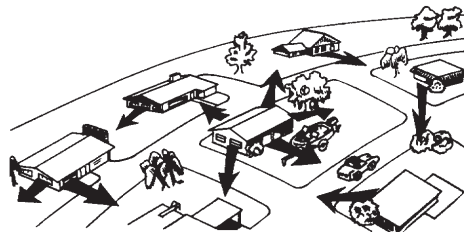


Staying Alive

When neighborhood crime is low, your Neighborhood Watch may lose participation. Here are some tips to keep your watch group a vital force in your community.

- Organize regular meetings that focus on current issues such as drug abuse, “hate” or bias motivated violence, crime in schools, child care before and after school, recreational activities for young people, and victim services.
- Organize community patrols to walk around streets or apartment complexes and alert law enforcement to crime and suspicious activities and identify problems needing attention. Community Patrol should have a means of communication available.
- Adopt a park or school playground. Pick up litter, repair broken equipment, paint over graffiti.
- Publish a newsletter that gives prevention tips and local crime news, recognizes residents of all ages who have “made a difference,” and highlights community events.
- Don’t forget social events that give neighbors a chance to know each other — a block party, potluck dinner, volleyball or softball game, picnic, etc.



1. **All Emergencies** **911**
(Sheriff, Fire, and Ambulance)
2. **Sheriff's Non-Emergency** **813-247-8200**
3. **Sheriff's Office Information** **813-247-8000**
4. **Community Outreach Division** . . . **813-247-8115**

Any problems which arise when instituting the Neighborhood Watch Program should be directed to the Sheriff's Office personnel by the Area Coordinator. Block Watchers and Captains are requested to direct matters which come to their attention to the Area Coordinator.

Block Watcher's Responsibilities

1. Acquaint yourself with neighbors and learn neighbors' schedules. Recognize neighbors' vehicles and regular visitors to the area.
2. Maintain a list of names, addresses and contact information of neighbors, area Block Captain and Neighborhood Watch Coordinator.
3. Have visible address numbers posted on your house, preferably four inches high on contrasting background.
4. Keep shrubbery well trimmed and use exterior lighting to provide maximum visibility.
5. Participate in Operation Identification and keep a written record of property descriptions, including serial numbers, model numbers, etc.
6. Inform at least one neighbor and Block Captain where you can be contacted in emergencies.
7. Call the Sheriff's Office Communications Center immediately when suspicious activity is observed, identify yourself, your Neighborhood Watch Group and stay on the line to provide the call taker with requested information. Afterwards, share the information with your Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, who in turn, informs the Block Captain so residents in the area can be advised through the communications network.
8. Attend and participate in Neighborhood Crime Watch meetings and encourage other residents to become involved.
9. Inform the Block Captain of new residents.
10. Check neighbors' homes when they are out of town.
11. Use secure locks to protect doors and windows.



HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**NEIGHBORHOOD
WATCH**

CHAD CHRONISTER, SHERIFF

www.hcso.tampa.fl.us

Keeping A Watchful Eye

Neighborhood Watch, Block Watch, Town Watch, Crime Watch — whatever the name, it's one of the most effective and least costly ways to prevent crime and reduce fear. Neighborhood Watch fights the isolation that crime creates and feeds upon.

These groups of neighbors looking out for each other and their neighborhood have helped reduce crime by as much as 50%. They simply extend a hand to law enforcement to make their community safer.

Many watch groups have not only seen crime go down, but have discovered a new feeling of caring and belonging among neighbors. Many have used their combined efforts to improve their streets and parks, recreational opportunities, and local services.

Benefits of Neighborhood Watch

1. Knowing your neighbors is an important feature and benefit of this program. You get to know participants' regular patterns so you can see when something is unusual. You get to know how to contact them quickly. You get to know when they are on vacation, when they are away at work and who are the occupants of their home. Being aware of what is going on in your neighborhood is not invading any one's privacy or snooping, it is guarding against trouble or any situation which could be dangerous to your neighborhood.
2. Law enforcement will teach you how to take preventive measures that can substantially decrease the likelihood of you becoming a crime victim. Not only does your Neighborhood Watch reduce the risk of your home being burglarized, the instances of other crimes such as vandalism, graffiti, personal assault, auto theft and other personal crimes also decrease.
3. Most law enforcement agencies are limited in their available manpower – you can help stretch that tax dollar by adding your eyes and ears through Neighborhood Watch.

4. The Neighborhood Watch program trains you how to observe and report suspicious activities occurring in your neighborhood. It trains you on what information law enforcement officers need when you report a crime and why. It trains you to detect illegal activities 24 hours a day – seven days a week.
5. A line of communication is set up to enable neighbors to keep one another informed of any criminal activity. An e-mail list or a telephone chain can keep your neighborhood watch be more effective in disseminating information regarding activities.
6. Operation Identification is the engraving of your valuables with your Florida driver's license number to deter burglars and to prove ownership should the article be stolen and recovered by law enforcement. Permanently marked valuables are more difficult for the burglar to pawn or sell and many times they won't bother stealing these items.

Types of Crime

THEFT: Taking of another's property or personal effects without their knowledge or permission.

BURGLARY: Illegally entering a structure, such as a house, trailer, shed or garage.

ROBBERY: Taking property of another by use of fear, force, or a weapon.

VANDALISM: (Criminal Mischief) Damaging another's property with criminal intent.

TRESPASSING: Being on someone else's property without their permission.

PROWLER: Someone who is loitering or engaging in a suspicious activity and has no reasonable explanation for that activity.

Procedure For Reporting To Sheriff's Office

1. Call directly to the Sheriff's Communication Center:
Emergency **911**
Non-Emergency **813-247-8200**
2. Say, "I would like to report a... [**type of incident**]."
3. Give the correct house number, street name and closest major intersection. (May also add color of home or vehicle in driveway.)
4. Give a complete description of suspect and suspect's vehicle, including tag number when possible.
5. Advise the call taker if you observe any weapons displayed.
6. Stay on the line until the call taker advises they have all the information and remember to ask for a call number.

Keys to Communication

The Primary Purpose:

1. Is to disseminate urgent and general information about criminal activities.
2. Watchers should not have to contact more than a few neighbors.

Helpful Hints:

1. Keep a pencil and paper available near the phone at all times.
2. Never confront a suspicious person. Call the Sheriff's Office.
3. Neighbor Watch contacts are not social calls. Be brief and stick to the facts.