

**ORGANIZING
&
OPERATING
NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH
IN
MADISON HEIGHTS**



CRIME PREVENTION BUREAU
MADISON HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT
280 WEST THIRTEEN MILE ROAD
MADISON HEIGHTS, MICHIGAN 48071

The information in these guidelines was compiled from the following sources:

The Sign Center, Inc., San Diego, California
"Watch Program Guidelines - Organizing a Crime Prevention Program" which cites its sources as:

The Virginia Secretary of Public Safety "Status of Neighborhood Watch in Virginia" Dec. 1, 1983

San Diego Police Department Crime Prevention Unit
"Community Alert Program Guidelines", Sept. 1979

Pontiac Police Department, Pontiac, Michigan
"Crime Watch Training Guide", No date

Garden City Police Department, Garden City, Michigan
"Neighborhood Watch Program - A Manual For Members", No date

"How To Protect Yourself From Crime", by Ira A. Lipman, 3rd ed., 1989, pub. by Contemporary Books, Inc.

National Crime Prevention Council, Washington, D.C.
"Getting Together To Fight Crime", No date

Crime Prevention Coalition, Washington, D.C.
"Crime Prevention In America - Foundations For Action", 1990
"Crime Prevention In America - Call To Action", 1990

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WHY DO WE NEED NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

During the past few years, the problems of "crime in the streets" has been brought home to all of us. Every man, woman, and child in Madison Heights is a potential victim of crime, whether it be assault, rape, robbery, kidnapping, or any other type crime.

Madison Heights, like most communities, can afford to have only a few officially designated police officers to control the crime problem. These officers are generally so few they cannot observe everything that happens within the community. Without citizen participation, police officers cannot adequately insure the safety and protection of the citizens and their property.

The basic responsibility for a safe community falls upon the individual citizens, first by controlling their own behavior and secondly by looking out for the safety of their fellow citizens. The best community, therefore, is one in which the citizens assist the police agency by reporting suspicious and criminal activity. With the law abiding citizens working in a partnership with the police officers, every person within Madison Heights will benefit.

Any law enforcement agency is only effective to the degree the public allows it to be. The Madison Heights Police Department is aware of this and enjoys the support of Madison Heights residents and business persons and continues to earn this support through the Department's daily activities. Neighborhood Watch is a method to increase the safety of citizens, to resolve problems, and to improve (or maintain) the quality of life in the neighborhood.

WHAT IS NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

Simply stated, Neighborhood Watch is people looking out for each other and acting as the eyes and ears of the police department in an organized manner. This concept involves the following primary activities:

- * Neighbors getting to know each other and working together in a program of, and for, mutual assistance.
- * Citizens being taught by the police department:
 - To recognize suspicious and criminal activity.
 - How to describe persons and vehicles.
 - How and when to document their observations.
 - What information to have ready when calling the police.
 - How to use the enhanced 911 system.
- * Utilizing current crime prevention programs.

GETTING STARTED

Talk to your neighbors. Find three or four who share your agreement to have a neighborhood watch for your block and are willing to assist in organizing a watch program.

Decide where you want to have the "Organizational Meeting". This could be your house, a church, a school, or the library. Set a date and time. Invite the three or four neighbors you found.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING PROCEDURES

Discuss the need for a watch program, the anticipated results, and any existing problems in the neighborhood.

Select a meeting site. It is best to hold the first meeting in a home to encourage an informal atmosphere. If this is not possible, consider the following possibilities:

- a. School
- b. Church
- c. City library's meeting room
- d. Police station

Plan the meeting far enough in advance to give everyone adequate notice. Schedule it for a day and time when most persons will be able to attend. Usually, this will be a weekday evening.

Decide who will be doing the door to door survey. A minimum of two persons should be conducting the survey at the same time. Contact the Madison Heights Police Department's Crime Prevention Bureau for the survey form.

Prepare an agenda for the "Neighborhood Meeting":

- a. Purpose and brief background
- b. Have all in attendance introduce themselves
- c. Introduce law enforcement officer
- d. Discussion on neighborhood crime problems and other problems of concern with the officer
- e. Explain benefits of the Neighborhood Watch program and how it is organized
- f. Election of block leader(s) and co-leader(s)

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY AFTER ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Contact the Madison Heights Police Department's Crime Prevention Bureau, 583-1424, Monday through Friday, 8:00am - 4:00 pm and:

- a. Make arrangements to pick up the survey form.
- b. Invite an officer to participate in the first "Neighborhood Meeting". Make this request at least two weeks in advance of the meeting to avoid scheduling conflicts.
- c. Request a presentation be given on what citizens can do to prevent crime.

Conduct the survey.

Return completed survey forms to the Crime Prevention Bureau. These can be left, in an envelope, at the police department's front desk. Simply address it to "Crime Prevention Bureau".

Send out notices to all interested neighbors about the "Neighborhood Meeting":

- a. Date
- b. Time
- c. Location
- d. Purpose: To form a Neighborhood Watch group

FIRST NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PROCEDURES

1. State the purpose and give a brief background for the meeting.
2. Have all in attendance introduce themselves.
3. Introduce the law enforcement officer.
4. Presentation by law enforcement on citizen participation in crime prevention through Neighborhood Watch.
 - a. Listen to the officer's suggestions.
 - b. Collectively discuss ways in which they currently keep an eye out for each other.
5. Open discussion regarding past, and current, neighborhood crime problems. Participants must be allowed to freely express their opinions, fears, and expectations. Develop a "team attitude" with the group.
6. Explain the benefits of a Neighborhood Watch program and duties of membership. (See: "Participant's Guidelines")
7. Explain the duties of a Neighborhood Watch Coordinator (See : "Neighborhood Watch Coordinator Guidelines")
8. Based on the returned surveys, poll those interested in being leaders if they wish to be the Coordinator.
9. If more than one person is interested, elect a Coordinator by ballot.
10. Explain the duties of a Neighborhood Watch Block Leader. (See: "Block Leader And Co-Leader Guidelines")
11. Based on the returned surveys, poll those interested in being leaders and confirm they still wish to be a leader.
12. If more than one person per block is interested in being a leader, elect block leader(s) by ballot for each block.
13. Poll those remaining if they wish to be a co-leader, who will act as the leader during the absence of the block leader and will assist the block leader in their duties.
14. If more than one person per block is interested in being a co-leader, elect block co-leader(s) by ballot for each block.
15. The officer will then set a date(s) and time(s) for attending the "Observation and Reporting Skills" class. There will be different times for odd and even addresses.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH COORDINATOR GUIDELINES

1. Serves as liaison between the Crime Prevention Bureau and the neighborhood.
2. Seeks resources and materials and makes these available to block leaders and co-leaders.
3. Will maintain a minimum of once monthly contact with the Madison Heights Police Department's Crime Prevention Bureau.
4. Passes information obtained from Crime Prevention Bureau to block leaders and co-leaders.
5. Passes information from block leaders and co-leaders to the Crime Prevention Bureau; i.e., suspicious persons/vehicles in the neighborhood and police were not called, problems, or other concerns.
6. Maintains a master list of qualified Watch members.
7. Arranges neighborhood crime prevention programs in conjunction with the Madison Heights Police Department.
8. Supervises the activities of the block leaders and co-leaders.
9. Serves as chairperson for the Neighborhood Watch Committee.
10. Establishes subcommittees to develop specific crime prevention projects: i.e., Operation Identification, Auto I.D., Home Security Inspection, etc.

BLOCK LEADER AND CO-LEADER GUIDELINES

1. Serve as a liaison between residents and Coordinator.
2. Recruit new Watch members, striving for 100% participation in their respective block.
3. Assist Coordinator plan meetings and activities.
4. Maintain a name/address list of participating members. This information will be given to the Block Leader, by the Crime Prevention Bureau, when members have qualified by attending the "Observation and Reporting Skills" class.
5. Notify members of meetings.
6. Notify Crime Prevention Bureau of residents expressing an interest in joining the Neighborhood Watch group.
7. Designate work assignments as needed:
 - a. Secretarial tasks
 - b. Fund raising
 - c. Vacation House Checks
 - d. Newsletter article contributions
8. Serve as participant in the Neighborhood Watch Committee. (See: "Neighborhood Watch Committee Guidelines")
9. Chair at least four membership meetings per year. The meeting minutes and members in attendance will be forwarded to the Crime Prevention Bureau within ten (10) working days after the meeting.

The elected Co-Leader duties are to assist the Leader in performing the above duties and:

10. Assume the role of Leader during the Leader's absence.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

The positions of Neighborhood Watch Coordinator and Block Leader are the most crucial positions. These persons provide leadership and coordination to the group. They are required to serve on the Neighborhood Watch Committee, which has the following responsibilities:

1. To maintain and expand the program to include as many residents as possible.
2. To set forth objectives and strategies, in cooperation with law enforcement, to make the neighborhood safer.
3. To plan and implement programs which will be beneficial and appropriate for the neighborhood.
4. To assess the success of the program and provide feedback to residents and law enforcement.

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDELINES

1. Members must attend the police department's "Observation and Reporting Skills" class to become a qualified participant.
2. Get acquainted with your neighbors, know their names, and be able to identify them and their vehicles by sight.
3. Attend at least 2/3 of scheduled meetings per year.
4. Utilize crime prevention programs offered.
5. Be observant. Keep watch on neighbors, their homes, and report suspicious activities to law enforcement when appropriate.
6. Write down, and report, license numbers and descriptions of suspicious vehicles and persons in the neighborhood.
7. Educate your children in crime prevention and instill respect for law enforcement. DO NOT USE POLICE OFFICERS AS A THREAT! Ex: "If you don't behave, I'll have the police take you away."
8. Do not try to make arrests. Be a good witness. Get all necessary information and phone the police department.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH ACTIVITIES AND TOOLS**PATROLS:**

The Madison Heights Police Department does not encourage residents to "go on patrol" and persons doing so are at risk. However, the following cautions are offered if your group elects to do foot, bicycle, or car patrol:

1. Discuss patrol with the Crime Prevention Bureau.
2. Magnetic Neighborhood Watch car signs are available for purchase by individuals through the "Sign Center" listed at the beginning of this booklet.
3. Citizen band radios, walkie-talkies, or cellular phones should be used to speed reporting of suspicious and criminal activity.
4. Only observe and report. Take no direct action.

TELEPHONE NETWORK:

For a telephone network to be effective, the members must be willing to give their phone numbers to other members. Some persons are reluctant to do this, especially those with unlisted numbers. It will be necessary to poll the members regarding such a network.

1. Individuals within the Watch group could be assigned to contact a specific number of other neighbors to pass on information.
2. A network is useful during the commission of a crime, reporting of suspicious persons, and during emergency conditions. Vital information can be exchanged quickly.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH SIGNS:

1. When there is participation from 51% of the households, as qualified participants, the Crime Prevention Bureau will have the signs installed at the entrances to the neighborhood.
2. The signs are placed to warn potential criminals, to advise police officers there is an active Watch group in the area, and to promote the Neighborhood Watch program.

3. Should participation drop below 51%, the signs will be removed. Participation is measured by attendance to meetings and persons who have attended the "Observation and Reporting Skills" class.

NEIGHBORHOOD MAP:

1. Block Leader(s) could draw up maps for their respective blocks.
2. Map information should show:
 - a. House number
 - b. Resident's name
 - c. Phone number
 - d. House addresses of residences located behind member's address.
3. Maps would be distributed to all qualified members within the map area.
4. Maps would be used as guide to report information to law enforcement, fire, rescue, or other emergency personnel.
5. Informs members who their neighbors are.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY REPORT:

1. Provided by the Crime Prevention Bureau at the "Observation and Reporting Skills" class. Additional copies may be obtained upon request.
2. Provides members with a uniform guide to record needed information.
3. Can be directly passed on to police officers for use in investigations.

PROGRAM OFFERINGS

The following list of programs can be undertaken by a Neighborhood Watch group.

CRIME PREVENTION:

1. Security inspections of homes and property.
2. Operation Identification
3. National Night Out
4. Crime Prevention Month
5. Rape Prevention
6. Child Watch
7. Park Watch
8. Halloween Safety
9. Street Safety
10. Auto I.D.
11. House Numbering
12. Auto Theft Prevention
13. Holiday Shopping Safety
14. Vacation Home Security

The Madison Heights Police Department's Crime Prevention Bureau will assist the Watch group with any of the above. Contact the Bureau for additional information about other topics.

OTHER PROGRAMS:

1. First Aid / CPR
2. Baby Sitting Safety
3. Fire Safety
4. Traffic Safety
5. Adopt A Senior Citizen

Neighborhood Watch Historical Background

"Neighborhood Watch, or Crime Watch, as practiced in most areas of the nation, is based on a model developed in 1972 by the National Sheriffs' Association. The national Neighborhood Watch program was developed in response to requests from sheriffs and police chiefs for a program which would stem the dramatically increasing rate of burglary in the United States.

The program concept evolved from the experiences of localities across the country which have encouraged citizens to help law enforcement fight crime by being more observant of suspicious or criminal activity and then reporting that activity to appropriate authorities.

The Sheriffs' Association recognized that changes in lifestyles were making neighborhoods less secure and more vulnerable to crime. Factors such as households where both husband and wife are employed, transience resulting from job transfers, mobility and freedom provided by automobiles, the growing popularity of apartment living, and others, were causing many persons to become strangers to their neighbors. Many neighborhoods become deserted during the day and often when people were at home, they were not aware or concerned enough to take action when suspicious activity or a crime took place.

The Sheriffs' Association Neighborhood Watch program is now in its twenty second year (1994). Since it was created, over 8,000 sheriffs, police departments and citizen organizations have been assisted in developing nearly 30,000 separate neighborhood crime prevention programs. It has been estimated that over 15 million people in all fifty states as well as the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are participating in the Watch program."