

# HOW TO START A



# NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME WATCH

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## *Starting a Neighborhood Watch*

Step 1: Canvas your neighborhood by phone or flyer to determine the interest and common concerns of your neighborhood.

Step 2: Contact the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit and schedule a meeting with the Neighborhood Watch coordinator at 871-5303

Step 3: At the meeting, collect names, addresses, and phone numbers.

Step 4: Distribute Crime Prevention materials to be shared with those who were unable to attend the meeting

Step 5: Set up next meeting date.

### **Primary Objectives Of Neighborhood Watch.**

**A.** Maintain, at a minimum level of 50% residence participation, a cooperative system of surveillance over on another's property, children etc. Complete the emergency telephone notification system.

**B.** Report suspicious activity or persons or crimes accurately and immediately.

**C.** Mutually assist and encourage the accomplishment of home security inspections, and target hardening. Attain a 10% participation in the property marking activity known as Operation Identification.

**D.** After completing the four (4) basic training meetings maintain a continuing system for the dissemination of educational materials relative to self-protection and criminal awareness and adjust program emphasis in accordance with the most current of this information. It is recommended that the continuance of these meetings be on a monthly basis.

**E.** Assist the victims of crime and assist in their readjustment to normalcy. Help elderly or debilitated citizens and children to protect themselves against criminal victimization, and advocate and push for additional projects to protect these special groups of person whenever necessary.

**F.** Encourage citizens to come forward as witnesses.

**If you are a person who believes that a neighborhood crime watch is a waste of time and that you will never be the victim of a crime, remember . . .  
*EVIL* Does Good, When *GOOD* Does Nothing**

**WHAT A NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME WATCH IS:**

The Neighborhood Crime Watch is a crime prevention program which enlists the active participation of the citizens of St. Lucie County in cooperation with the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office with the goal of reducing criminal activity in your community. The Neighborhood Crime Watch program is the most effective means available for keeping crime out of your community. It relies on the best crime fighting tool ever intended . . . a watchful neighbor.

**THE NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME WATCH PROGRAM INVOLVES:**

Getting to know your neighbors and taking the time to care about them while working together in a spirit of mutual assistance.

Becoming the "eyes and ears" of law enforcement by being trained to recognize and report suspicious activities in your community.

Learning crime prevention strategies such as home security, Operation Identification, and other programs being implemented.

**WHAT A NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME WATCH IS NOT:**

- NOT...A vigilante force working outside the normal procedures of law enforcement.
- NOT...A program designed for participants to take personal risks to prevent crime.
- NOT...A 100% guarantee that crime will not occur in your neighborhood.

## **FIRST MEETING AGENDA**

If possible, meet in the home of a neighbor to foster an informal, comfortable atmosphere.

*\*\*\*You may want to ask everyone to bring a food dish or drinks for refreshments\*\*\**

1. Have everyone attending sign in on a meeting roster.
2. Call the meeting to order and thank everyone for attending.
3. Have all individuals introduce themselves and where they live.
4. Inform everyone that the group needs to elect a Chairperson. Explain the responsibilities of this position.
5. Elect or designate a Co-Chairperson.
6. At this time, the Chairperson should take over the meeting and collect the family data sheets.
7. Discuss what ideas are needed to enhance the quality of life in your community.
8. Address known hazards such as area crimes, lighting, speeding problems, etc.
9. Turn over the meeting to the Crime Prevention Deputy. He / She will discuss the Neighborhood Crime Watch program, how to report suspicious activity, the fax network, Operation ID, crime prevention techniques, etc.
10. After the Deputy is finished with the presentation, the Chairperson should inform members that he / she will complete the block map, block profile sheet, telephone tree and make copies of them for distribution to all members as well as the Sheriff's Office.
11. Thank everyone again for attending before closing the meeting.

## **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:

1. Expanding the program and maintaining a current list of participants and neighborhood residents, including names, addresses, home and work telephone numbers, and vehicle descriptions;
2. Acting as liaison between WATCH members, law enforcement officers, civic groups, and block captains;
3. Arranging neighborhood crime prevention training programs;
4. Obtaining and distributing crime prevention materials, such as stickers and signs;
5. Involving others to develop specific crime prevention projects;
6. 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.

## **The Block Captain**

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

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

## **NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MEMBER'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Learning your neighbor's names and being able to recognize them and their vehicles without any hesitation.
2. Keeping personal Block map, family data sheets, and telephone tree in an easily accessible place and continue to update them with any new information.
3. Attending all Crime Watch meetings.
4. Implementing security measures suggested by your law enforcement officials.
5. Properly identify all of your property using the guidelines suggested in Operation ID.
6. Keeping an eye on your neighbor's homes and reporting any suspicious activities to your local Police or the Sheriff's Office as well as your neighbors.
7. Teaching your children crime prevention and about respecting law enforcement.
8. Not taking any risks to prevent crime or trying to make an arrest. It is more important to have a good witness.
9. Testifying in court if you are a witness to a crime.
10. When planning on leaving for any length of time, having the mail and newspapers picked up or stopped.
11. Notifying your Block Captain and neighbors that you are going away so your home can be watched while you are gone.

## **FAMILY DATA SHEETS**

It is important that you share as much information as you can with your neighbors about yourself so they can recognize when something suspicious is occurring at your home.

This can be accomplished by using the Crime Watch Family Data Sheet. The data sheet is designed to list all members of the household, their ages, telephone numbers, emergency contacts, medical problems, vehicles, and any special training that may be of use in an emergency situation.

The Family Data Sheet will be kept by the Block Captain to assist him or her in preparing the Block map and profile sheet for distribution to members and the Sheriff's Office.

## **THE BLOCK MAP**

The block map gives you a visual perspective of your Neighborhood Crime Watch area. It is an easy reference for who lives in your community and is used to explain the layout of your cell when reporting an emergency situation to 911 or a law enforcement dispatcher.

The block map is to be completed by the Block Captain and distributed after the first meeting. The block map ought to include information such as: house color, address, resident's name, telephone number, and any distinctive or identifying landmarks around the residence.

You may also want to use symbols to indicate things such as alarms, dogs, work schedules, etc. Your block map should be kept in a place that is easily accessible to the family, yet safe from strangers.

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Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Car _____ Color _____ Misc. Information: _____	Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Car _____ Color _____ Misc. Information: _____	Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Car _____ Color _____ Misc. Information: _____	Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Car _____ Color _____ Misc. Information: _____
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NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH BLOCK MAP



# ST LUCIE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME WATCH

## FAMILY DATA SHEET

Adult Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Female \_\_\_\_\_;  
Address: Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Child 1: Age: School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Child 2: Age: School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Child 3: Age: School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Child 4: Age: School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other Occupants: \_\_\_\_\_

### VEHICLES

License Plate #	Year Make	Body Style	Color
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

His Employment: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Hours: \_\_\_\_\_ Days Off: \_\_\_\_\_  
Her Employment: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Hours: \_\_\_\_\_ Days Off: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Work Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

### MEDICAL OR HEALTH PROBLEMS:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Training / Skills: \_\_\_\_\_