



Block Watch Manual



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What is A Neighborhood Block Watch

A Neighborhood Block Watch is a crime prevention program which brings together active participation between citizens, local law enforcement, city officials, and city departments to reduce crime in our neighborhoods.

It Involves

Neighbors getting to know each other and working together in a program of mutual interests and assistance.

Citizens being trained to recognize and report suspicious activities in their neighborhoods; and implementation of crime prevention techniques, such as home, garage and personal safety and security. Operation Identification, Community Emergency Response Team and much more.

Neighbors Looking out for each other.

Who can Participate

Renters, home owners, landlords, local business, men, women, young people, elderly people, children, people in single family homes, people in apartment buildings, etc.

*Everyone living in the city of Milwaukee- **this means you!***

Why have a Neighborhood Block Watch

Over 40 million crimes are committed every year and the number continues to grow.

There cannot be a police officer on every corner all the time, so citizen involvement is crucial to combat quality of life issues and other social crisis.

No one can know what is really going on in your neighborhood like you and your neighbors.

With cooperation by you, your neighbors and the police, crime can be fought in your neighborhood in the most effective way- **before it begins!**

Benefits of a Block Watch

An organized Block Watch has a presence that make politicians and the Police Department more accountable.

Organized Block Watches have greater access to reported criminal activity and more readily gain shared information of crime prevention techniques such as home security.

Develops a greater sense of security.

Neighbors learn to recognize and support each other.

Neighbors form bonds of friendship that last.

Neighbors are better trained to recognize and report crime accurately.

Block Watches have proven to reduce property crimes and quality of life issues in their area.

A Single Block Watch can be the impetus to change the environment of a neighborhood and create a community.

How to build a Block Watch

1. **Contact your District Liaison Officer and Your District Representative from the City Wide Block Watch Council**
 - A. Both people can help you organize the initial meeting.
 - B. They both will have crime prevention materials they can bring to your meeting.
 - C. The Liaison Officer can inform your Block Watch about the crime currently happening in your neighborhood.

2. **Talk to your Neighbors...**
 - A. Talk to your neighbors and explain the importance of a Block Watch and ask if they would be interested.
 - B. Ask their opinion about what bothers them the most in your neighborhood.(drug houses, speeders, litter, nuisance properties, absentee landlords, robbery, etc.)
 - C. Ask them what would be a convenient time/day of the week to attend a meeting.
 - D. Tell them that we can also have neighborhood clean ups and block parties.
 - E. Remind them that a Block Watch is to be the extra eyes and ears of the Police Department. **Citizens are never to put themselves in danger.**

3. **Arrange the “Ice Breaker” first meeting...**
 - A. Welcome everyone and ask them to wear name tags.
 - B. Opening remarks from yourself and /or coordinator.
 - C. Have everyone introduce themselves and state their address.
 - D. Neighbors will learn basic education about the police department, suspicious activities, who patrols area, etc.
 - E. Explain the purpose of the meeting. *This allows for a discussion on what is going on from both the resident and police view points.*
 - F. Block location map is explained and developed.
 - G. Ask for volunteers to host meetings, be a block parent , be a co-captain, or make phone calls.
 - H. Discuss ways to encourage participation, i.e. Neighborhood clean up, block parties.
 - I. Schedule next meeting and length of time between meetings.
 - J. Thank everyone for coming and encourage them to talk to other neighbors and invite them to the next meeting.

Responsibilities of a Block Watch Captain

A Block Watch Captain is the spokesperson for the group and the liaison between the CLO (Community Liaison Officer) of your Police District and your Block Watch.

You will need to keep an updated map (this form is supplied by the MPD) of the Block Watch Area. This will have the names, addresses, and phone numbers of your members. A copy of this map is also given to your CLO.

Organize the Block Watch meeting by making arrangements to secure a location for the meeting and prepare an agenda that can be distributed to your members. (distribute information via mail, email, and phone.)

A valuable suggestion is to incorporate a guest speaker from one of the city's departments. *i.e. Department of Sanitation, Fire Department, Department of Neighborhood Services, etc.*

You will have to pass on any valuable information received from your Alderman, Police Department and other City Departments. Having an email loop within your neighborhood will assist in expediting the information.

Encourage all neighbors to be alert to the activity in the neighborhood and to report odd and suspicious behavior to the Police. It is also important that they then let you, the captain, know what was reported.

How to maintain a Block Watch

The key to keeping a Block Watch active is maintaining people's interest over time. Your goal is to create the *small town feel*, where people care for and about each other. To this end you must see this organization not just as a safety meeting but as a place to build long term relationships and encourage a stronger community. Block Watches can be a lot more than just a meeting. Think of having a neighborhood clean up, a Halloween Party, a Summer Block Party, or sponsor a National Night Out event. Active Block Watches can have a direct effect on a city by partnering with their local police district, elected officials and city departments on public issues. Large or small; it is only by working together that you can accomplish meaningful change.

Listed below are activities your fellow Block Watches have utilized!

Invite other speakers such as your alderman and county supervisors.

Develop an email contact list.

Create a neighborhood newsletter.

Start a Safe House in the neighborhood.

Solicit local businesses for financial support.

Create a community garden.

Service exchange with neighbors, i.e. Babysitting, yard work, picking up your mail when you are out of town.

Develop a schedule to check on your elderly and handicapped.

Create opportunities for the youth of your neighborhood.

Create an out of town watch.

Helpful Hints for Members of your Block Watch

THE BASICS

How to contact the police - either 911 for an emergency or 933-4444 for a non-emergency

What is an emergency - something that needs immediate police intervention - anything involving personal safety or any criminal act in progress

What is suspicious - anything out of place in the neighborhood - people you aren't familiar with or cars parked with occupants

OTHER RESOURCES

If you would like additional information these internet web sites are very helpful:

www.citizencorps.gov - founded after 911

www.cert.org - community emergency resource training – training provided in Milwaukee

www.policevolunteers.org - ideas for organizing and keeping volunteers within police departments

www.nationaltownwatch.org - national site for Night Out events

www.nationalsheriffsassociation.org - premier law enforcement agency for block watches and Boris the burglar logo

Involve local businesses in your efforts. They have a stake in the neighborhood as well.