



LAW ENFORCEMENT GUIDE TO NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

For more information, please visit

www.USAonwatch.org

or contact

The National Sheriffs' Association

at 1-800-424-7827

www.sheriffs.org



BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance
Office of Justice Programs ■ U.S. Department of Justice

Getting Involved

As a Beat Cop or Deputy who may not have specific Neighborhood Watch responsibilities, you still have several ways to become involved with the Neighborhood Watch programs in your area.



This Law Enforcement Guide to Neighborhood Watch has been designed to provide you with important information on the Neighborhood Watch program, the roles and responsibilities of volunteers, and how these dedicated citizens can work with you to make the community safer and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

As you perform your routine patrol or investigative duties, remember that Neighborhood Watch (NW) groups have in-depth knowledge of the community and access to a wide variety of resources that can be utilized for neighborhood safety and security.

This booklet will demonstrate ways to work with, develop and assist Neighborhood Watch groups in your area.

Neighborhood Watch's New Emphasis on Terrorism

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, President Bush encouraged citizens to report suspicious activity and to remain “in a heightened state of alert for more terrorist attacks.” He challenged all Americans to become involved in Homeland Security efforts, and he specifically charged the National Sheriffs' Association with the mission to promote and increase the number of Neighborhood Watches, thereby making safe and secure neighborhoods, which are the foundation of a safe and secure nation.



As we face one of the most serious challenges to the American way of life we are prepared to meet the challenge, and do our part in the fight against terrorism. We have transformed Neighborhood Watch by giving it a new mission: secure the homeland by encouraging, promoting and empowering people to get involved in their communities through Neighborhood Watch.

Tom Faust, Executive Director, NSA

National Neighborhood Watch has re-invented itself at a time when we needed it more than every, and today, it remains our nation's flagship citizen-partnership program.

Attorney General John Ashcroft

Neighborhood Watch

What is NW?

How does NW benefit you as a law enforcer?

Police officers and Sheriffs' deputies throughout the country receive invaluable assistance from their Neighborhood Watch partners.

NW leaders and volunteers can provide the foundation for an entire network of valuable community contacts. Through these contacts, officers can gain and leverage resources, learn about their communities, and clear offenses.

Partnering with Block Captains

All law enforcers have a professional obligation to treat citizens with respect and dignity. When officers encounter Neighborhood Watch volunteers, they should realize that these individuals have committed themselves to helping to make their communities safer and more secure. NW volunteers dedicate their time and resources to the neighborhood, and often can be a source of valuable information regarding community activities and neighborhood issues. Beat officers should learn who their local Block Captains are, and work with them to build mutually beneficial partnerships.

For more than 30 years, **The National Neighborhood Watch Program**, an initiative of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), has been one of the most effective ways for citizens to become involved in the protection of their neighborhoods.

Acting as the "eyes and ears" of local law enforcement, Neighborhood Watch encourages citizens to take steps to make their own homes and property less vulnerable to the threat of break-ins and vandalism.

Neighborhood Watch empowers citizens and communities to become active in emergency preparedness, as well as in the fight against crime and terrorism.

Law enforcers should actively work with their NW volunteers to reduce crime and disorder, report suspicious activities and individuals, and improve the quality of life in the community.



Citizens helping Officers

Observe and Report

NW leaders are trained by their law enforcement liaisons to observe and report. They understand the importance of providing timely and accurate information, and realize that good observation skills and reporting procedures can lead to safer and more secure communities.



Partnerships and Problem Solving

Successful law enforcement organizations have benefited from forming partnerships with their concerned citizens and working to resolve common problems in order to improve neighborhood safety and the overall quality of life. Law enforcers should strive to build partnerships with local NW groups so that they can engage in joint problem solving activities. By establishing these positive relationships, crime can be reduced and neighborhood issues resolved, benefiting the entire community.

10 Things an Officer can do to get involved with Neighborhood Watch



1. Learn the various groups and the areas which they represent
2. Be involved with established Neighborhood Watch Groups on your beat
3. Identify areas without a group that can benefit from a Neighborhood Watch Program
4. Help establish new groups in those neighborhoods in need
5. Get to know your local Block Captains
6. Whenever possible, attend Neighborhood Watch meetings on your beat or in your area
7. Work with volunteers at Neighborhood Watch-sponsored events and activities
8. Identify special groups (for example, local CERT teams) that could partner with Neighborhood Watch groups
9. Identify groups that may benefit from Neighborhood Watch activities (for example, after-school programs)
10. Work with other officers to increase Neighborhood Watch involvement in their areas.