

Partnerships for A Safer Community

Neighborhood Watch



Citizens Guide

“The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of those that do evil, but because of those who watch it and let it happen.”

Albert Einstein

COPS ★

**COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

Foreword



Community Oriented Policing Services

The COPS Office was created as a result of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. As a component of the Justice Department, the mission of the COPS Office is to advance community policing in jurisdictions of all sizes across the country. Community policing represents a shift from more traditional law enforcement in that it focuses on prevention of crime and the fear of crime on a very local basis. Community policing puts law enforcement professionals on the streets and assigns them a beat, so they can build mutually beneficial relationships with the people they serve. By earning the trust of the members of their communities and making those individuals stakeholders in their own safety, community policing makes law enforcement safer and more efficient, and makes America safer.

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the need for strengthening and securing our communities has become even more critical, and Neighborhood Watch groups have taken on a greater significance. In addition to serving a crime prevention role, Neighborhood Watch can also be used as the basis for bringing neighborhood residents together to focus on disaster preparedness as well as terrorism awareness; to focus on evacuation drills and exercises; and even to organize group training, such as the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.

Neighborhood Watch takes a degree of commitment on the part of citizens. It requires meetings, patrols, and other activities. When the crime rate in the areas with Neighborhood Watch decreases it is because of those who have given their time and energy to the project.

Your country and community have never needed you more. As citizens, we all share the responsibility for reporting and preventing terrorism in our community. We can be alert and aware of those activities in our neighborhood that may have links to terrorist and criminal behavior. It is only your commitment to protecting your family and neighbors that will truly make the difference. We thank you for answering the call, and doing your part to help keep America safe and strong.

“I call on all Americans to serve by bettering our communities and, thereby, defy and defeat the terrorist”

President George W. Bush, November 8, 2001

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The Role Of Neighborhood Watch Members

If citizens get together to actively prevent crime half as often as criminals meet to create crime, the community would notice real change.

EYES AND EARS OBSERVATION

Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you during the day. If you observe something suspicious, notify law enforcement as soon as you can and try to describe the activity as accurately as possible. Stay on the telephone so you can provide additional information that may help law enforcement officers responding to the call.

REPORT SUSPICIOUS PERSONS BY ...

- Sex
- Race
- Height
- Weight
- Hair Color / Length
- Eyes / Glasses
- Tattoos / Scars
- Clothing
- Weapon
- Vehicle: Make/Model/Color/License Plate Number

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES MAY INCLUDE:

- Individual walking around a residence, looking into windows or trying to force open doors
- Individual carrying any kind of weapon
- Solicitors asking unusual questions, appearing uncertain of questions or the purpose for their questions
- Unusual noises for the time of day
- Telephone caller asking for credit card or bank account numbers
- Individual carrying property out of residence or business at unusual times
- Car driving past area repeatedly, or parking and no one exits
- Individual running from a residence or building

COMMON DRUG ACTIVITIES

- Unusual or chemical odors coming from a residence
- Vacant or occupied house with unusually high amount of traffic to and from, especially late at night
- Double-parked cars in front of house
- Groups of people congregating on front steps of residence, or nearby
- People displaying large sums of cash, or carrying valuables into house but leaving without them

TEAMWORK

Working together for the good of the Watch and your neighborhood. Help out neighbors by watching their homes when they are away on vacation or just at work. Maintain a lived-in look to neighbors' residence by picking up newspapers and mail; parking your car in their driveway, and putting garbage cans out on the day it is normally collected. By maintaining a lived-in appearance to homes, you and your neighbors are working together to prevent criminal activity in the area.

There are many other ways you can work with your neighbors. If a neighbor or family in your area is a victim of crime, Watch members can show support by going with them to court, or contacting a Victim Assistance Center for them.

PRACTICE PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY

Crime prevention is a way of life that offers greater security and peace of mind. Practice basic personal safety measures and always be aware of your surroundings, whether at home or away. Maximize home security by surveying and correcting security weaknesses in your residence. A law enforcement officer will survey your home with you and discuss ways to increase home security.

MEETINGS

Regularly attend meetings and work with other members on the goals and initiatives of the Watch. Not only will you receive crime prevention training at meetings, but also you will benefit from meeting neighbors and keeping up with area concerns as they arise.

A WATCH CAPTAIN

- Distributes information to members
- Recruits new members
- Provides current crime prevention information to members
- Updates Phone Trees
- Announces and advertises meetings
- Leads meetings
- Coordinates information with law enforcement liaison officer
- Develops agendas and finds guest speakers for meetings
- Delegates duties among members

A WATCH MEMBER

- Attends meetings
- Works with other members on common goals
- Reports suspicious and criminal activity in area
- Looks after residences when neighbors are away
- Practices safety and security measures at home and work
- Supports the Captain in accomplishing goals
- Recruits new members

What Should Citizens Know About Terrorism?

- **Terrorism:**
 - **Creates fear and panic.**
 - **Cause disruption in daily activities of the community.**
 - **Harasses our governing bodies.**
- **Intimidates and Demoralizes Citizens**
 - **Forces policy change.**
- **Activities or Behavior:**
 - **Assaults & Murders**
 - **Arson & Bombings**
 - **Vandalism**
 - **Graffiti messages of hate or social disorder**
 - **Kidnapping & Skyjackings**
 - **Cyber terrorism**
- **How is terrorism funded locally?**
 - **Robbery & Burglary**
 - **Counterfeiting**
 - **Narcotics**
 - **Extortion**
 - **Charities & Businesses**
 - **Sympathizers**

Are state Crime Prevention Associations and Neighborhood Watch Programs involved in Community Policing and Homeland Security? ABSOLUTELY!

Recognizing Terrorist Activity

Although the U.S. government is responding to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, citizens can take concrete steps in the community and in the workplace to help detect and deter suspected domestic and international terrorists. By being aware of your surroundings and knowing how and when to report crime, you can make a difference in the war on terrorism.

Signs of terrorist activity may include:

- Someone bragging or talking about plans to harm citizens in violent attacks or who claims membership in a terrorist organization that espouses killing innocent people.
- Suspicious packages, luggage, or mail that have been abandoned in a crowded place like an office building, an airport, a school, or a shopping center.
- Suspicious letter or package that arrives in your mailbox. (Stay away from the letter or package and don't shake, bump or sniff it; wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.)
- Someone suspiciously exiting a secured, non-public area near a train or bus depot, airport, tunnel, bridge, government building, or tourist attraction.
- Any type of activity or circumstance that seems frightening or unusual within the normal routines of your neighborhood, community, and workplace.
- Someone unfamiliar loitering in a parking lot, government building, or around a school or playground.
- Someone using or threatening to use a gun or other weapon, place a bomb, or release a poisonous substance into the air, water, or food supply.
- Strange odors, smoke, fire, or an explosion.
- Abandoned vehicles.

Reporting Terrorist Activity

- If you believe you have information that would help authorities, do not take any action other than to inform your local police department or FBI as soon as possible. Here are some tips for reporting:
 - Call 911 for life-threatening emergencies only.
 - Call your police non-emergency number to report any behavior or event that seems to be outside the norm or is frightening but does not immediately endanger lives or property.
 - Call your local FBI field office. To find your local office, go to www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/info.htm or check inside the front cover the phone book. You can also contact the FBI at 1-866-483-5137 or submit a tip on their web site, www.fbi.gov
- Remain calm and provide the following information:
 - Your name and address
 - A brief description of the event -- what happened, when, where, and who was involved
 - Description of the suspect: sex, race, age, height, weight, hair color, clothing, distinctive characteristics such as a beard, mustache, scars, or accent
 - Description of the vehicle if one was involved: color, make, model, year, license plate, and special features such as stickers, dents, or decals
 - Where you think the suspicious person(s) may have gone

Disaster Preparedness: A Checklist

_____ Make a list of important phone numbers, such as non-emergency numbers for the police and fire departments, FBI field office, and local emergency management office. Post it by your telephone. Make sure children know how to dial 911 or “0” in an emergency.

_____ Develop a communications plan for your family. Choose someone who does not live with you (preferably out-of-town) that you and other family members can contact to check on each other in the event that you are separated during a disaster. Carry the number in your wallet.

_____ Establish a meeting place for family members if home or neighborhood evacuation is necessary. Pick on place near your home and one outside your neighborhood in case you can’t return after a disaster.

_____ Assemble an emergency preparedness kit that contains the following supplies:

- _____ three to five day supply of water (one gallon per person per day)
- _____ food that will not spoil and requires no cooking
- _____ first-aid kit and needed medicine
- _____ emergency tools, such as a battery powered radio, cell phone, flashlight
- _____ extra batteries
- _____ personal items like toilet paper and plastic garbage bags
- _____ change of clothing and blankets for each person
- _____ portable generator if possible

_____ Take a basic course in CPR and first-aid.

_____ Learn how to turn off water, gas, and electricity at the main switches.

_____ Learn about emergency plans for your children’s school or day care center.

_____ Draw a floor plan of your home and mark two escape routes from each room. Practice your evacuation plan.

_____ Know your community’s evacuation routes.

_____ Work with your Neighborhood Watch group or civic association to create community disaster preparedness plans.

COMMUNITY LIGHTING CHECK

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Problem</i>
Street lights spaced properly			
All lights work			
No broken globes			
All globes clean			
Nothing blocking street light			
Driveways lit			
Front yards lit			
Garage doors lit			
Residence numbers lit			

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEMS ON BACK

LOCATION	PROBLEMS

Date _____ Time _____ Signature _____

COMMUNITY SECURITY

CHECK

	Excellent	<i>Good</i>	<i>Problem</i>
Street names plainly marked			
House number visible from street			
Residence appears occupied			
Operation I.D. sticker visible			
Garage doors closed			
Shrubs below window level			
No valuables left in yard			
No valuables left in vehicle			
No ladder outside			

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEMS ON BACK

LOCATION	PROBLEMS
----------	----------

Date _____ **Time** _____ **Signature** _____

PERSONAL PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION RECORD

If you are a victim of a burglary, it is important that you know the serial numbers of the items stolen. Without the positive identification made possible by a serial number – or a unique number which you may engrave or mark on your property – you may not be able to prove you are the rightful owner if the item is recovered from the thief. Recovered property that cannot be positively identified as being stolen cannot be used as evidence against the thief.

Take a few minutes and record the description, serial numbers and value of those items which are most likely to be stolen. Many of them are listed for you on this form. If you have valuable jewelry, silver, antiques or art objects, take color photographs and note any marks, blemishes or features that make it uniquely identifiable. Keep your property record form and photographs with your insurance papers or in another safe place.

After you complete your inventory, you will realize how much you have to lose in a burglary.

Credit & Charge Cards			
COMPANY	CARD NUMBER	COMPANY	CARD NUMBER

HOUSEHOLD AND PERSONAL ITEMS				
ITEM	BRAND NAME	MODEL #	SERIAL NUMBER	\$ VALUE
Television				
Television				
Vcr				
Cd Player				
Dvd Player				
Walkman				
Microwave Oven				
Computer Monitor				
Cpu (Hard Drive)				
Printer				
Watch				

FRONT ENTRANCE	YES	NO	RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMENTS
1. Is door itself of metal or solid wood construction?			
2. Is the doorframe strong enough and tight enough to prevent forcing or spreading?			
3. Are door hinges protected from removal from outside?			
4. Are there windows in the door or within 40 inches of the locks?			
5. Are the door locks adequate and in good repair?			
6. Are strikes and strike plates adequate and properly installed?			
7. If there are no windows in door, is there a wide-angle viewer or voice intercommunications device?			
8. Can the lock mechanism be reached through a mail slot, delivery port or pet entrance at doorway?			
9. Is there a screen or storm door with an adequate lock?			
10. Is exterior or front entrance lighted with at least a 40-watt light?			
11. Can front entrance be observed from street or public areas?			
12. Does porch or landscaping offer concealment from view from street or public area?			
SIDE OR REAR ENTRANCE			
13. Is door itself of metal or solid wood construction?			
14. Is doorframe strong enough and tight enough to prevent forcing or spreading?			
15. Are door hinges protected from removal from outside?			
16. Are there windows in the door or within 40 inches of the locks?			
SIDE OR REAR ENTRANCE			
17. Are the door locks adequate and in good repair?			

18. Are strikes and strike plates adequate and properly installed?			
19. Can the lock mechanism be reached through a mail slot, delivery port or pet entrance at doorway?			
20. Is exterior or front entrance lighted with at least a 40-watt light?			
21. Is doorway concealed from street or neighbor's view by porch, fence or landscaping?			
22. Does doorway have screen or storm door with lock?			
23. If door is sliding glass door, is the sliding panel secured from being lifted out of track?			
24. Is "charley-bar" or key operated auxiliary lock used on sliding glass door?			
ENTRANCES FROM GARAGE & BASEMENT			
25. Are all entrances to living quarters from garage and basement of metal or solid wood construction?			
26. Does door from garage to living quarters have locks adequate for exterior entrance?			
27. Does door from basement to living quarters have an adequate lock operated from living quarter side?			
GROUND FLOOR WINDOWS			
28. Do all windows have adequate locks in operating condition?			
29. Do windows have screens or storm windows that lock from the inside?			
30. Do any windows open onto areas that may be hazardous or offer special risk to burglary?			
GROUND FLOOR WINDOWS			
31. Do windows that open to hazardous areas have security screens or grills?			
32. Are exterior areas of windows free from concealing structure or landscaping?			
33. Is exterior well-lit at all window areas?			
UPPER FLOOR WINDOWS			
34. Do any upper floor windows open onto			

porch or garage roofs or roofs of adjoining buildings?			
35. If so, are they secured as adequately as if they were at ground level?			
36. Are trees and shrubbery kept trimmed back from upper floor windows?			
37. Are ladders kept outside the house where they are accessible?			
BASEMENT DOORS AND WINDOWS			
38. Is there a door from outside to the basement?			
39. If so, is that door adequately secure for an exterior door?			
40. Is outside basement entrance lighted by exterior light of at least 40 watts?			
41. Is outside basement door concealed from street or neighbors?			
42. Are all basement windows adequately secured against entrance?			
GARAGE DOORS AND WINDOWS			
43. Is automobile entrance door to garage equipped with adequate locking device?			
44. Is garage door kept closed and locked at all times?			
45. Are garage windows secured adequately for ground floor windows?			
46. Is outside utility entrance to garage as secure as required for any ground floor entrance?			
47. Are tools and ladders kept in garage?			
48. Are all garage doors lighted on the outside by at least 40-watt lights?			

VEHICLE DESCRIPTIONS

MAKE: _____ YEAR: _____

MODEL: _____ Color: _____ Interior
color: _____

Did vehicle have tinted windows?

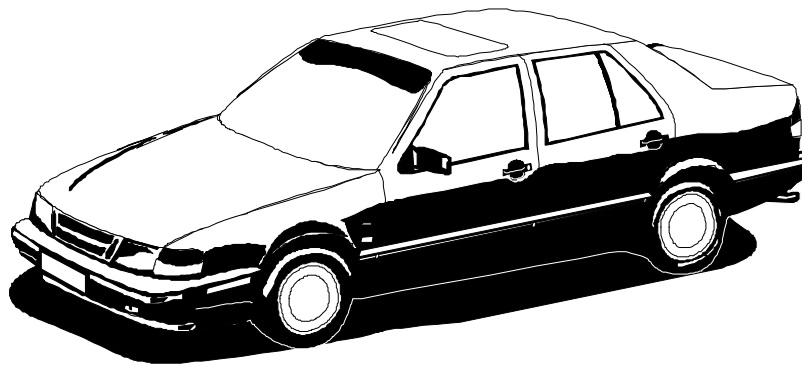
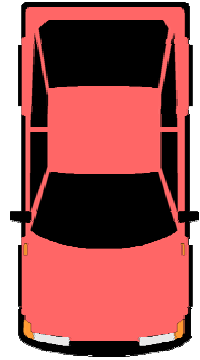
Did vehicle have damage: (circle area) _____ →

How many doors: 2 4

Mini-Van Truck Wagon SUV Hatchback Convertible

Did vehicle have license plates? Number: _____

State: _____



Anyone in front seat? _____ Back Seat: _____

What did the Driver look like? _____

What direction did the car come from? _____

What direction did the car leave? _____

Did the vehicle make any noises? (muffler, engine, etc.) _____

Suspect Description Sheet

Sex _____ **Race** _____ **Age** _____ **Height** _____ **Weight** _____

Hair

Hat

Eye Color

Shirt

Glasses

Coat

**Mustache/
Beard/
Sideburns**

Tie

Complexion

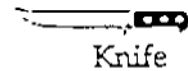
Pants

**Tattoos,
Amputations,
Scars**

Shoes

**Speech
Impediments or
Accents**

Weapon



Distinguishable Gait or Limp _____