



Dear Neighbor:

Thank you for your interest in the Neighborhood Watch Program. Enclosed you will find information to get you started and an overview of what the Neighborhood Watch Program is about. I thank you for taking this first step and look forward to talking with you soon.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely, Jim Knabb

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of the initials "JK" in a stylized, cursive font.

Community Resource Specialist
Desert Hot Springs Police Department
65950 Pierson Blvd.
Desert Hot Springs, CA. 92240
760-329-6411 X340
760-671-6760 Fax



Emergency Dial 911
Non-Emergency Dial 329-2904 Ext.2

WHAT IS NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

It is important to note that Neighborhood Watch is not a vigilante program.

It is neighbors getting to know each other, taking the time to care about each other and working together in a satisfying program of mutual assistance.

It is community members being trained to recognize and report suspicious activities in their neighborhoods.

It is crime prevention strategies such as home security, neighborhood clean-ups, education, Operation Identification and other projects created and implemented by community members.

WHY NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

As you know, there can't be a police officer on every corner, thus community involvement and participation are essential to combat crime.

You and your neighbors are the only ones who really know what is going on in your neighborhood.

By cooperating with each other and the police, people can help fight crime in the community - before it begins.

It works. Throughout the country, dramatic decreases in burglary and related offenses are reported by law enforcement professionals in communities with active Neighborhood Watch programs.



Starting a NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH Group

You've heard about the benefits of NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH participation. You may suspect, know of, or just want to prevent a crime problem in your area. How do you get a program started in your neighborhood?

FIRST....

Form a small planning committee of neighbors to discuss needs, the level of interest, and possible problems. Decide on a date and place for an initial NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH meeting.

NEXT...

Contact your local law enforcement agency. Request the Community Resource Specialist (CRS) come to a meeting of your group in the near future to discuss NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH and help assess your community's problems and needs as well as the level of commitment to formalize a group.

FINALLY.....

Contact as many of your neighbors as possible, asking them:

If they feel at risk of being burglarized or being the victim of other crimes; and

- If they have taken any steps to protect their homes; and
- If they would be willing to attend a meeting to organize a NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH group in your area.

You may be surprised to learn how many of your neighbors' lives have already been touched by crime!

Planning for a Successful First Meeting

Schedule your kickoff meeting in a place convenient to the neighborhood, such as a private home, church community building, school or library. Consider providing refreshments.

Contact the police department 10 to 14 days in advance to inform the CRS of the date and place of the first meeting and to verify that he or she will be able to attend.

Draw a large map of all the streets and households to be covered by your NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH group. Include the houses of those who are not yet participating. You may want to include the names of the residents, number of residents, vehicles and license plates. **Start with a manageable number of homes at first as you can always add other areas in the future.**

Design a flyer or letter of invitation (see sample) and see that one is delivered to every home on your target list. Follow up each invitation with a call or personal visit, reminding neighbors of the meeting time and place. Try to get each household to commit at least one adult member to the meeting so you can estimate potential attendance. All family members are welcome to join NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH as young people can add substantially to the success of the program. Senior citizen participation is also a plus; retired seniors are home during the day and can observe the neighborhood when many other adults are at work.

Conducting the First Meeting

Arrive early at the first meeting to introduce the Community Resource Specialist (CRS) and help everyone become acquainted.

Following the CRS presentation, ask for details concerning any area of the NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH program that may not be clear, such as benefits of membership, training programs, availability of signs and materials, etc.

Set clear, achievable goals for your program. Your CRS can offer insight into what your new group can realistically expect to accomplish.

Start a list of names, addresses, phone numbers, and vehicle descriptions of those who decide to participate in the program. You may also want to include names and ages of their children, work and school schedules, and whether or not their homes have burglar alarms or timers on lights. While some of this information may seem somewhat personal to neighbors who have just met, it is essential that they make a commitment to the NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH effort at this state and agree to work together.

Choose high visibility NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH signs and decals to identify participating homes and streets (the cost can be divided among households). Your CRS will direct you in ordering materials when a good percentage of the residents have agreed to participate and ample training has been conducted.

Discuss program coordination and explain the responsibilities of the NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH Coordinator and the Block Captains. Proceed with nominations and election of persons (or designation of volunteers) to fill these positions.

Ask the CRS to suggest topics and speakers for future meetings. Determine time and place of next meeting. The members of the group should determine how often they will meet, but to keep the momentum going during the start-up phase, it is best to schedule monthly meetings. Some of the most successful NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH programs require members' attendance during the first three to five meetings. These meetings are essential in organizing and training the participants, supplying them with crime prevention procedures, and reinforcing the NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH concepts and commitment. These meetings are also instrumental in establishing a bond between group members.

Following Meeting

After the meeting plan to distribute literature to residents in the community who were unable to attend as this may encourage them to be at the next meeting.

Program Coordination

The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator

The Coordinator's job is crucial to the success of your program. This may be just the right job for a retiree or other individual who has extra time at home. This person's responsibilities may include:

- Expanding the program and maintaining a current list of participants and neighborhood residents, including names, addresses, home and work telephone numbers, and vehicle descriptions; and
- Acting as liaison between NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH members, law enforcement officers, civic groups, and block captains; and
- Arranging neighborhood crime prevention training programs; and
- Obtaining and distributing crime prevention materials, such as stickers and signs; and
- Involving others to develop specific crime prevention projects; and
- Encouraging participation in "Operation Identification," a nationwide program in which personal property is marked legibly with a unique identifying number to permit positive identification if valuables are lost or stolen.

The Block Captain

Block Captains should be designated for every 10-15 houses, and they should be directly involved with their immediate neighbors. The Block Captain's responsibilities may include:

- Acting as liaison between block residents and the Coordinator; and
- Establishing a "telephone tree" by compiling and distributing a current list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of block participants; and
- Visiting and inviting new residents to join NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH; notifying them of meetings and training sessions; and
- Establishing the "Operation Identification" program; and
- Contacting each neighbor as often as possible to discuss possible crime problems, needs for assistance, and suggestions for program improvement.

Tips on Getting People Involved

Three days prior to the meeting, call participants and remind them of the importance of appearing. Utilize Block Captains as much as possible. As Coordinator you must check the progress of each Block Captain. One-person shows ultimately move on, leaving no one behind to take over. Don't be afraid to encourage people. Be aggressive. You are selling a product-the security of one's neighborhood, home, family, and self, which is the basic need for everyone. Hold them accountable for their attendance. Don't take "No" for an answer. Ask what nights they could attend a future meeting. Don't let people take the attitude that they can sit back and let their neighborhood do it. Their participation is necessary for the Neighborhood Watch program to be a success. Seek out and use the resources of your group. For example, who can copy handouts at work, or does anyone have a home computer, which can manage a data base or make a newsletter. Expect to suffer some setbacks, but continue to push forward and show your concern and enthusiasm. It will be contagious.

Sample Invitation



Greetings Neighbor!

You are invited to a **Neighborhood Watch Meeting.**

Come and meet your neighbors, and learn about how we can make our neighborhood a better place. Please send at least one adult, however all are welcome. Refreshments will be provided and a representative from Desert Hot Springs Police Department will be present to help us assess our needs and present an overview of the program.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Neighborhood Watch...What is it?

Neighborhood Watch is the cornerstone of all crime prevention programs. It enlists the active participation of citizens in cooperation with law enforcement to reduce burglaries and other neighborhood crimes. Its primary purpose is the protection of property -- **yours and your neighbors**. It is also neighbors getting to know each other, taking the time to care about each other and working together in a plan of mutual assistance.

Neighborhood Watch is a proven and effective means to substantially reduce not only the incidence of residential burglaries in a specified geographical area, but the incidence of other crimes.

Thank you for your help and support. I know it will be a fun and successful event and look forward to meeting with you.

Please call with any questions you may have and R.S.V.P at: _____

Best regards,