriff) got our program going and has stuck with it since. It's the best thing we've had happen here in a long, long time!"

EVERYONE BENEFITS WHEN YOU MAINTAIN A HIGH LEVEL OF INTEREST IN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH!

## II. SETTING UP PROGRAMS AND SETTING GOALS

Successful Neighborhood Watch groups do more than just serve as nosy neighbors who keep their eyes open and report possible problems.

Of the groups surveyed in 1985-86:

80% participate in Operation Identification.

68% sponsor home security surveys.

PAGE 9

38% work on environmental/beautification problems.

27% co-ordinate Block Parenting programs.

19% engage in some form of victim assistance.

Experimenting with different crime prevention and community service methods is one way to keep your Neighborhood Watch program fresh and alive! Having realistic and achievable goals also stimulates interest.

Below are some projects and ideas you may want to consider for your Watch group.

#### CITIZEN PATROLS

Foot or vehicle patrol may make your group even more effective. Two or more individuals, often from the same family, on patrol during designated tours of duty can often detect suspicious activity not noticed by stationary observation.

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 police or sheriff's deputies. It should be emphasized to members that they do not possess police powers; 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 EXTREMELY DANGEROUS!

The frequency of patrol need not be more than a willingness to take a "sweep" through the neighborhood every half hour or so. In rural communities it may be wise to check with neighboring landowners and determine the extent of surveillance they desire: some prefer to have their property observed from a distance, while others welcome patrollers right up to their front doors.

Groups may also want to intensify patrol efforts during certain peak holiday periods (Halloween, Independence Day) or supplement the sheriff or police patrol during its change of the watch.

Patrol members should be properly equipped for their patrol duties. For example, flashlights or searchlights are necessary for night patrols, and many mobile patrols use C.B. radios, to contact a citizen-manned base station. Group members may choose to purchase this or other equipment and rotate it among members going on patrol.

PATROL PROCEDURES

1. The patrol area should be well defined.
2. Only residents of this defined community should participate in the patrol. Patrol members should be at least 18 years of age.
3. Patrol members must have participated in a training session.
4. A patrol team should consist of two people: A driver and an observer in the patrol vehicle or two neighbors walking together. A vehicle should be marked with a removable sign.
5. The purpose of community patrol is to observe and report. Patrol members should not leave their vehicle or become involved with a suspect.
6. Patrol members do not possess police powers. Each member is liable as an individual for civil and criminal charges should he exceed his authority.



7. Patrol members should not challenge anyone. The patrol's visual presence should be a deterrent to most criminal activity. If a suspicious situation continues they should call the police and request assistance.
8. Patrol members should not pursue vehicles except briefly to get the license number. They should not attempt to enforce traffic laws.
9. Patrol members should patrol between designated hours. Members should attempt to patrol in a random fashion rather than in an observable pattern. Vary the route and the time of the patrol.
10. Patrol members may not drink alcoholic beverages while on patrol nor report for patrol if they have been drinking.
11. Patrol members shall not carry weapons.
12. Any patrol members violating patrol procedures may be banned from participation in the community patrol.
13. Patrol members should take notes of suspicious situations on log sheets. The notes may become evidence if the situation becomes a criminal matter. A copy of the notes could be turned over to the Block

PAGE 13

Captain and the original kept by the patrol member. ( The notes may be needed later for the patrol member to refresh his memory.

CB radios have also proven to be an excellent communications link between Watch patrol members and law enforcement agencies. Many programs link patrolling units to a base station in their watch community which is responsible for contacting law enforcement agencies when necessary.

Service station managers may be willing to donate gasoline to group members going on patrol. Watch members unable to participate in active patrol can be asked to help with sharing the cost of gasoline and other vehicle expenses involved, or in manning base stations for CB radios.

### III. Keeping It Going

#### VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

If you haven't already done so, give serious consideration to initiating a victim assistance program. Many citizens suffer serious mental anguish after being victimized by crime and are greatly in need of comfort and help. Many victims (especially women and the elderly) are intimidated by the perpetrator. In some areas the entire community is victimized.

Your agency may not be able to provide all the direct services to victims, but it can act effectively as a referral source to establish professional agencies in the community. Your agency is also especially suited to inform victims of what may be required of them if the case is prosecuted.

Your NW group is also a logical resource for rendering assistance to neighbors who are victims of crime.

How can a NW group member help a victim?

1. Be there, encouraging, supporting, comforting, caring and reassuring the victim.
2. Avoid being judgmental. If the victim shows signs of guilt, let him know that the criminal is at fault, not him.

3. Just listen and let the victim talk. Ventilation is healthy.
4. When things settle down, an informed individual needs to discuss the procedures and requirements of the criminal justice system with the victim. Be informed and offer the necessary support for the victim to deal with coming events in the investigation and prosecution process.
5. Have telephone contact persons available. Each group can provide referrals to the victim to help in dealing with the trauma associated with being victimized as well as to help them through criminal justice proceedings.
6. Help provide for the daily needs of the victim -- food, repairs, transportation, babysitting, care of pets, running errands -- AND JUST PLAIN BEING THERE!
7. Be with the victim during key stages of criminal justice proceedings such as the investigation, visits to the prosecutor and court.

How to get it started?

Determine if there is a victim assistance program in the area already; if so, Neighborhood Watch becomes an adjunct, complementing the services already offered. These Watch groups should be trained and coordinated by law enforcement. If there is no existing victim assistance program, the sheriff or police chief should be the one to initiate the program, provide training, information, and direction.

OPERATION IDENTIFICATION

Operation Identification is the name given to a nationwide program of marking personal property indelibly with a unique identifying number to permit positive identification if the items are lost or stolen. Numbers can be engraved onto metal objects or marked with indelible markers on other materials.

By marking property, law enforcement agencies can more effectively aid in its recovery should it be lost or stolen. By participating in Operation ID, citizens can also deter the burglar by making it more difficult to dispose of stolen goods, and by increasing the criminals' chances of discovery and conviction. Contact the National Sheriffs' Association; 1450 Duke Street; Alexandria, Virginia 22314 for information on Operation Identification Registry.

## PROJECT SAFEHOUSE

Because over half of the persons participating in Watch programs are either retired or otherwise not employed -- and home during the day -- they are ideally suited to serve as Block Parents.

Ask your group members to assist children who are frightened or who may be followed by strangers by allowing their homes to be designated as a "SAFEHOUSE".

"SAFEHOUSES" can be 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.

Stickers or signs should however, only be displayed when the block parent is in the house and within hearing distance of the doorbell. Officers should have a list of authorized "SAFEHOUSES" and check neighborhoods to insure that only authorized homes display "SAFEHOUSE" signs.

## YOUTH ESCORT SERVICE

A Youth Escort Service is one way young persons can assist an older person who needs assistance or companionship for any reason. The young person (who

may be a member of a youth service organization sponsored by an adult voluntary organization) accompanies the elderly person on regularly scheduled trips or in response to a request which might come into a central escort service. It is an appropriate service not only in the typical residential community but also in rural areas and in housing developments for the elderly.

A Youth Escort Service is not a security or bodyguard service and should not be planned as such. It is a program to alleviate and counteract fear among elderly persons, a program of companionship, a program of service to those who need special kinds of assistance when they move about. Fear of crime is a reality - often far beyond the reality of danger from criminal action. Combatting it is a commendable objective for an anti-crime effort.

#### PROJECT PORCHLIGHT

This project is underway in at least one major city and may benefit your community as well. By encouraging your neighbors to burn their porchlights from dusk to dawn, the cover of darkness is greatly reduced -- and at a cost of about a nickel per night for using a sixty watt bulb.

Rural electrification companies have also demonstrated their willingness to support security lighting programs by providing discounts on a group basis for families who wish to install such lighting. Contact your rural electrical cooperative for further information.

#### CRIME STOPPERS

This is a very successful nationwide program based on the simple principal that for every crime committed someone other than the offender has information that could solve the crime.

CRIME STOPPERS serves to overcome victims' fear of involvement or retaliation by offering anonymity, and reduces apathy by offering rewards to those who provide useful information.

To preserve anonymity, callers are not asked to give their names, but are assigned code numbers from a chronological log sheet. This number is used in all future communications.

Your Watch group can be instrumental in getting such a program off the ground in your area, or can offer assistance to an existing CRIME STOPPERS program by eliciting public, judicial and media support.



#### CRIME WATCH

This is a way for your group to get the word out to neighbors with daily broadcasts of crime activities. By making use of widespread media coverage -- especially radio broadcasts during morning and evening rush hours -- your neighbors will be better informed and more alert to potential problems.

#### SEASONAL CRIME PREVENTION TIPS

Crime tips are yet another way your group can provide timely information to neighbors in regard to holidays, seasonal changes, or special events. This program is not an expensive one and can be accomplished by simply noting the tips on a postcard and mailing or distributing them throughout the community, or providing them as Public Service Announcements to local radio and TV stations.

#### TELEPHONE TREES

Telephone trees can help expedite emergency information among your neighbors. Neighborhoods can be divided into small workable areas using

major 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 department.

Each individual listed on the tree knows who he is to contact should emergency or other important information need to be disseminated in a hurry.

#### SCANNER OWNERS

Owners of emergency radio scanners have been shown to be a valuable adjunct to many watch groups.

Because of the immediacy with which scanner owners receive information, they can be of vital assistance as additional "eyes and ears" of local law enforcement and valuable members of local Neighborhood Watch organizations. They have the capacity to immediately warn other members of their crime prevention group should emergencies arise in their neighborhood.

#### BEAUTIFICATION PROJECTS

Your group can organize an effort to remove 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 liveable. Research has clearly shown that improvements of this type can have measurable effect on reducing crime as well as the fear of crime among community members.

#### MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings with a wide range of speakers from judges, lawyers and prosecutors to parole and probation officers can keep interest going in your group. Speakers from all segments of the community can be an untapped resource capable of providing a wealth of information to group members.

#### FIRE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

This and other safety related programs can be an excellent addition to your Neighborhood Watch meetings. In some areas fire prevention officers are willing to address Watch groups on such topics as CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation), disaster preparedness and fire safety.

#### OPERATION FINGERPRINT

Thousands of children are reported missing each year. Fingerprinting children can hasten the identification of missing children and is being done

by law enforcement departments across the country at no cost to parents. Watch parents can participate in this effort and encourage others to do likewise.

#### FUNDRAISING

This may not be essential for your group. More than half of the Neighborhood Watch programs surveyed reported having no funding source at the inception. Of those needing funding however, many are successful in obtaining monies by sponsoring bake sales, pot luck dinners, ice cream socials, raffles, yard sales and community festivals.

#### INSTALLATION OF SECURITY DEVICES

Using the contributed services of handymen in your Watch groups is a great way to help your neighbors put locks, window pins and bars peepholes, and other devices into place. Such assistance saves the cost of the actual installation, thereby inducing more citizens to avail themselves of these necessary measures.

Some Neighborhood Watch groups arrange to purchase locks and other security devices in quantity at a discount.

Some jurisdictions provide mobile installation crews to provide this service at minimal cost to residents. Senior citizens, handicapped persons and burglary victims are among those who can be offered these services free of charge.

#### CALL FORWARDING

Call forwarding is a service your phone company may offer and one which can give callers the impression that someone is home when residents are actually away. Call forwarding lets you transfer your incoming calls to another telephone number. The transfer process is a simple one that takes only a few seconds. It is accomplished by dialing a few numbers, then listening for a distinct tone signifying that the transfer has been made. The return to normal service is equally simple. Your local phone company can provide you with further information.

#### WELCOMING COMMITTEE

Organize volunteers to welcome new neighbors to the community. This creates an opportunity to acquaint new neighbors and sign up new Watch participants.

#### HOUSE NUMBERING PROJECT

Nothing is more frustrating to a responding police officer than to arrive at a location and not be able to find the exact house because no house numbers can be seen. Every neighborhood number should be uniform as to the size and location. House numbers should be visible from the street at night. Start a project that will ensure that house numbers are present, uniform and conspicuous.

#### "RENT-A-TEEN"

Whenever possible, the young adults of your neighborhood should be actively involved in your Watch program. The "Rent-A-Teen" program is simply a project whereby they perform odd jobs around the house (wash windows, cut grass, wax cars, small painting jobs, etc.) for a fee. The monies collected could be used for special youth projects such as field trips or other worthwhile neighborhood projects.

#### AUTO BUMPER DECAL

This is a program to identify vehicles belonging to residents within a Watch neighborhood. The basic purpose of the bumper decal system is to alert

police patrol and concerned community members that a particular vehicle does or does not belong in the Watch area allowing appropriate action to be taken when necessary.

#### WARMLINES

Warmlines can be set up by group members willing to spend time talking to children of working parents who become lonely after returning from school to empty homes. Warmlines can also serve as a valuable link for so-called "latch-key" children to a helping adult should an emergency arise.

#### HOUSE SITTING

Get members of church groups, senior citizens clubs and social clubs to establish routine procedures for "housesitting" when their members are involved in attendance at funeral services, weddings or when they are temporarily confined in a hospital or convalescent center. People are especially vulnerable to burglaries at these times and are least able emotionally and financially to withstand the shock and loss.

NATURAL OBSERVERS

Natural observers such as senior citizens, teenagers, utility truck drivers, bus drivers, mailmen, or joggers should be recruited into Watch programs. These individuals are often moving about neighborhoods during daylight hours when most burglaries occur and are a valuable addition to your own "eyes and ears."



#### IV. ORGANIZATIONAL AIDS

The success of any program relies heavily on solid organizational structure, sound programming and accurate records. With this in mind, you will need to develop forms to assist both your department and the Watch group to keep track of program implementation and activities. Some of those you may consider are as follows:

##### Organizational Structure Form

This form provides the Crime Prevention Unit with the names, addresses and phone numbers of the liaison people in the neighborhood (Block Captains, Committee and Coordinator). It is the responsibility of the Neighborhood Coordinator to provide this needed information.

##### Activity/Correspondence Record Form

This form is a record of all contacts between the neighborhood and the Crime Prevention Unit as well as a record of neighborhood activity in the Block Security program. The updating of this file lies with the Neighborhood Coordinator and the Crime Prevention Unit. It is the responsibility of the Neighborhood Coordinator to advise the Unit concerning neighborhood activities such as meetings, operation identification and sign-up progress, crime problems, etc. The contact officer is responsible for making all such notations on the form.

Participation Form

Neighborhood Watch is a community based program which requires a commitment on the part of each participant. This form is used by the Block Captains to acquire this commitment with the signature of the neighbor. The Block Captain has the responsibility of explaining the program and the duties of the participant prior to requesting this commitment.

The signatures on this form will be used to determine the percentage of participation in the program. This same form can be used to track Operation Identification progress by making appropriate notation next to participants name. Before a neighborhood is allowed to display Neighborhood Watch signs, it is recommended that seventy percent participation in these two activities (Sign-Up and Operation Identification) be required. It is the responsibility of the Neighborhood Coordinator to provide the Crime Prevention Unit with this listing of participants.

Map of the Area

It is the responsibility of the Block Captain, if there is no Planning Committee, to provide the Neighborhood Coordinator with a map showing the street(s) for which the Block Captain is responsible. This map should show each dwelling, listing the name, address and telephone numbers of its

residents. The residents participating should be clearly marked. Once the Neighborhood Coordinator has all the maps from the Block Captains, it is the Coordinators responsibility to provide a master copy to the Crime Prevention Unit.

#### Crime Statistics

This information is provided by the Crime Analysis Unit and is kept by the Crime Prevention Unit.

#### Neighborhood Newsletters

If the neighborhood has a newsletter, it is requested that the Crime Prevention Unit be forwarded a copy to be filed in the neighborhood's folder.

#### Newspaper Articles

Any crime prevention or related article that appears in the local newspapers relating to the neighborhood should be sent to the Unit for filing.

For additional information on the aforementioned suggestions, write to:

National Institute of Justice  
633 Indiana Avenue  
Washington, DC 20531

National Sheriffs' Association  
1450 Duke Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

National Crime Prevention Council  
Woodward Building  
733 15th Street. NW  
Suite 540  
Washington, DC 20005

CRIME STOPPERS INTERNATIONAL  
3736 Eubank, NE  
Suite B-4  
Albuquerque, NM 87111

N.C.J.R.S.

Post Office Box 6000

Rockville, MD 20850

For specific additional information and materials you might wish to contact:

AARP

1909 K Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20049

International Society of Crime Prevention Practitioners

Box 1284

Rockville, MD 20850

National Crime Prevention Council

The Woodward Building

733 15th Street, N.W.

Suite 540

Washington, DC 20005

National Crime Prevention Institute  
University of Louisville  
Shelby Campus  
Louisville, KY 40292  
502/588-6987

NCJRS - National Criminal Justice Reference Service  
Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20850

National Neighborhood Watch Program  
National Sheriffs' Association  
1450 Duke Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

National Urban Coalition  
Community Information Exchange  
1120 G Street, N.W.  
Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20005

This manual was prepared with the help of the following departments, who generously supplied invaluable information about Neighborhood Watch programs and progress:

Alexandria Police Department

Alexandria, Virginia

Buncombe County Sheriff's Department

Asheville, North Carolina

Clifton Police Department

Clifton, New Jersey

Detroit Police Department

Detroit, Michigan

Greene County Sheriff's Department

Springfield, Missouri

Norfolk Police Department

Norfolk, Virginia

San Diego Police Department  
San Diego, California

St. Louis Police Department  
SafeStreet Staff  
St. Louis, Missouri

StreetSafe Staff  
Boston, Massachusetts

Neighborhood Watch coordinators and participants in each of these areas also gave generously of their time in supplying information about individual Neighborhood Watch programs.

Thanks also to contributing editors Mike Bolton and Diane Bailey-Lynn.



*Sample Notice*

**It Is Time To Stop!!!!**

**Crimes Break-Ins Vandalism**

**Neighborhood Watch Meeting**

WHERE: GOOCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
Calculus and Rosser.  
WHEN: THURS. NOV. 5, 1981  
TIME: 7:00 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.  
Must be out by 9:00

An officer from the Police Department will show a film on security for our homes and discuss how we can protect our homes and our neighbors' homes.

**It Takes All Of Us To Work Together  
On This Project!!!!!!!!!!  
Please Try To Attend!!!!!!!!!!**

*Sample Notice*

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

DEAR MEMBER:

THERE WILL BE A MEETING OF YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY WATCH

THIS MONTH. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE FOLLOWING

LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_

THE TIME OF THE MEETING IS \_\_\_\_\_ PM, ON \_\_\_\_\_.

THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY CRIME PREVENTION SQUAD IS LOOKING

FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THIS MEETING.

CRIME PREVENTION SQUAD

Dear Neighborhood Watch Participants,

The crime problem in our nation is both costly and demoralizing. Directly or indirectly, we are all affected by crime, either suffering from injury, financial loss and intimidation. These situations demonstrate vividly the need for community involvement and assistance in crime prevention, crime reporting and crime solving. Therefore, I support and welcome your efforts in the \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Watch Program.

This community-based crime watch program is a simple and direct approach towards protecting our community from criminal attacks. The program involves the reduction of criminal opportunity through citizen participation in crime prevention measures such as being alert and aware, reporting suspicious and criminal activity to the police , and initiating actions which reduce criminal opportunity.

In these times of reported apathy within our communities, it is encouraging to find the concern and involvement you and your neighbors display with your Neighborhood Watch efforts. The \_\_\_\_\_ Police/Sheriff's Department stands ready to assist and to support you with this program.

Again, I welcome and appreciate your efforts towards making \_\_\_\_\_ a safer place to live and visit.

Gratefully,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief of Police (Sheriff)

P.S. For assistance with your area's program, call \_\_\_\_\_.