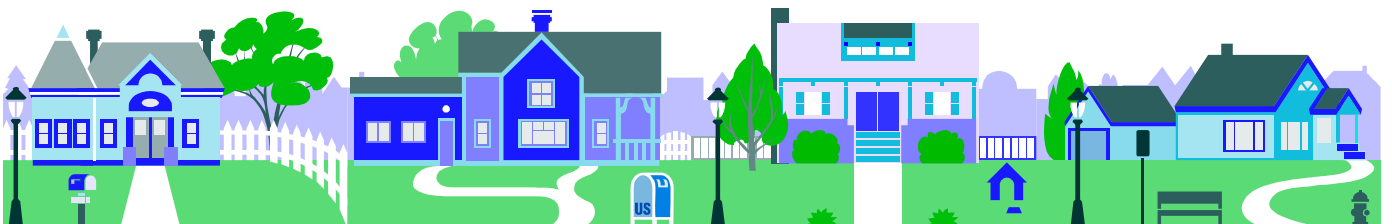


# Washington County Sheriff's Office



# NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MANUAL



## **INTRODUCTION TO NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH**

Neighborhood Watch is one of the oldest and most effective crime prevention programs in the country, bringing citizens together with law enforcement to deter crime and make communities safer.

Sponsored by the [National Sheriffs' Association](#) (NSA), Neighborhood Watch can trace its roots back to the days of colonial settlements, when night watchmen patrolled the streets. The modern version of Neighborhood Watch was developed in 1972 as a response to requests from sheriffs and police chiefs who were looking for a crime prevention program that would involve citizens and address an increasing number of burglaries.

Neighborhood Watch has been active in Washington County for many years now. It has been an effective tool to enhance safety and foster a sense of community in neighborhoods. Neighborhood Watch has helped to draw many diverse people together as they make a commitment to watch out for one another. It gives participants an opportunity to be united in the work of crime prevention and form a partnership with the Sheriff's Office to take on neighborhood crime and disorder.

Neighborhood Watch participants learn how to:

- Create a leadership team within the group
- Form a communication network
- Recognize and report suspicious and criminal activity
- Secure their valuables and protect personal property
- Protect themselves and those they care about from physical harm
- Make neighborhoods less attractive to criminals

The ultimate goal of Neighborhood Watch is to help reduce crime and also the fear of crime in our neighborhoods. It can serve as a deterrent to criminal activity and enhance a sense of safety so residents can better enjoy their homes and neighborhoods. Neighborhood Watch helps people get organized and focus energy and resources to make a difference in their neighborhoods!

A Neighborhood Watch is often formed when residents become aware of a problem in the neighborhood—vandalism, burglaries, or vehicle break-ins. These are the types of crimes that Neighborhood Watch programs can address. An active Watch group can also help reduce drug dealing, discourage gangs, and improve pedestrian safety.

Some Watches continue faithfully and others become somewhat inactive once the problem is resolved. The most effective Watches are those where neighbors commit to keep the Watch going because they know it can prevent future crimes, and they come to appreciate the sense of community it provides.

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## **ROLES WITHIN A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUP**

Neighborhood Watches consist of a group of members, one or two of whom are designated as the Neighborhood Watch Coordinators(s). The Coordinator is someone selected by the group to maintain the paperwork of the group and be the primary communication link with partners of the Watch. Block Captains volunteer to work with the coordinators and take responsibility for communicating with 8-12 homes.

### **Roles of partners**

While community members are the people who form the actual Neighborhood Watch, they partner with others to achieve the best results. Neighborhood Watches partner with and receive technical assistance from Crime Prevention staff and Sheriff's Deputies. Depending on the location of the Watch and the specific issues in that area, other partners may also be appropriate.

### **Crime Prevention Specialists**

Employed by the Washington County Sheriff's Office, Crime Prevention Specialists (CPS) are professional problem-solvers, educators, and community organizers focused on issues of crime and public safety. They serve primarily in Unincorporated Washington County but also work with other local police agencies and citizens on various Crime Prevention and community education projects. In the context of Neighborhood Watch, Crime Prevention Specialists provide:

- The initial training to watch members, and often provide follow-up training if necessary
- Advice and assistance to the Watch such as information about resources and crime patterns;
- Coordination of responses to chronic problems. Crime Prevention Specialists send out crime alerts to watches when appropriate, and often act as liaisons between watches and Patrol deputies as well other public safety and livability resources.

### **Sheriff's Deputies**

These could be Beat Deputies who respond to radio calls, Special Operations Unit Detectives who work on long-term problems, or members of specialty units such as the Interagency Gang Enforcement Team (IGET), the Westside Interagency Narcotics (WIN) Team, or the School Resource Officers. Deputies receive, review, and respond as necessary to incidents reported by the Neighborhood Watch. Beat Sergeants often assign a deputy to attend Watch trainings or meetings.

### **Business owners and business associations**

These can be very effective partners for a Neighborhood Watch that borders on a business district or a Business Watch. Business associations may be able to direct resources or attention to a problem. Some business owners are willing and able to make physical improvements on their building that may help deter crime, such as additional lighting.

### **School staff**

When a Neighborhood Watch borders on a school, the group should communicate with that school's principal, the school district security manager, and/or maintenance and custodial staff to help address problems that are detected on school grounds.

### **Other possible partners**

There are many other county staff and community members that might work with a Neighborhood Watch, such as the County Code Enforcement Officers, the Department of Land Use and Transportation, DHS Child Welfare, neighborhood mediation, or a faith community in the Watch area. Neighborhood Watches are successful because they bring people together!

## **DUTIES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MEMBERS AND LEADERS**

### ***Neighborhood Watch Members***

- Participates in the communication network—passing on messages as part of the telephone tree and informing neighbors of crimes and suspicious activity
- If a neighborhood problem is ongoing, may log details about suspicious or criminal activity to help police and crime prevention respond most effectively
- Attends Neighborhood Watch meetings and social gatherings if possible
- Works to develop trust and communication with neighbors
- Keeps an eye on neighbors' homes and reports suspicious activity and crimes in progress when they are happening
- Works with the CPS, Patrol Deputies and other resources to solve problems and resolve neighborhood concerns
- Implements personal safety, home security and property identification strategies and works to make the block less attractive to criminals
- May assist the Coordinator in putting together the block map, phone tree and block profile form
- May assist the Coordinator by helping with refreshments, hosting follow-up meetings and assisting with block parties

### ***Neighborhood Watch Coordinator***

- Coordinates the design, development and distribution of the block map, telephone tree and block profile form
- Ensures that the block map, phone tree and block profile forms are up to date, and that the CPS has a current copy
- Relays information about crime and nuisance activity on the block to the appropriate resource (CPS, Patrol Deputy or Beat Sergeant)
- Serves with Block Captains as the Leadership Team. All help with goal setting and organization of the Watch.
- Acts as the primary contact person between the CPS or the Patrol Deputies and the block
- Coordinates collecting money for purchase and installation of the Neighborhood Watch signs
- Encourages full participation in the Neighborhood Watch Program
- Coordinates the welcoming of new households into the Neighborhood Watch
- Coordinates problem solving efforts, scheduling meetings and social gatherings
- Recruits block members to attend additional training opportunities
- Finds a replacement if no longer able to fulfill the duties of Neighborhood Watch Coordinator
- Performs the regular duties of a watch member as described below

## **STARTING A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH**

Neighborhood Watches begin with an initial meeting at which the Crime Prevention Specialist (CPS) provides the training and materials you need to get started. The steps to take to set up this initial meeting are listed below.

### ***Initial Steps to Organizing***

#### **1. Talk to your CPS**

Call the Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit at (503) 846-2579 to determine the CPS assigned to your area of Washington County. Make contact and tell him or her you're interested in starting a Neighborhood Watch. Ask any questions you have about how to proceed. They will provide you with instructions and start-up materials.

#### **2. Ask a neighbor or two to help you**

If you already know some of your neighbors, recruit one or two of them to help you get your Neighborhood Watch up and running.

#### **3. Find out about your neighbors' concerns**

Talk with your neighbors, asking them about their crime concerns and about any other block issues they may have. They might provide you with information about suspicious activity on your block at this time. Also ask them about days of the week that would work for them to attend a meeting.

#### **4. Decide what area you are going to organize**

At the minimum, invite the neighbors who have a fairly direct view of each other's houses or apartments. For a standard city block this might include both sides of the street, corner houses that look down your block and backyard neighbors where applicable. It is a good idea to start with your own block, and then recruit people on surrounding blocks to organize their own blocks. If you are organizing within an apartment complex, invite at least all of the people in your building, and decide if you want to invite the people in adjacent buildings as well.

Although full block participation is ideal, there are times when a household on the block is suspected of engaging in illegal activity. If the participation of that household makes others reluctant to participate, it is not necessary to include that household.

#### **5. Decide the time, date, and location of the first meeting**

Usually Neighborhood Watch trainings are held on weekday evenings, and start around 6:30 - 7:00 p.m. Often meetings are held on your block in someone's living room. Choose a meeting space that comfortably accommodates the neighbors you have invited. The initial meeting takes about 1-1.5 hours.

#### **6. Ask your CPS to put the training date on his/her calendar**

Contact the CPS three to four weeks in advance of your proposed meeting to ensure that he or she has this date and time available. Let him/her know the location of the meeting, the number of households expected and any concerns that your neighbors might have shared with you.

#### **7. Deliver invitations to your neighbors**

Use written invitations to invite your neighbors. Distribute the invitations at least a week or two before the meeting. Try to make personal contact with every neighbor as well. This will increase the turnout to the meeting.

#### **8. Recruit neighbors to help with the meeting**

They may volunteer to help with refreshments, bring extra folding chairs, escort seniors to the meeting and assist you with contacting other neighbors and organizing the Neighborhood Watch. Don't forget to include children and youth in the preparations. They can also help!

## **9. Confirm and remind**

One or two days before the meeting, confirm the time and place with your CPS. Have several block members help you remind the neighbors of the meeting to maximize turnout.

## **10. The big Kick-Off!**

At your training, your CPPC will train your group in the following topics and give you the assistance and materials you need to start your group.

- Purpose of Neighborhood Watch
- Discussion of any crime issues of particular interest to group
- Recognizing and reporting suspicious activity
- 9-1-1 vs. non-emergency number
- Describing suspects and vehicles in a way that police can use the information
- Documenting suspicious and criminal activity
- Organizing your Neighborhood Watch
- Roles within a Neighborhood Watch
- How to use the tools: block profile questionnaire, block profile form, block map, telephone tree
- Neighborhood Watch signs
- Other resources for neighborhood problems
- How to improve the security of your home and your personal safety
- Maintaining your Neighborhood Watch in the long term
- Discussion and signing of volunteer agreements
- Selection of Watch Coordinator and Block Captains
- Q & A

### ***After the first meeting***

After the initial meeting, when the group has had their training and selected a Coordinator & Block Captains, there are a few tasks that need to be done by the Leadership Team to get the Neighborhood Watch officially up and running. (See the task checklist in the addendum section of this manual.)

### ***Follow up training and meetings***

An active Neighborhood Watch often has members join after the initial training that happens when the watch forms. The CPS is available to train new members of the Neighborhood Watch and do refresher trainings for people who are already members. After a Neighborhood Watch is established and gains some experience, the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator may do these trainings. The CPS can provide the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator with materials to conduct the training.

It's a good idea for active Neighborhood Watches to set up regular meetings for members to discuss what they are seeing in their neighborhood. At a minimum, the group should meet annually. Many groups find it effective to meet more often. The CPS or Beat Deputy will make every effort to attend additional meetings if desired.

Meetings are a good time to discuss how more members might be recruited, or any procedural decisions that need to be made. They are also a good time to have a short training on a topic of interest to members of your Neighborhood Watch that would help them better understand trends in crime and livability problems in their neighborhood. For example, additional training is available on a number of topics, including

- personal safety
- internet safety
- identity theft
- gang awareness

- recognizing child molesters
- Drug & alcohol awareness.

Talk to your CPS about additional training. He or she may be able to provide the training, or help you find a trainer on the topic.



## **NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH TOOLS AND PROCEDURES**

One of the most effective and valuable features of Neighborhood Watch is getting to know your neighbors. It is important for Neighborhood Watch participants to share information about the composition of their households and activities. When everyone becomes familiar with the normal activity on your block, it is easier for block members to recognize and respond to suspicious activities when they occur.

As you are compiling neighborhood information, discuss strengths and weaknesses of your block with your neighbors. Talk about visibility, areas of high daytime vacancy, who has watchdogs, routine activities, etc. The more information you share with each other, the better you are able to recognize when something suspicious is occurring. Many burglars “case out” a neighborhood before committing a crime, paying attention to schedules, activities and alertness of neighbors. If a burglar strives to become familiar with patterns on your block, shouldn't you become familiar with them as well? Here are the tools that you can use to share information with each other:

### ***Block Profile Questionnaire*** (see blank form in the appendix)

The block profile questionnaire is used to collect the information for each household participating in the Neighborhood Watch. Although there are specific reasons for sharing each piece of information on the questionnaire, block members might not feel comfortable answering all of the questions on the form. This is voluntary. The form does not have to be filled out completely, but at the very minimum participants do need to share names, addresses and phone numbers.

Distribute the form at the time of the initial Neighborhood Watch training. Members of the new Neighborhood Watch should fill out the questionnaire in a timely fashion and return them to the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator or their Block Captain so that he or she can compile the block map, master block profile form, and telephone tree.

### ***Block Map***

The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator creates a map using information from the completed block profile questionnaires, then makes copies and distributes it to all watch members. A sample is shown in the appendix. Maps should be updated every year.

The block map gives you a visual picture of your block. It's a handy way to remember addresses and names and it makes it easy to report any activity to a 9-1-1 operator, so that help can respond as quickly as possible.

Keep it in an accessible, but hidden place in your home, preferably by the phone. If you should need to call 9-1-1, take it out and use it to help describe where a problem is happening while you talk to the 9-1-1 call taker.

### ***Master Block Profile Form*** (blank in appendix)

The block profile form is a more detailed record of your block's composition. It includes information such as household members, work schedules, emergency phone numbers, email addresses, types of vehicles and special skills. It is usually in the form of a spreadsheet. The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator creates the Block Profile using information from the completed block profile questionnaires, then makes copies and distributes it to all watch members. A sample is shown in the appendix.

Keep it with your block map in an accessible but hidden place in your home. Refer to it when you need the information. For example, if you hear a neighbor's alarm going off, you could check to see if they have any special instructions for their neighbors about what to do under those circumstances, such as call them at work.

### ***Telephone Tree***

The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator creates the Telephone Tree using information from the completed block profile questionnaires, then makes copies and distributes it to all watch members. A sample is shown in the appendix, along with instructions on how to use the phone tree.

The telephone tree gives block members an effective method for sharing information between neighbors quickly. Each neighbor is responsible for initiating the telephone tree when any problems arise. Keep it with your block map and block profile form in an accessible but hidden place in your home.

Anytime there is news that should be shared with everyone right away, the telephone tree should be activated. For example, if you see someone breaking into cars on the street, your first call should be to 9-1-1, and then you should activate the telephone tree so that everyone on the street finds out about the problem and can look out their window to witness the situation and see if their own property is in jeopardy. The telephone tree can also be used to spread good news, too, such as the birth of a new baby on the block. Telephone Trees should be updated at least once every year.

**Note:** Many Neighborhood Watches use email to communicate as well. Email can be used very effectively to set up follow-up meetings and trainings, parties, and to have general discussions about issues on your street. However, email shouldn't take the place of the phone tree at times when information needs to be spread quickly, such as when a crime or suspicious activity is in progress on the street.

## **REPORTING SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY**

Suspicious activity can be defined as any person or behavior that is inappropriate or out of the ordinary. Discuss with your neighbors any suspicious activities or individuals you have noticed on the block. Below are some actual examples of neighbors taking action upon seeing what they considered to be suspicious activity.

- At 3:00 a.m. a woman saw a car pull up at an elderly neighbor's home. One man left the car and disappeared around the corner while a second man stayed behind the wheel with the lights off and the car's engine running. The woman called 9-1-1 and the police apprehended the first man breaking into a gas station on the next block.
- Early one Sunday morning a neighbor noticed a man walking down the street looking into each vehicle as he passed. A few seconds later the neighbor heard the sound of breaking glass. The neighbor called 9-1-1 and the man was apprehended a few blocks away with several stolen car stereos.
- A woman saw a young man knock on her neighbor's front door. When nobody answered the man went around the side of the house. The woman immediately called 9-1-1 and the man was caught burglarizing her neighbors' house.

### ***What to look for***

Some suspicious activity may not be as obvious as the previous examples. Additionally, what is considered suspicious on one block may be normal activity on another. Keep in mind that what is not normal for your block could be an indication of a crime about to happen. Other examples of suspicious activity include:

#### ***Concerning Vehicles***

- Slow moving vehicle without lights—possibly casing neighborhood
- Vehicle being loaded with valuables if parked by closed business or residence—Possible burglary in progress
- Person detaching mechanical parts or accessories from vehicle—Possible theft or vandalism in progress
- Locked vehicle that someone is attempting to forcibly enter—Possible theft of car or contents in progress
- Someone being forced into vehicle—Possible kidnap, assault, attempted sexual assault, domestic violence

#### ***Concerning Persons***

- Going door to door, especially if one or more persons goes to the rear of the house—Casing, possible burglary in progress
- Loitering in front of house or business, especially if site is unoccupied—Possible burglary suspects
- Person running carrying items of value, i.e. TV, stereo—Possible suspect fleeing scene of theft
- Sounds of a fight- screaming or yelling, sounds of breaking furniture or glass—Possible domestic violence assault, sexual assault
- Persons offering items for sale at a very low price—Possibly trying to sell stolen items
- Persons coming to your door with unusual requests, especially if yours is the only house approached—Possibly casing house or attempting an entry for robbery

If your intuition tells you something isn't right, call 9-1-1 or the Non-emergency Number—(503) 629-0111—and report your suspicions. It's better to discover that nothing is wrong than to let a crime occur.

If there is an ongoing problem with crime at a location, your CPS will give you forms to help you log the information. Logging helps establish patterns in the activity which makes effective response easier, and can help police get search warrants for locations with serious problems.

## **DESCRIBING SUSPECTS, VEHICLES, AND ACTIVITIES**

When you call the police or make entries into a log, how you describe what you have seen is very important. Your information will allow any responding deputies to know specifically what they are looking for and where to look for it.

### **Describing suspects**

Take note of sex, race, age, height, weight, hair, complexion, scars, tattoos, glasses, facial hair, clothing, and anything else that would help police find the person. If you don't have time to note all of these, pay the most attention to things the suspect cannot change. They can quickly change out of their clothing, but they can't quickly remove a tattoo or scar, or change their weight.

### **Describing vehicles**

The license plate is the most important piece of information. Take note of the license plate and the direction in which the vehicle was traveling. Then, note color, make, year, body style, and any other identifying characteristics such as dents or bumper stickers.

### **Describing activities**

Give as much detail as you possibly can. For example:

*"I saw a person take a small orange colored object out of their mouth and hand it to another person. The second person handed the first person money. The first person folded the money in half and put the money in the right front pocket of their pants. The second person put the orange packet in the left front pocket of their jacket."* This information is much more useful than: *"I saw a person dealing drugs."*

### **Accurate Terminology**

When calling 9-1-1 it is important to be as clear and accurate as possible about what you are observing. In order to be effective you should have working knowledge of the terminology used by the police and the 9-1-1 call takers to prioritize crime. To say "I've been robbed!" when in fact you were the victim of a burglary may have an effect on how your situation is responded to. Below is a list of commonly used terms to describe criminal activity:

#### ***Common Crime Definition***

**Assault:** Causing injury or attempting to cause injury to another person

**Burglary:** Unlawful entry of a structure with intent to commit a felony or any theft. (Note: a residential burglary is theft from a dwelling. Non-residential burglary is theft from a business, a detached garage or any other non-dwelling.)

**Car Prowl (or "clout):** Theft from an automobile, not the theft of an automobile

**Robbery:** Taking or carrying away of another's property by force or with imminent threat of force with intent of permanently depriving rightful owner of the property

**Sexual Assault:** Sexual activity by one against another either by force or without the ability to consent (not limited to rape or to women)

**Theft:** Taking of property other than by burglary or robbery

**Vandalism:** Destruction or defacing of property

## **CALLING 911 OR THE NON-EMERGENCY DISPATCH NUMBER**

### ***When to call 911?***

Call 911 when it is an emergency and a prompt response is needed. Call 911 if it is a life-threatening situation or something is occurring at the time of the call. A fire, medical problem, assault, fight, traffic accident, or any situation that could result in loss of life or major property loss should be called in to 911.

### ***What happens when you call 911?***

When you call 911, a call taker will ask you a series of questions which they are trained to ask. Keep your answers as short and direct as possible. Questions may include:

- What happened? What is the location?
- Where are you calling from?
- What is your name?

Please do not assume that the call taker has this information in the computer. All facts need to be verified to ensure that your emergency is handled as quickly as possible.

### ***Why you should stay on the line?***

While you are on the phone with the call taker, he or she can send your call to the dispatcher. Staying on the line with the call taker does not interfere with the ability of the dispatcher to send help and it will not delay the response. The call taker may need you to stay on the line to help direct emergency personnel to the right location or to provide additional assistance that can help ensure your emergency is handled correctly.

If it is possible, do not hang up the phone until the 911 call taker says it is okay to hang up.

### ***What should you do if you're put on hold?***

If you call 911 and reach a recording which states that all lines are busy, stay on the line. Your call will be answered as quickly as possible. If you hang up and redial, you will lose your place in line and a call taker will receive the message that someone from your phone called 911 and then hung up. The call taker then is required to attempt to call you back; meanwhile if you are calling in to 911 again, two call takers are now attempting to respond to your call.

### ***When to call the non-emergency number***

The non-emergency number is **(503) 629-0111**, which you can dial 24 hours a day for non-emergency police help. Using the non-emergency number keeps 911 available for true emergencies. 911 call takers receive non-emergency calls often; most frequently the call is from someone wanting to report a crime which occurred a few hours, or even a few days ago. This ties up valuable resources that should be reserved for true emergencies.

### ***When not to call either number***

Often people call 911 or the non-emergency number if they want to know road conditions, report an animal problem which does not involve a vicious animal, report a power outage, or are having trouble finding a phone number in the phone book. When you need information, or if you are making routine business inquiries, you should not use either the emergency or non-emergency number.

## **MAINTAINING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH**

Typically, Neighborhood Watches form in response to a specific neighborhood problem, such as a sharp increase in burglaries. Once the crisis is resolved, some Neighborhood Watches become inactive because members may not see the group as relevant any longer. Studies show that active Neighborhood Watches reduce the fear of crime, encourage crime reporting, stimulate members' involvement in crime prevention, inhibit drug trafficking and encourage beautification activities.

Unfortunately, once a Neighborhood Watch becomes inactive, many of the benefits are lost. However, when watches succeed in remaining active, they are much more likely to prevent future crimes from happening or to respond effectively if they do. They also make neighborhoods great places to live.

Part of keeping your Neighborhood Watch alive and thriving is to make it relevant and enjoyable for the members, striking a balance between business and pleasure. Here are some suggestions for activities and projects you can use to keep your group cohesive and take it to the next level:

- Hold regular meetings to help residents get to know each other better and to collectively decide upon strategies and activities
- Invite a guest speaker to your next watch meeting
- Conduct an annual community needs survey- find out what concerns people have about life in the neighborhood
- Have a work party to help neighbors in securing their homes, for example, help seniors or other neighbors who might need assistance with trimming shrubbery or installing lighting
- Organize a block party- National Night Out is always the first Tuesday in August, and is a great time to socialize with neighbors and members of the Sheriff's Office
- Order a shared drop box for the block and have a clean up day
- Hold a graffiti removal day
- Have a game night- gather together to play cards, board games, or badminton
- Start a book club
- Adopt a nearby park or playground and keep it free of litter
- Hold a block garage sale
- When gardens are overflowing in August, have a vegetable exchange party
- Organize a kid's costume parade
- Form a plan for disaster response. Visit the county's emergency management website at <http://www.ocem.org/> for more information.
- Invite everyone over for a potluck dinner, or have a "progressive party," moving from house to house for each course of a meal
- Start an exercise or walking group
- Establish a telephone reassurance system whereby seniors or shut-ins are telephoned regularly to make sure everything is all right

## **MOTIVATING MEMBERS:**

### ***The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator as Volunteer Coordinator***

The fun and success of Neighborhood Watch lies in sharing the work. How can the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator motivate neighbors to help with the Watch, beyond just participating in the telephone tree when something happens? It might help to view this position as a volunteer coordinator.

If you are successful in getting your block members active and involved, you can organize all kinds of wonderful things for your Watch, such as a block garage sale, a kid's parade, or a group that welcomes new residents. Some fundamentals of getting people to volunteer:

#### **1. Don't be afraid to ask.**

One of the best ways to get someone to volunteer is to directly ask them. 80% of people who do not volunteer indicate that it is because nobody ever asked. When people are asked to volunteer, they feel flattered and needed.

You can always ask a whole group of people if they want to participate ("Is anyone willing to be in charge of making flyers?"), but you are more likely to get volunteers if you ask individual people ("Sue, would you be willing to make flyers?")

#### **2. Tailor your request to the person.**

Before you ask for volunteers, make a list the jobs that need to get done, and the skills that are needed to do those jobs. Then try to match people with a job they will enjoy. People will procrastinate if they don't enjoy their task.

When new folks move onto the block, don't immediately approach them to do a task. Get to know them first. Make them feel welcome and let them bond a little with the neighborhood before you ask them to contribute. Make sure they understand the concept of Neighborhood Watch. The more they understand what the effort is all about, the better they can contribute.

What is the person's personality? Is the person an introvert or an extravert? Introverted people might enjoy work that happens behind-the-scenes, such as computer work, walking around distributing newsletters, or setting up tables and barricades for a block party. Extraverts might enjoy going door-to-door to solicit contributions for the Neighborhood Watch signs or making a speech at an awards party.

Does the person have special skills or hobbies that they might contribute? Someone who is mechanically inclined might help an elderly resident install locks on their windows. Someone with computer skills might set up a watch list serve. Someone who loves to bake might contribute cookies for a Neighborhood Watch meeting. Someone who is artistic might teach a painting class for the kids while their parents meet to talk about an issue on the block.

People are motivated to volunteer for different reasons. Be flexible; don't assume the same thing motivates everyone. Some people like the camaraderie of working on a project together, while others are focused on the result of the project. Try to determine what motivates someone and give them opportunities to experience that.

#### **3. Accept "no" for an answer.**

Don't make someone feel guilty if they don't want to do what you are asking. If the potential volunteer feels OK about saying "no," they are left feeling positive about you and the Neighborhood Watch effort. It could result in a "yes" next time.



#### **4. Keep your expectations reasonable.**

Don't try to rope someone into a huge amount of work, or pretend that a job will take two hours if you know it will take eight hours. Be honest and clear about the amount of time and energy required for the job. Be honest and clear about the scope of the job.

If someone agrees to do something once, don't assume they will always do it. If someone feels trapped into a job, they burn out quickly. Ask if they'd like to give it a try this once. Afterwards, if they seemed to enjoy it, ask them if they'd like to do it again next time.

If you want the person to volunteer again in the future, try to make sure that the benefits for the person outweigh the costs. Part of this is thanking them for their help.

#### **5. Give them recognition for their good work.**

Be generous with thanks. Recognition should not just happen once per year. It should happen often, in formal and informal ways. This can be done in such a way as to cost little or no money. Some ideas:

- Say thank you face-to-face
- Send the person a thank you note
- Give the person some flowers or vegetables from your garden or some home made cookies
- Mention the person's good work in a watch newsletter or at a meeting
- At an annual event, name each person who helped during the year and remind the group what each person did
- Ask the volunteer for his/her opinion or advice
- Let the person know the results of the project they worked on
- If someone goes far above and beyond, hold a block party in their honor or nominate them for an award

# ***APPENDIX***

**TASK CHECKLIST**—after the initial Neighborhood Watch meeting. Not all of these tasks need to be done by the Coordinator; some can be done by Block Captains and other members.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Completed</b>
<b>Getting organized</b>			
Choose organizer(s)			
Contact households not at initial meeting			
Collect completed Block Profile Questionnaires			
Collect completed & signed Volunteer Agreements			
Make Block Map			
Make Block Profile Form			
Make Telephone Tree			
Copy completed Map, Profile Form, and Phone Tree			
Distribute these copies to watch members			
Send copies of Map, Profile Form, Phone Tree, and Volunteer Agreements to CPS			
Schedule regular updates of forms			
<b>Signs</b>			
Review Washington County guidelines on sign placement			
Decide on number and locations for signs			
Collect money for signs			
Order signs			
Contact Department of Land Use and Transportation for installation			
<b>Next meeting</b>			
Decide on frequency of meetings			
Set date			
Host meeting			
Set agenda and facilitate			
Make and distribute invitations			
Bring refreshments			

**NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (full name), have chosen to participate as a volunteer member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Watch.

I understand that the central function of a Neighborhood Watch is to watch for Suspicious or criminal activity in a specific area, and to share that information with my neighbors and report it to the Washington County Sheriff’s Office for the purpose of short- and long-term problem solving efforts. I understand that in my capacity as a member of this Neighborhood Watch, I am not a County employee or agent.

I have received training in Neighborhood Watch from the Washington County Sheriff’s Office Crime Prevention Unit, or from the organizer of my Neighborhood Watch, \_\_\_\_\_ (trainer name), on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

I understand that, as a member of this Neighborhood Watch, I will have access to personal information about my neighbors (i.e. their contact info, names, etc.) for the purpose of networking and information sharing, which I might not otherwise have. ***I will never misuse this personal information to harm my neighbors in any way.***

***I will only use the information I am provided in order to accomplish objectives of the Neighborhood Watch program. I will respect my fellow Neighborhood Watch members as individuals who share my concern about our neighborhood and will not act in any way that jeopardizes their safety or mine.***

I will not share a member’s personal information with anyone (other than the members of our Neighborhood Watch, the County staff who provide support to our Neighborhood Watch, or members of the Sheriff’s Office) without first receiving permission from that person.

I accept responsibility for my own actions as a member of the Neighborhood Watch and the consequences of those actions. I understand that I can cause my removal from the Neighborhood Watch if I violate any of the terms of this agreement.

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Name of volunteer (please print)	Signature of volunteer	Date
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Address of volunteer, including zip code

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Phone numbers & email address of volunteer

**BLOCK PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE**

This information will be used by the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator and Block Captains to create the Block Map, Block Profile Form, and Telephone Tree. Please complete this form and return it to the Coordinator promptly. Thank you!

**Names of household members** (include children's birth years) \_\_\_\_\_

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**Pets** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**House color** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Work phone(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact** (name, relationship, and phone numbers) \_\_\_\_\_

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**Work schedule(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cars** (make/model/color/license number) \_\_\_\_\_

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**Alarm:** (circle one) yes / no

**If yes, should your neighbors call 9-1-1 when they hear your alarm?** (Circle one) yes / no

**Special medical problems** (heart conditions, diabetes...) and instructions \_\_\_\_\_

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**Special skills** (CPR, first aid, electrical, plumbing...) \_\_\_\_\_

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**What do you think are the three main problems facing your neighborhood?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH TELEPHONE TREE**  
**CONFIDENTIAL**

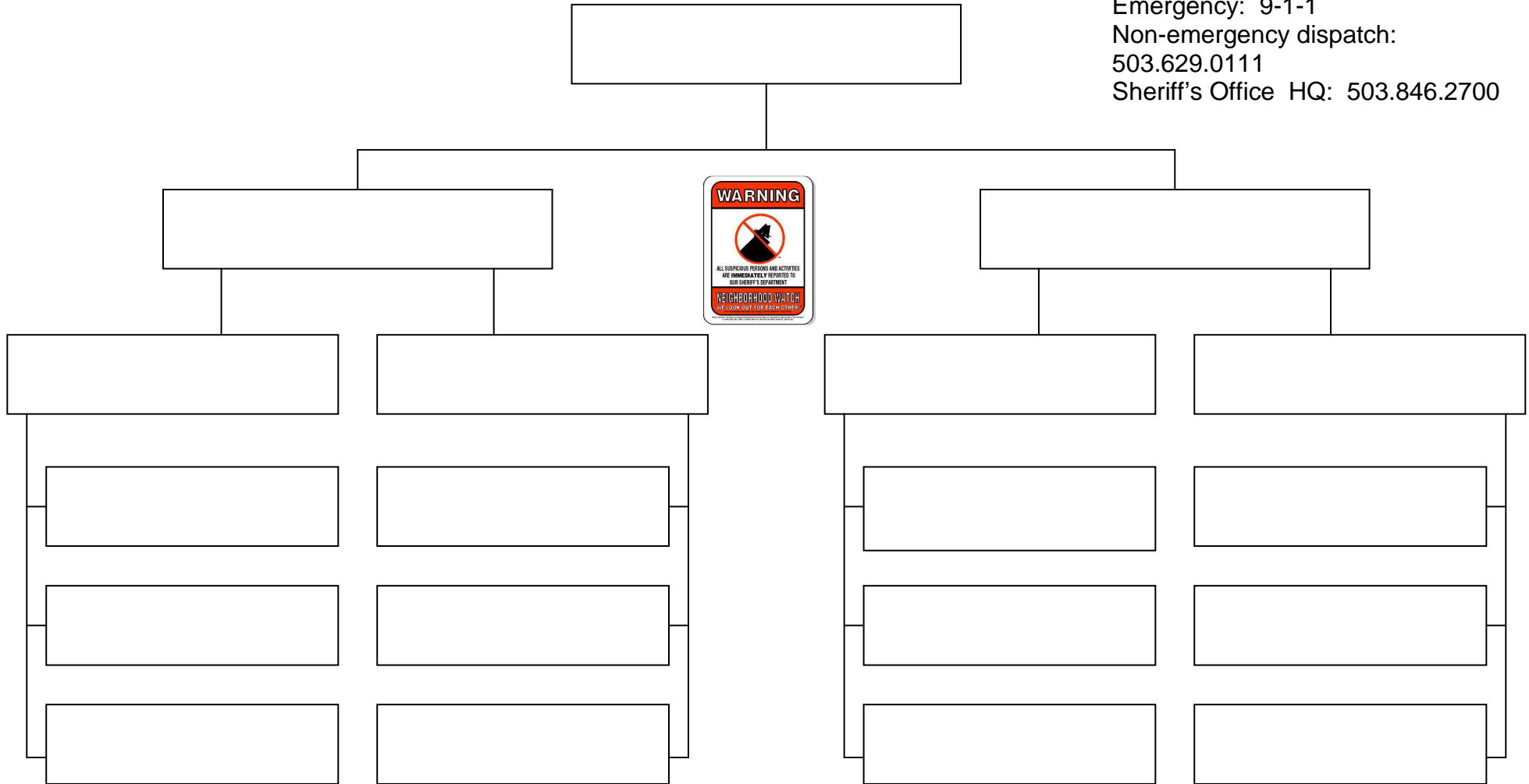
**Sheriff's Office Numbers**

Emergency: 9-1-1

Non-emergency dispatch:

503.629.0111

Sheriff's Office HQ: 503.846.2700



The phone tree is used for quick communication with all neighbors. Every household is assigned one or two names/numbers to call when situations arise that everyone should be aware of. When someone on the block has information to be passed along, they call the name at the top of the list. That person in turn calls the participants directly below them and relays the message, and so on. If someone does not answer, try them at work or call them later. In the meantime, call the people directly below them on the list. Finally, the people at the bottom of the phone tree should call the first person at the top of the tree and let them know the chain is complete. As new members join, they should fill spaces lower on the list. Each household gets a copy of the completed form to keep in a safe but accessible place.