

# **PRESCOTT POLICE DEPARTMENT**



**FORMING A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH  
PROGRAM**

## **WHAT IS NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?**

Crime or the fear of crime provides the impetus for residents to become better informed on how to protect themselves and their property. Getting back to the old adage of being our “brother’s keepers”, means neighbors watching out for other neighbors. Neighbors are asked to be the eyes and ears in helping the police in apprehending criminals. Crime Watch is not designed to substitute for police protection. Rather it is an extension or supplement in assisting the police in making neighborhoods safer for all residents. Neighborhood Watch operates under two principles. When neighbors get to know and watch out for each other, they watch out for each other’s property as though it was their own. Second, Neighborhood Watch helps to create an identity within the neighborhood, which in turn fosters sense of pride, and belonging for the participants. The participants make their neighborhood a safer place to live by adopting a more observant and active attitude and, as a result, become more aware of strange cars, persons, or circumstances. This will not take a lot of time and soon will develop into a daily habit of becoming more aware of what is going on in the neighborhood.

## **ORGANIZING A CRIME WATCH PROGRAM**

Crime Watch programs take many forms, but in all cases, organization by blocks is the cornerstone of all neighborhood crime prevention programs. The following are basic guidelines to help establish and maintain Crime Watch for a neighborhood.

- Step 1 Talk with neighbors and friends. Ask for their participation in a small core group to take the first steps in starting a Crime Watch program. Explain the need for and value of a Neighborhood Crime Watch. Define the boundaries of the areas to be organized.
- Step 2 Contact your Prescott Police Department Crime Prevention Team. Explain that you would like to start a Neighborhood Crime Watch and ask for help from a Crime Prevention Team member. Discuss the size and boundaries of the area considered for the program.
- Step 3 Planning the first Neighborhood Meeting: Make arrangements to use a convenient meeting place that will accommodate the number of people who might attend. Design a simple flyer or ask your Prescott Police Crime Prevention Team for help in developing a flyer to announce the meeting. Recruit volunteers to hand deliver an invitation to every home in the area. Do not place meeting notices in mailboxes if they do not have the appropriate postal stamp affixed. Your Prescott Police Crime Prevention Team will provide specific details as to the content of the first Crime Watch meeting and possible topics for future meetings.

## **USING THESE GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines describe how to organize and operate a Crime Prevention Program, and are offered only as suggestions on how a Neighborhood Watch program might be established. The extent of neighborhood problems and the commitment by neighborhood residents will determine which of the suggestions are adopted.

Neighborhood Watch programs involve the following primary activities:

- Neighbors getting to know each other and working in a program of mutual assistance.
- Residents being trained to recognize and report suspicious activities in their neighborhoods.

- Implementation of crime prevention programs, such as Neighborhood Watch, Crime Watch, Operation Identification, and others.

## **ORGANIZING A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MEETING**

### **First Meeting**

1. Contact the Prescott Police Department Crime Prevention Team to advise them of your plans and invite them to participate in the first formal neighborhood meeting. Allow them at least two-to-four weeks to arrange their schedule.
2. Request a presentation on crime and what residents can do to prevent it.
3. Obtain instructions from law enforcement (if possible) on how to do the following:
  - A. Obtain reports on crime in the neighborhood.
  - B. Obtain information on crime trends, which may affect the neighborhood.
4. If there is a Home Owners or civic association representing the neighborhood, ask the appropriate committee to study the development of the Neighborhood Watch program.
5. Send out notices to all neighbors. Include date, time, location and purpose of meeting.

## **ORGANIZATION OF ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUP**

### **Second Meeting**

#### **A. NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH COMMITTEE GUIDELINES**

1. The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator and the block/road captains are the most crucial positions. They provide leadership and coordination and serve on the Neighborhood Watch Committee, which has the following responsibilities:
  - A. To maintain and expand the program to include as many residents as possible.
  - B. To set forth objectives and strategies in cooperation with law enforcement that will make the neighborhood safer.
  - C. To plan and implement programs that will be beneficial and appropriate for the neighborhood.
  - D. To assess the success of the program and provide feedback to residents and law enforcement.

#### **B. NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH COORDINATOR GUIDELINES**

1. Serves as liaison between the law enforcement agency and the neighborhood.
2. Seeks resources and materials and makes them available to block captains.
3. Passes information obtained from law enforcement to block captains.
4. Passes information from block captains to law enforcement; i.e., suspicious vehicles in neighborhood, problems and concerns.
5. Maintains a master list of Watch members.
6. Arranges Neighborhood Crime Prevention programs in conjunction with law enforcement.
7. Obtains signs proclaiming that the neighborhood has a Watch Program.
8. Provides a report to the civic association, if such exists.
9. Supervises the activities of the block captains.
10. Establishes subcommittees to develop specific crime prevention projects; i.e., Operation Identification, Block Parents, etc.

## EVERY DAY

1. Be observant. Keep watch on neighbors, homes and report suspicious activities to neighbors or law enforcement when appropriate.
2. Write down and report license numbers and description of suspicious looking persons and vehicles in the neighborhood.
3. Educate your children in crime prevention and instill respect for law enforcement.
4. **Do not try to make arrests.** Being a good witness is more important. Get all necessary information and phone your Police Department.

## ACTIVITIES AND TOOLS

### 1. Patrols (If Needed)

- A. Should only be organized after discussion with local law enforcement.
- B. Can be accomplished by foot, bicycle or motor vehicle.
- C. Magnetic car signs are available for designating vehicle patrol.
- D. Citizen band radios or walkie-talkies can be used to speed transmission of suspicious activity reports.
- E. Should only observe and report and take no direct action.

### 2. Telephone Tree

- A. Each individual in the Watch group is assigned to contact a specific number of other neighbors to pass on general information.
- B. Vital information is required during and after suspicious circumstances or emergencies and can be communicated to others within the system.
- C. Each resident must provide his or her block/road captain with sufficient information about the household to make the system effective

## SIGN POSTING GUIDELINES

### **ALL DISTANCES ARE APPROXIMATE AND INTENDED ONLY AS A GUIDE**

- 24 x 32 SIGN IS READABLE UP TO 75-80 FEET – LOGO IS VISIBLE UP TO 175-200 FEET. (Recommended for defining boundaries. Placed at entrance points of community or mobile home Park, or parking areas of apartment and condo complexes.)
- 18 X 24 SIGN IS READABLE UP TO 40-50 FEET – LOGO IS VISIBLE UP TO 125-150 FEET. (Recommended for neighborhood streets and business district.)
- 12 X 18 SIGN IS READABLE UP TO 25-40 FEET – LOGO IS VISIBLE UP TO 75-100 FEET. (Recommended for use within the neighborhood.)
- 12 X 12 PLASTIC YARD SIGN (Recommended for gates, garages, fence posts; should be visible from the street.)
- 5 X 5 PLASTIC GATE OR ENTRY SIGN (Use near entrance to home; visible only close-up.)

Individual municipalities and counties may have ordinances regarding the posting of signs. The departments of City Planning or Public Works may be a reference source for specific restrictions concerning your area. Signs are not intended for posting on utility poles, telephone poles or any other standard that a repairperson may have to climb. Posting on traffic sign poles is usually prohibited.

## NEIGHBORHOOD MAP

Meet with your City's GIS department and secure good quality maps of your neighborhood and identify each property owner on that map.

## CRIME WATCH PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

Participation in Crime Watch is not something that takes a lot of time. It does require each person to adopt a more observant and active attitude on a daily basis. As a result, neighbors will get to know each other better and will become more aware of strange cars, persons or circumstances that might require calling the police. What participants do to make their homes more secure and how alert they become is entirely up to them. The more prepared individuals are, the more effective will be the weapon against crime.

- Get to know your neighbors. Know their names and be able to identify them and their vehicles by sight.
- Maintain a map of the immediate neighborhood with names and addresses.
- Mark all property for identification using the "Operation Identification" program.
- Be observant and watch over neighbors' homes, especially when they are not at home or out of town.
- Write down license numbers and descriptions of suspicious-looking vehicles and persons in the neighborhood and report them to the police immediately.
- Report information that may be helpful in solving a crime to the police.
- Educate children in crime prevention and teach respect and friendship for law enforcement and police officials.

## SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY CONCERNING PERSONS CIRCUMSTANCE POSSIBLE CRIME

Going door-to-door in a residential area, especially if one or more persons go to the rear of the 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. **Possible burglary, theft or trespassing.**

Person running, especially if something of value is being carried. **Possible suspect fleeing the scene of a crime.**

Person carrying property that is not wrapped, at an unusual hour. **Possible suspect fleeing the scene of a burglary or robbery.**

Much human traffic to and from a certain residence if it occurs on a daily or regular basis. **Possible drug, vice or a fence operation.**

Person screaming. **Possible rape or assault.**



Person loitering around cars or going car-to-car peering into them, especially in parking lots or on streets. **Possible car thief.**

Persons loitering around schools, parks, or secluded areas. **Possible sex offenders.**

Person offering items for sale at very low price. **Possibly trying to sell stolen property.**

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

## **OTHER SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY CIRCUMSTANCE POSSIBLE CRIME**

Continuous repair operations at a non-business 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.**

Property in homes, garage, or storage areas is suspicious if accumulations are large, or items are in good condition but not in use. **Possible stolen property.**

## **HOME SECURITY SURVEY**

You may contact the Prescott Police Department Crime Prevention Team and schedule a Home Security Survey. Trained members of our Citizens on Patrol will meet with you and perform a detailed survey for your guidance.

## **WHEN IN DOUBT, CALL IT IN**

***Under no circumstances attempt to apprehend a person committing a crime or try to investigate suspicious activity. The police want your information – not your action. 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. 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 neighborhood all the time. But criminals do take advantage of this by pretending to be legitimate workmen.***

APPENDIX A: Family Data Sheet

**NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH FAMILY DATA SHEET**

*(To be maintained by NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH Coordinator)*

HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ HOME TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL RESIDENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

MAN OF HOUSEHOLD: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

WOMAN OF HOUSEHOLD: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD: \_\_\_\_\_ (LIST NAMES AND AGES BELOW)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAMES OF OTHER RESIDENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CONTACT:**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ HOME TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

**FAMILY VEHICLES:**

NO. 1 MAKE: \_\_\_\_\_ STYLE: \_\_\_\_\_ COLOR: \_\_\_\_\_ LICENSE : \_\_\_\_\_

NO. 2 MAKE: \_\_\_\_\_ STYLE: \_\_\_\_\_ COLOR: \_\_\_\_\_ LICENSE : \_\_\_\_\_

NO. 3 MAKE: \_\_\_\_\_ STYLE: \_\_\_\_\_ COLOR: \_\_\_\_\_ LICENSE : \_\_\_\_\_

LIST ANY SPECIAL FAMILY HEALTH OR MEDICAL INFORMATION:

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LIST ANY SPECIAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE TRAINING OR SKILLS:

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LIST ANY OTHER PERTINENT – IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

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