

The Business Watch program is modeled after the highly successful, Neighborhood Watch program. In concept, Business Watch is about creating partnerships between business and law enforcement to deter and reduce crimes afflicting businesses. The Business Watch philosophy is straightforward—*Take control of what happens in your business community and lessen your chances of becoming a victim.*

Tips for Success

- Be alert to unusual or suspicious behavior in your business community
- Write down descriptions of the person(s) and license plate number(s) of any vehicle(s) involved in criminal activity.
- Start an email/phone tree of neighboring businesses to quickly pass along pertinent information.
- Tell a neighboring business when you're closed and ask them to "keep an eye out."
- Hold regular meetings to help businesses get to know one another and to collectively decide upon program strategies and activities.
- Consider linking with an existing organization, such the Chamber of Commerce.
- Gain support from law enforcement. This is critical to a Watch Group's credibility. The S.B.S.O. is a major source of information on local crime patterns, business security, other crime prevention education, and crime reporting.
- Get the information out quickly. Share all kinds of news—squash rumors.
- Gather the facts about crime in your business area.
- Remember, you are the "eyes" and "ears" in your business community. Report what you see and hear to the S.B.S.O.



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Informational Web Site:
www.usaonwatch.org

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BUSINESS WATCH



Teaching businesses how NOT to become a target
of crime...

In fact, it's about neighbors helping neighbors.
And when neighboring merchants get together and
cooperate with law enforcement, crime CAN be
reduced.

BUSINESS WATCH

What is It? Like the nationally successful Neighborhood Watch, Business Watch is a crime prevention program which enlists the active participation of businesses, in cooperation with law enforcement, to prevent and reduce crime to their businesses.

It involves neighboring businesses getting to know each other and working together in a program of mutual assistance and trained to recognize and report suspicious activities in their business neighborhoods. The program also involves the implementation of crime prevention techniques such as business security.

Who Can Participate? Any and all businesses who care and are concerned about the security and safety of their business and crime prevention as a whole!

Why Business Watch? Nationwide, millions of crimes are committed every year, and the number is still growing. There cannot be a law enforcement officer on every corner, so citizen involvement is essential to combat crime.

By cooperating with each other and law enforcement, people can help fight crime in their community before it begins.

How do I get Involved?

FIRST—Contact a few (it only takes a few!) neighboring businesses and discuss the needs to start a Watch program.

NEXT—contact the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office and explain that you are interested in joining or starting a Business Watch group.

REMEMBER—Deputy Sheriff's cannot be everywhere at once—but you and your neighboring business can put that business "know how" to work. It's simple: Use your eyes and ears and then your telephone/ computer. If you spot something suspicious, call law enforcement immediately.

Starting a Business Watch. Nationally, it has been seen that Business Watch is one of the most effective and least costly answers to crime. Watch groups are a foundation of community crime prevention; they can be a stepping stone to community revitalization.

Phase One: Getting Started Meetings, Block Captains, and Maps

1. Form a small planning committee of business owners/ managers to discuss needs, the level of interest, possible challenges, and the "Watch" concept.
2. Contact the S.B.S.O. or local crime prevention organization, and invite a deputy specializing in Business Watch to attend your meeting.
3. Publicize your meeting at least one week in advance with business to business fliers, and follow up with phone calls/ emails the day before. Select a meeting place that is accessible to people with disabilities.

4. Hold an initial meeting to gauge businesses interest, establish the purpose of the program, and begin to identify issues that need to be addressed.
5. Stress that a watch group is an association of businesses who look out for one another's employees and property, alert law enforcement to any suspicious activities or crime in progress, and work together to make their business community a safer and better place to live.

Phase Two: When businesses decides to adopt the Watch idea:

1. Elect a chairperson.
2. Ask for Business District Captain (BDC) volunteers who are members in their area, keeping up-to-date information on businesses and making special efforts to involve all employees. The BDC also can serve as liaisons between businesses and the Sheriff's Office and communicate information about meetings and crime incidents to all area businesses.
3. Establish a regular means of communicating with Watch members; e.g., newsletter, telephone tree, e-mail, fax, etc.
4. Prepare a neighborhood map showing business names, addresses, and phone numbers of participants and distribute map to members. The BDC will keep this map up to date, contacting new businesses to the area, and rechecking occasionally with ongoing participants. With guidance from the Sheriff's Office, the Watch trains its members in business security techniques, observation skills, employee protection and crime reporting. Businesses also learn about the types of crime that affect the area.