

# NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

## 1. What is Neighborhood Watch?

Neighborhood Watch is grass roots **Crime Prevention**.

## 2. What are the functions of Neighborhood Watch?

**First and foremost**, know your neighbors. By knowing when your neighbors normally are coming and going, who is normally around, and the types of activities they're involved in will help prevent crime. This also works in the reverse when you share information about yourself with your neighbor.

**Secondly**, when neighbors know one another, they also get to know each other's families. In a neighborhood where all the neighbors know each other, work together, and are organized, there tends to be a lower crime rate. Everyone knows the neighbors and knows that they're watching out for one another.

**Third**, Neighborhood Watch areas don't just watch for the potential crime to be committed in a neighborhood. They also work together to clean up trash, improve lighting by clearing brush from around street lights and traffic signs, abandoned vehicles and buildings are also noted and reported to the proper authorities. Getting old buildings demolished eliminates a safe haven for drug dealers and their customers as well as the potential danger to curious neighborhood youth.

**These are quality of life issues, but they also affect crime in a neighborhood.**

Letting your neighborhood fall apart and run down sends a message to the criminal element that you don't care and this is just what they want. This is where a criminal wants to do business; a place where nobody cares about what goes on around him or her.

**Criminals don't stand a chance in a self-respecting neighborhood.** What this means is that if people care about their neighbors and the neighborhood they will be out doing things to keep the neighborhood looking good and noticing what people are doing around them. This makes criminals nervous, too many potential witnesses to his illegal trade and it makes your neighborhood a safer place to live, for you and your family.

## 3. Where did Neighborhood Watch come from?

Early in 1970, a concerned citizen named Ellie Wagner became outraged when a close neighborhood friend of hers was raped. She initially called a meeting together to find out what the neighbors could do for the rape victim, but found that many of the neighbors had more on their minds than just helping the victim. They also wanted to

make the neighborhood safer for everyone. They united and began watching out for one another and reporting any suspicious activity to the local police department, Neighborhood Watch.

#### 4. **Neighborhood Watch is Not!**

A bunch a vigilantes or lawless people taking the law into their own hands. Nor do Neighborhood Watch Citizens take the place of their police department in enforcing the law or apprehending criminals. We all work together as a team to prevent crime and improve our neighborhoods. Neighborhood Watch Citizens are our eyes and ears, after all they're right there where things are happening.

There aren't enough police officers to put one on every corner so we have to rely on dedicated neighbors to keep us informed and in turn we share information of interest to the neighborhood at regularly scheduled meetings.

#### 5. **What are the costs of organizing?**

There are no costs involved in forming a **Neighborhood Watch**. Many local schools, churches, and businesses are happy to supply the space for meetings of a worthwhile organization like **Neighborhood Watch** free of charge. Watch area signs and window decals are furnished. Any extra signs or stickers that a particular Watch area may decide on can be obtained at minimal costs to the Watch. There are no dues to pay. You can start and run a Watch with no costs at all other than your time. We all know how valuable that can be, but **time used to improve your neighborhood or your quality of life is time well spent.**

#### 6. **Does Neighborhood Watch really work?**

Police officers do try to prevent crime, but the real crime fighters are the people of the neighborhoods. People that live in an area obviously know that area, unless of course they lock themselves in their homes like prisoners. In some areas people were afraid to report criminal activities and when they decided to form a Watch area they found that they weren't alone. There is strength in numbers. Crimes have been solved; drug houses have been taken down as a direct result of Neighborhood Watch. Not to mention how many crimes were prevented by the diligent efforts of a few caring people.

#### 7. **What do I mean by strength in number?**

Not only is it a lot harder for a criminal to intimidate a group of organized individuals, but this organization can be a very powerful tool for getting things done in a neighborhood. **Politicians don't like to let groups of voters down.** Neighborhood Watch has been in the Quincy area since the late 1980's and is well respected by both the police department and local government. When a Watch group makes a reasonable request of either the police department or any city departments

these request are acted on swiftly and are given a high priority. Being a part of such a group gives you an opportunity and a place to voice your concerns and ideas on improving our community. These groups are a great place to brainstorm problems. There is a wealth of combined knowledge in these groups that can provide answers to problems in our community. Some of what seem to be the most Difficult and insurmountable problems can be easily overcome by some of the simplest means. Many people have found solutions to annoying, reoccurring problems as well through interacting with their neighbors at Watch meetings. The knowledge is definitely there and Neighborhood Watch provides us with an opportunity to tap it.

**8. Do you receive any training from the police department?**

Definitely; The Quincy Police Department not only believes in Neighborhood Watch, but also supports it by providing whatever training sessions or hand out materials each individual Watch may request. These training sessions also serve a dual purpose by providing an additional incentive for members to attend meetings.

**9. Who benefits from Neighborhood Watch?**

In many different ways, we all do. If it's not getting rid of the neighborhood bully or drug dealer on the corner it's just plain living in a clean, safe neighborhood that we can all be proud of!

**10. To start a Watch in the City of Quincy or get more information;**

**Feel free to contact Officer Kelly VanderMaiden with the Quincy Police Department at 228-4485. Kelly will be glad to talk with you and help you to establish a Watch in your neighborhood if one does not already exist.**