



A watchful neighborhood is key to preventing crime because many criminals are discouraged if they might be observed. The benefits of starting a Neighborhood Watch include:

- Reduced crime and better quality of life.
- Greater sense of security and community.
- Better preparation for emergencies.
- Greater support for law enforcement.

Neighborhood Watch is about knowing your neighbors, staying observant and reporting suspicious or illegal activity. It is NOT about taking the law into your own hands or forming a vigilante justice group.

To launch a new group, follow the steps outlined here and tailor them to meet your neighborhood's unique needs.



Tips for having a Neighborhood Watch party!

- Assign one person to handle RSVPs.
- Have name tags with each person's name and house number.
- Assign people to bring food, paper plates, napkins, cups, drinks, utensils, ice; or let each person bring their own beverage.
- Younger children are comfortable on sheets or blankets on the ground. It is nice to have some toys out for them or activities planned for them.
- Provide several large trash containers.
- Ask guests to bring lawn chairs.
- Ask local merchants to donate food, prizes, gift certificates; even money-saving coupons that will make good give-aways to those who attend.
- If you BBQ, keep the grill far away from the children's area. Begin cooking on the grill about a half-hour before the party.
- Take pictures as souvenirs.

CONTACT US

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Neighborhood Watch

GETTING STARTED

Don't have a neighborhood watch yet? You can be the one to take that first step and talk to your neighbors about the crime concerns in your area.

GET STARTED

With a bit of time, effort and cooperation it's quite easy to get a neighborhood watch going. The key is taking that first step.

- Share the idea with your neighbors and assess their interest. Offer the benefits of a watch group and provide relevant crime data and reports. Consider distributing a survey to gauge concerns and interest. Those who express immediate interest could be recruited as core members.
- Contact the Community Engagement Unit to let them know that you want to start a group and to have an Officer stop by. You'll then set a time when he or she can meet with you and your neighbors to discuss the particular crime concerns in your area. Call 651-554-3314.
- Formalize your group and register it with the national neighborhood watch program at NNW.org. This will allow law enforcement and others to see that you are coming together to help prevent crime in your neighborhood.



GET ORGANIZED

DETERMINE LEADERS

Who are the "core" members? Who will be the block Captain or Co-Captains? Is the group large enough to divide into blocks with their own Captains?

ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION METHOD

What is the group's preferred method of meeting and communication? Will it mainly be offline with in-person meetings, a phone tree and newsletters? Or online using email, a website and social media? Much of this depends on the technology used by the residents.

CREATE NEIGHBORHOOD MAP

This visual aid is a good idea in case you need to call someone with a specific report or for any kind of emergency. The map should include a basic compass rose noting North and labels for streets, homes and landmarks. Also include the names of each resident on their location with emergency contact information; and note if they hold a Neighborhood Watch role.

DISCUSS TOPICS OF CONCERN & DETERMINE GROUP GOALS

Be sure to assess available resources and set priorities. Then begin to develop a strategy and action plan for reaching the goals. The plan should include an effort to inform everyone of good home security practices and watching out for suspicious or unusual activities.

SCHEDULE REGULAR MEETINGS

To address crime prevention and community policing topics and discuss the group's progress. The meeting schedule will depend on if your group mainly gathers online or offline. A combination of both might work for many groups. Consider holding in-person meetings less often with more frequent online discussions in between.