

Neighbourhood Watch

For

Houses

Neighbourhood Watch

Objective

Neighbourhood Watch is a community crime prevention program uniting neighbours to reduce crime.

History

Neighbourhood Watch began in Seattle, Washington in the early 1970's. The community was asked to be the eyes and the ears for the police as they could not be everywhere all the time.

The program has spread to many countries all over the world, under various names and logos.

How it works

Awareness:

Everyday the Neighbourhood Watch office receives information about crime that has happened from each police division. Volunteers phone this information to each Neighbourhood Watch program, when a crime occurs in their area. By giving information such as the time, date, location, method of entry and suspect description, the neighbourhood can become more aware of patterns of crime and be on the lookout for anyone suspicious.

Education:

Learn about personal security, home security, what is suspicious, and latest trends in crime.

Communication:

The Neighbourhood Watch network is very important. By communicating information about crime prevention tips on a regular basis, everyone benefits.

Getting to know your neighbours:

If you know your neighbours, you can recognize strangers and know when something is unusual or suspicious. You can keep an eye on each other's home and pick up each other's mail and newspapers when on holiday.

Maintenance:

It is difficult to keep the enthusiasm, especially if crime has decreased. People think that the problem is solved, and the Neighbourhood Watch program can become dormant. It is very important to try to have regular meetings and newsletters to keep the interest up.

Working Together:

By working together, the community and the police, crime is reduced and your neighbourhood becomes a much safer and better place to live.

Steps to Organize

1. Set up a meeting:

- Choose a local school, library, community center, church or lobby in an apartment building
- The Neighbourhood Watch office can apply for a permit to use a gym or room in a public school

2. Meeting Notice:

- A small group of neighbours could easily deliver 50 or more flyers each, door to door
- The Neighbourhood Watch office can help you create your first flyer

3. First Meeting:

- A representative from the Neighbourhood Watch office will lead the meeting
- The Crime Prevention Officer from your police division usually attends
- The Neighbourhood Watch representative will talk about how the program works, how to set it up and why it is so important
- Depending on the turn out, people are asked to volunteer
- We need one or two people per 30-40 homes
- We need a committee of two or three to be the area leaders
- The latest crimes and statistics will be mentioned as well as crime prevention information

4. Training Meeting:

- To be held a few weeks after the first meeting in order to train the volunteers and to answer any questions they may have
- A Neighbourhood Watch Captain button is given to each volunteer to wear when they are going door to door

If over 50% of the neighbours join the program, Neighbourhood Watch signs are erected at the main intersections of the area and door stickers are distributed.

5. Newsletters:

- It is important to have a newsletter to inform your neighbours of the latest crimes, prevention tips, etc.
- Since everyone cannot attend the meetings, this is a good way to keep in contact
- We suggest having a newsletter go out 3 or 4 times per year. One page is enough. Too many and they won't read it.
- Keep it positive
- We have cartoons and logos that you can use to liven it up

The Neighbourhood Watch office will help you create your first newsletter, but due to lack of funds the programs are encouraged to find their own methods of printing, such as through a school, local merchant or donations from the neighbourhood. Sometimes the City Councillor will offer to print a newsletter.

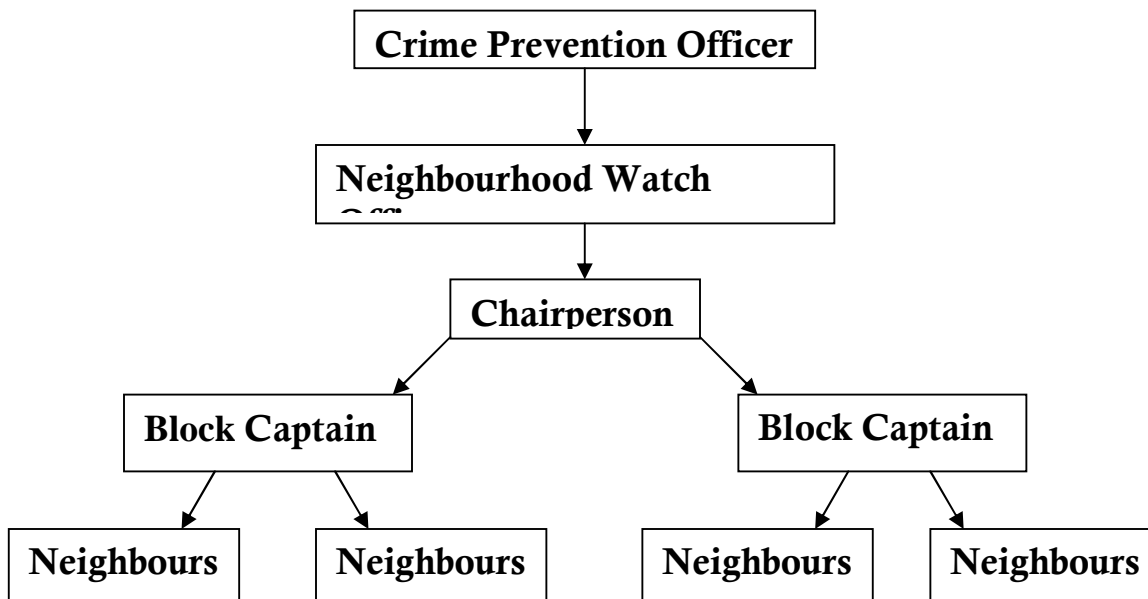
Committee and Chairperson's Role

Note: We advise having a committee rather than just one person on their own. This will help keep the program alive.

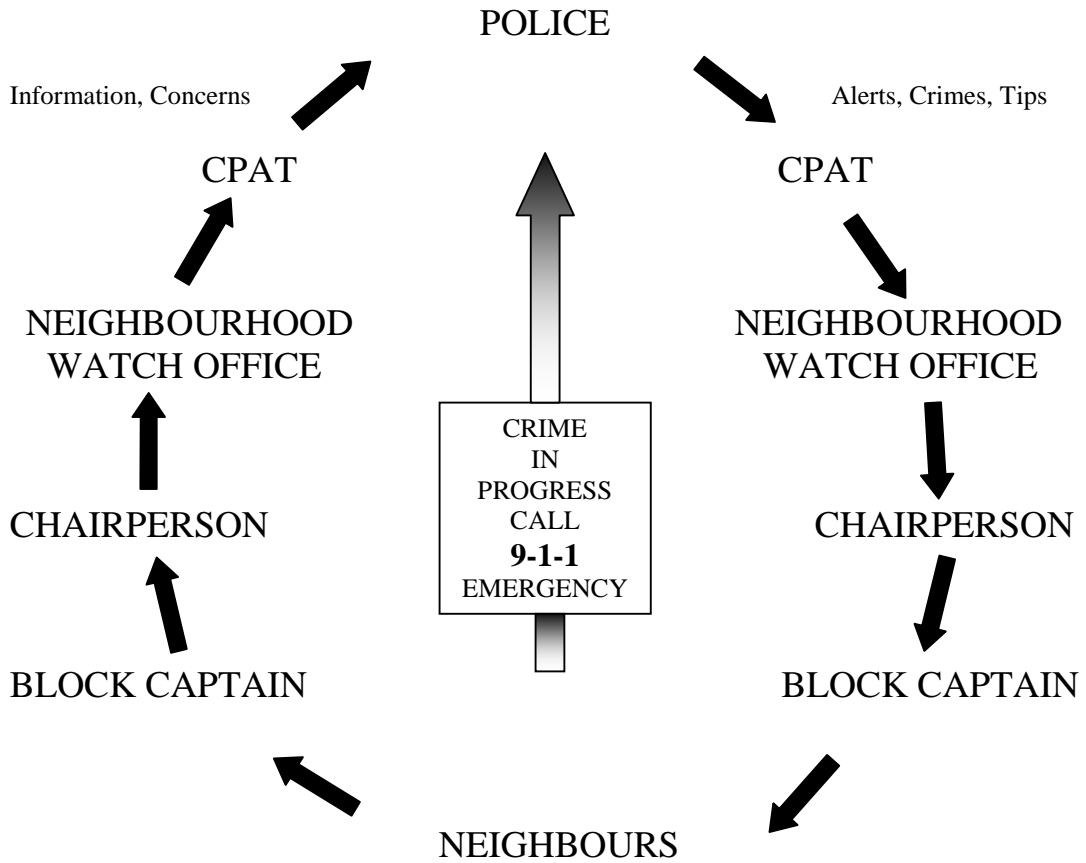
A chairperson and an assistant should be chosen to be the liaison between the police, The Neighbourhood Watch office and the community. There could also be a treasurer or newsletter editor, etc.

Role:

- 1) Oversee the organization of your community
- 2) Be a liaison between your community, the police and the Neighbourhood Watch office
- 3) Help to find Block Captains
- 4) Ensure that information is relayed to the community
- 5) Attend annual training meetings
- 6) Ensure that newsletters are prepared regularly
- 7) Hold meetings for your community and your helpers
- 8) Make a list of your assistants. Send a copy to your Neighbourhood Watch office
- 9) Encourage your volunteers
- 10) Find a replacement if you are unable to continue in this role. A program will die without leadership



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH COMMUNICATION FLOW



**ACTION CIRCLE
WORKING TOGETHER**

Other Materials Available

- Neighbours' Night Out Kits
- Meeting Ideas
- Sample Newsletters
- Cartoons for Newsletters
- Neighbourhood Watch Letterhead and Logos
- Vacation Tips
- Winter Tips
- Holiday Season Tips
- Calls to the Police
- Description of Suspects

Pamphlets Available

- Crime Prevention Association of Toronto
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Personal Security
- Home Security
- Apartment Security
- A Caring Community
- Frauds and Scams
- Graffiti
- Auto Theft
- Purse Snatch

This material, plus information on many topics relating to crime prevention, community safety and the justice system is available at:



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North York, Ont. M2P 1W6

Phone: (416) 225-1102, Fax: 225-2340

Website: www.cptoronto.org

email: william@cptoronto.org

Block Captain's Instructions

You are the key! You are the leader of your block. Through your direction, your home and street will become a safer place to live.

1. Create a contact list of the homes in your block, write all the addresses you have - list odd and even numbers separately as it is easier to go up one side of the street and down the other.
2. **Visiting homes:**
 - a) **Show why you are calling.** Carry a Neighbourhood Watch pamphlet, sticker or wear your Block Captain button.
 - b) **Try to visit every home,** and make short notes of general facts: e.g. home during the day, seniors living alone and other language spoken.
 - c) **Explain the Neighbourhood Watch program.** It is a great way to improve security in your area. Give them a Neighbourhood Watch pamphlet. At meetings residents will get to know their neighbours better and learn how to make their own home and neighbourhood safer.
 - d) **Tell them about any meetings planned in your area.** Invite them to come and explain that it is important to attend in order to learn about the program. Mention that at least 50% of the community must agree to participate before the signs can be erected and door stickers are given out.
 - e) **Write down the name, address and phone number of participating householders on a sheet.**
 - f) **Give everyone your name and phone number.** Remind people to phone the police not the Block Captain in an emergency. They can call you for or with any information.
3. After your final meeting, **distribute a sticker to all residents who are participating.** Tell them to place the sticker on their front door; if this is not possible, place it where it is visible from the front door.
4. **If the Neighbourhood Watch office requests your assistance, pass on the information quickly.** It may be a description of a suspicious person or vehicle. If there has been a crime, **DO NOT GIVE OUT THE NUMBER OF THE HOUSE INVOLVED** for confidentiality reasons. Do tell them when and how it happened and the kinds of things stolen. We believe it is better to be aware and take precautions, than not to know at all. You do not have to contact everyone yourself. For instance, you tell five people and they each tell five people.
5. Try to arrange Block get-togethers. **Neighbours' Night Out** is an annual event celebrated across the city on the third Tuesday in June and helps to get the neighbours to know each other.
6. **When new people move in, welcome them and explain the program.** Update your list of members
7. **The police may request your assistance.** For example, they may need your help in looking for a lost child or an elderly person with Alzheimer disease.

Crime prevention is truly effective when crimes occur, but when nothing happens, people become complacent and careless. It is up to you to provide the leadership that will keep your family, your home and your neighbourhood safe.

YOU ARE THE KEY TO CRIME PREVENTION!