

If you are ready to post Neighborhood Watch signs, check with law enforcement to see if they have eligibility requirements such as the number of houses that participate in the program. Law enforcement may also be able to provide your program with signs. If not, they can probably tell you where you can order them. Organizers and block captains must emphasize that watch groups are not vigilantes and do not assume the role of law enforcement. They only ask neighbors to be alert, observant, and caring—and to report immediately suspicious activity or crimes to law enforcement.

Tips for Success

- Hold regular meetings to help residents get to know one another and to collectively decide upon program strategies and activities.
- Consider linking with an existing organization, such as a citizens' association, community development office, tenants' association, or housing authority.
- Canvas door-to-door to recruit members.
- Involve everyone—young and old, single and married, renter and homeowner.
- Gain support from law enforcement. This is critical to a watch group's credibility. These agencies are the major source of information on local crime patterns, home 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 neighborhood. Check law enforcement reports, conduct victimization surveys, and learn residents' perceptions about crime. Often residents' opinions are not supported by facts, and accurate information can reduce fear of crime.



BILL BROWN
Sheriff-Coroner

Informational Web Site:
www.usaonwatch.org

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Buellton (805) 686-8150
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Isla Vista (805) 681-4148
Lompoc (805) 737-7737
New Cuyama (661) 766-2310
Santa Maria (805) 934-6150
Solvang/Santa Ynez (805) 686-5000
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NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH



Want to know the best crime
prevention tool ever invented?
A Good Neighbor!

In fact, neighbors working together with law
enforcement are one of the best crime
fighting teams around.

We call it ... Neighborhood Watch

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

What is It? Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program which enlists the active participation of residents, in cooperation with law enforcement, to reduce crime in their communities.

It involves neighbors getting to know each other and working together in a program of mutual assistance, residents trained to recognize and report suspicious activities in their neighborhoods, and implementation of crime prevention techniques such as home security, Operation Identification, etc.

Whether you call it NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH, Home Alert, Citizen Crime Watch, or Block Watch, the idea is the same: **Neighbors looking out for one another!**

Who Can Participate? City residents, country residents, suburban residents, apartment dwellers, mobile home residents, young people, senior citizens, men, women, families, couples, singles...in summary...YOU!

Why Neighborhood 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 your local law enforcement agency and explain that you are interested in joining or starting a Neighborhood Watch group.

NEXT—visit www.usaonwatch.org to register and download tools to help your organization learn how to prevent crime.

REMEMBER—law enforcement officers cannot be everywhere at once—but you and your neighbors can put that neighborhood “know how” to work. It’s simple: Use your eyes and ears and then your telephone. If you spot something suspicious, call law enforcement immediately.

Starting a Neighborhood Watch. Neighborhood Watch, Block Watch, Town Watch, Apartment Watch, Crime Watch, no matter what it’s called, 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 neighbors to discuss needs, the level of interest, possible challenges, and the “Watch” concept.
2. Contact your local law enforcement agency or local crime prevention organization, and invite a law enforcement officer to attend your meeting.
3. Publicize your meeting at least one week in advance with door-to-door fliers, and follow up with phone calls the day before. Select a meeting place that is accessible to people with disabilities.

4. Hold an initial meeting to gauge neighbors’ 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 neighbors who look out for one another’s families and property, alert law enforcement to any suspicious activities or crime in progress, and work together to make their community a safer and better place to live.

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

1. Elect a chairperson.
2. Ask for block captain volunteers who are members on their block, keeping up-to-date information on residents and making special efforts to involve the elderly, working parents, and young people. Block captains also can serve as liaisons between the neighborhood and local law enforcement and communicate information about meetings and crime incidents to all residents.
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 names, addresses, and phone numbers of participating households, and distribute to members. Block captains keep this map up to date, contacting newcomers to the neighborhood, and rechecking occasionally with ongoing participants. With guidance from a law enforcement agency, the Watch trains its members in home security techniques, observation skills, and crime reporting. Residents also learn about the types of crime that affect the area.