

Neighborhood Watch

A Community Empowerment Program

The Manual

E-mail address:

blockwatch@co.clallam.wa.us



Emergency Management

Community Policing Team

Neighborhood Watch is a simple but highly effective public safety program that can best be defined as neighbors watching out for neighbors, and “Building and Strengthening Disaster Readiness among Neighbors”. The New Neighborhood Watch creates a neighborhood atmosphere where neighbors know each other and feel comfortable relying on each other for help.

**The three key elements of Neighborhood Watch are:
Organization, Education, and Communication.**

Organization of the neighborhood is the foundation that facilitates the feeling of community and ownership, paving the way for education and communication within. We use the Washington State “Map Your Neighborhood” program to provide a proven organizational framework for “*Building and Strengthening Disaster Readiness Among Neighbors*” dramatically improving your Neighborhoods ability to survive in a disaster.

This new approach can save lives, and provides the training to become extremely effective in addressing any neighborhood public safety situation.

The NEW Community

Close Collaboration with all Federal, State, County, and other Community support Agencies, Programs and Groups, provides a “safety net” of support and information access for all County Citizens resulting in a crime resistant, safer, stronger, more prepared, and more resilient Community.

Clallam County Sheriff’s Office

223 E. Fourth St. – Suite 12
Port Angeles, WA 98362-3015
360-417-2376

*A Special Letter of Appreciation
For those participating in Clallam County's
Neighborhood Watch Program*

Dear Participant:

On behalf of the Clallam County Sheriff's Office, I want to thank you for stepping forward and taking on the responsibility of becoming part of the solution to addressing the need for better Community Preparedness and increased public Safety.

The Neighborhood Watch program is the foundation to our Sheriff's Office Community Policing Program and your active involvement is critical to its success.

This link between the neighborhood and the Sheriff's Office is basic to our success in increasing Public Safety, improving Emergency Preparedness, providing better access to public assistance information overall, and in the support of Homeland Security protecting against terrorism.

We will make every attempt to give you the information and support you need, and we ask that when incidents and/or suspicious activity occurs within your neighborhood, that you contact us as soon as possible so that we can deal with the issue.

We look forward to working with you. We are confident that your Neighborhood Watch participation will provide you with a new, and even greater, sense of Community.

Should any questions arise or you have any concerns, please feel free to contact me at the Sheriff's Office.

Sincerely yours,

Sheriff W. L. Benedict

What Is Community Oriented Policing (COP)?

A Partnership – (A team approach)

Implementing COP has a positive impact on enhancing public safety, reducing neighborhood crime, and helping to reduce the fear of crime while enhancing the quality of life in the community. It accomplishes these things by combining the efforts and resources of law enforcement, local government and community members into a cohesive “team” effort. (Together, Everyone Achieves More!)

The Clallam County Sheriff’s Office believes in the proposition that we are a part of our community and our community is a part of us. This partnership leads to a safe and healthier community and is accomplished through education, positive interaction and professional law enforcement.

Crime Prevention is best accomplished through an active partnership between the community as a whole and law enforcement working together, keeping each other informed as to mutual concerns, objectives, goals, and the progress towards achieving them.

What Makes Community Policing (COP) Different?

COP is a collaborative effort between the law enforcement, other government agencies and the community, that identifies problems of public safety, crime and disorder and involves all elements of the community in the search for solutions to these problems. It is founded on close, mutually beneficial ties between government, law enforcement and the community members they represent.

A Practical Approach to Problems –

COP seeks the input and talents of all members of the community in the effort to safeguard our neighborhoods and is being advocated by leaders at the highest levels of government.

It has been proven that COP can play a primary role in directing the way government services are provided at the community level. It minimizes duplication of efforts, and maximizes duplication of successes. Utilizing the Neighborhood Watch Program will ensure that each unique neighborhood is provided the “personal focus” that will achieve results geared specifically to them, and that we can track our impact.

More Effective Ways to Solve Ongoing Problems –

A spin off of COP is role clarification of what various public agencies have been designed and funded to do, their legitimate function, and what belongs to others.

Most important, it involves everyone in the struggle with problem definitions and possible solutions. COP places the public service agency in the business of influencing, developing and implementing policy, as defined by the needs of, and input from, their constituency.

Renewed Emphasis on Public Safety Crime Prevention issues –

This would improve the quality of life in neighborhoods. Doing this however, requires an intimate knowledge of the community, which can only be achieved with an ongoing dialog with those who actually live there so that they come to law enforcement for counsel and help before a serious problem arises, not after the fact.

Resist Crime, or become a Target for Burglars -

It's Up to You! Chances are good that a home burglarized today is located in a neighborhood where one vital prevention tool is missing: An active NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH group.

This community-based organization of citizens working together with law enforcement has become the key to preventing burglary and crime nationwide.

Since its establishment in 1972, NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH has pulled together thousands of local residential crime prevention programs in which individual citizens work to:

- 1) Make their own homes and families less inviting targets for crime, and
- 2) Cooperate with law enforcement through block and neighborhood groups to control crime throughout the community.

Crime Prevention is a Joint Responsibility:

The prevention of crime – particularly crime involving residential neighborhoods – is a responsibility that must be shared equally by law enforcement and private citizens.

The fact is, the impact on crime prevention by law enforcement alone is minimal when compared with the power of private citizens working with law enforcement and with each other.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH is based on this concept of cooperation, and nationwide statistics prove that it works.

When citizens take positive steps to secure their own property and neighbors learn how to report suspicious activity occurring around their homes, burglary and related offenses decrease dramatically.

Neighborhood Watch Areas Show Significant Crime Drop

Throughout the United States, dramatic decreases in burglary and related offenses are being reported by law enforcement agencies throughout the country with active NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH programs.

Statistics show that when a concerned citizenry does its part, the possibilities are endless...and the results positive. NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH is now the most successful anticrime initiative in the country and the most effective and least expensive tool for restoring the safe, pleasant environment we all want for our families! This is homeowners' insurance that works!

Taking Positive Steps

Victim responses to a home burglary generally follow a similar pattern:

Initial fear and anger give way to an obsession with seeing the intruder caught and making sure the home is never targeted by criminals again.

In the past, many frightened victims sat back and simply hoped their homes would be spared a repeat performance. They, as well as their neighbors, worried and wondered about what they could do to protect their property.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH, however, has organized thousands of homeowners who want to take intelligently planned action to decrease crime statistics in their areas have discovered that they have a ready, willing and highly qualified partner in their local law enforcement agency.

These homeowners now know that their agency would rather work with them to prevent crime than spend time and manpower investigating it after it occurs.

Starting a Neighborhood Watch Program

You've heard about some of the benefits of Neighborhood Watch participation. You may suspect, or know, that there is a crime problem in your area. How do you get a new program started in your own neighborhood?

It's easier than you think!

Our Department is committed to the concept of Community Oriented Policing and we will work with you to make the process of establishing a Neighborhood Watch Group an easy Step by step process.

Even before a group starts up, this manual contains valuable information on Crime Prevention you can use today to begin living in a safer environment.

Community Oriented Policing stresses the role every citizen can play in this fight against lawlessness.

The program is designed to bring into every home, information and steps that will reduce the threat to the property and person of each citizen.

What Can You Do?

Persons wishing to become a part of the Neighborhood Watch Program or to become Block Captains should contact the Community Oriented Policing Unit or the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator at the Clallam County Sheriffs Department phone: 417-2376

The Sheriffs Neighborhood Watch and Crime Prevention Office will schedule training sessions and provide materials.

We will provide professional instruction, so that each participant will know what to look for, how to describe what he or she sees, how to properly report any incident to law enforcement and how to organize neighborhood interest.

In summary, You will learn what can be done to prevent crime in your neighborhood.

Use High visibility Neighborhood Watch signs and decals to identify participating homes and streets (the cost can be divided among households).

The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator will assist you in ordering any materials, but he/she may want to postpone this option until a good percentage of the residents have agreed to participate and ample training has been conducted.

The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator will explain the responsibilities of their position and that of the block captain. Proceed with nominations and election of persons (or designation of volunteers) to fill these positions.

Ask the officer to suggest topics and speakers for future meetings. Inquire about security inspections for participants' homes (our department offers this service).

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 regular meetings.

Some of the most successful Watch programs require members' attendance during the first three to five meetings.

These meetings are essential in organizing and training participants, and supplying the latest crime prevention procedures, while reinforcing the Neighborhood Watch concepts and commitment.

These meetings are also instrumental in establishing a stronger bond between group members.

You Will Need:

1. A group of people committed to starting a Neighborhood Watch (We can assist in generating group interest)
2. Someone to initiate the program. (We will assist)
3. A list of what issues you initially feel need to be addressed in your community. (We can help identify)
4. A means of communicating with the residents, e-mail, fliers, telephone trees/lists.
5. Publicity for the initial meeting.
6. A meeting agenda to keep things moving and on track.
7. A place to meet-resident's house or apartment, community center, school, library.
8. A crime prevention officer to discuss the crime issues in the neighborhood and to help train members. (We provide)
9. A map of the community with spaces for names, addresses, and phone numbers of all households. (We provide)
10. A sign-up sheet for those interested in becoming block or building captains. (We provide)
11. Brochures or other materials on topics of interest to the residents. (We provide)
12. NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH signs to be posted around the community. (We will assist in obtaining)
13. Facts about crime in your neighborhood. Perceptions are sometimes not supported by facts, and accurate information can reduce fear of crime.)

Ideas To Build Partnerships

1. The Sheriffs' office is critical to a Watch group's success. Our agency is the major source of information on local crime patterns, crime prevention education, and crime reporting.
2. Local businesses and organizations can help provide fliers and a newsletter, offer meeting places, and distribute crime prevention information.
3. Libraries can provide research materials, videos, computers, and meeting space.
4. Media can aid Neighborhood Watches by publicizing recruitment drives.
5. Teenagers are valuable resources. They can be an integral part of a watch plan including rollerblading to scout the neighborhood
6. Places of worship can provide meeting space and a good source of volunteers.

Options To Add Excitement

7. Mix business with pleasure allow attendees time to socialize.
8. Seek out neighborhood go-getters, civic leaders and elected officials to be your advocates and mentors.
9. Work with such organizations as citizens' association, tenants' association, or housing authorities.
10. Provide speakers on topics of community interest.
11. Link crime prevention into activities promoted by other groups: child protection, anti-vandalism projects, community service, arson prevention, and recreation activities for young people.

What do Block Captains Do?

Block Captains Should

1. Block Captains shall act as liaison between the Sheriff's Dept. and their assigned respective neighborhood.
2. Be responsible for organizing block meetings in their own neighborhood; these meetings may be held in the Block Captains home or in the home of any watch member.
3. Distribute information to Watch members in their neighborhood. (Crime Warning Bulletins, and newsletters) to those who may not be have e-mail notification abilities.
4. Attend area general meetings with a watch member if possible – or send watch members whenever possible.
5. Have knowledge of common Sheriff's Department procedures
6. Know which section of the Sheriff's Department to contact for a particular problem, e.g., Traffic, Vehicle Abatement, Supervisor, etc.
7. Solicit members to attend meetings. Keep in contact, at reasonable intervals with their watch members so they are aware of any neighborhood problems, (such as vandalism, and/or burglaries) and therefore can alert the Sheriff's Department and other watch members.
8. Bring information back from General Meetings to improve communication with neighbors.
9. Have updated information such as: Neighborhood Watch signs and telephone stickers; and other material, for all neighbors.
10. Report suspicious circumstances to Sheriff's Department; monitor crime trends and problem areas in your neighborhood.
11. Encourage neighbors to get to know one another and exchange information. Example: Phone numbers, e-mail addresses, addresses, vehicle information, who has children and usual working hours of neighbors, etc.
12. Inform the Deputy/Crime Prevention Officer if their phone number should change, or if planning to move from the area.
13. Inform neighbors of what a Block Captain can do and cannot do.
14. Continue to learn what the Block Captain's Association can do to reduce crime.

Block Captains Should Not

1. Use their position in an attempt to receive any form of special consideration from any employee of the Sheriff's Department.
2. Act in the capacity of a law enforcement officer in any way.
3. Attempt to handle a situation, which might in any way be hazardous to themselves or others.

**We provide training
and support for all
Block Captains**

Recognizing Suspicious Activity

BE ALERT. Anything that seems slightly “out of place” or is occurring at an unusual time of day could be criminal activity.

Do not Attempt To Apprehend a Person Committing a Crime, or Investigate a Suspicious Activity

Call the Sheriff’s Department immediately, and do not worry about being embarrassed if your suspicions prove to be unfounded.

Law enforcement officers would rather investigate, than be called when it is too late.

The following incidents MAY indicate possible criminal activity and should be reported:

- Continuous repair operations at a non-business location (stolen property being altered);
- Open or broken doors and windows at a closed business or unoccupied residence (burglary or vandalism);
- Unusual noises, such as gunshots, screaming, or dogs barking continuously (burglary, assault, or rape);
- Sound of breaking glass (burglary or vandalism);
- A person exhibiting unusual mental or physical symptoms, (person may be injured, under the influence of drugs, or otherwise needing medical attention).

Time and accuracy are critical in reporting crime or suspicious events. Use your law enforcement agency’s emergency number to report life-threatening incidents or a crime in progress, and use the non-emergency number for crimes that have already occurred. Your call could save a life, prevent an injury, or stop a crime

Suspicious Persons

Legitimate door-to-door sales and repair people appear in residential areas frequently.

Occasionally, however, criminals disguise themselves as these workers; therefore, it is important to be alert to the activities of all nonresidents.

Law enforcement officials should be called to investigate persons in the following circumstances, who may be suspects in the crimes indicated:

- Going door to door in a residential area, especially if one or more goes to rear of residence or loiters in front of an unoccupied house or closed business (burglary);
- Forcing entrance or entering an unoccupied house (burglary, theft, or trespassing);
- Running, especially if carrying something of value or carrying unwrapped property at an unusual hour (fleeing the scene of a crime);
- Heavy traffic to and from a residence, particularly if it occurs on a daily basis (drug dealing, vice or fence operation);
- Screaming (rape or assault);
- Loitering around or peering into cars, especially in parking lots or on streets (car theft);
- Loitering around schools, parks or secluded areas (sex offender);
- Offering items for sale at a very low price (trying to sell stolen property)
- Loitering or driving through a neighborhood several times, or appearing as a delivery person with a wrong address (burglary).

Suspicious Vehicles

Vehicles in the following situations MAY be involved in crimes and should be reported to authorities:

- Slow moving, without lights, following aimless course in any location, including residential streets, schools, and playgrounds (burglar, drug pusher, or sex offender);
- Parked or occupied, containing one or more persons, especially at an unusual hour (lookouts for a burglary or robbery);
- Parked by a business or unoccupied residence, being loaded with valuables (burglary or theft);
- Abandoned and or damaged in your neighborhood (stolen car);
- Containing weapons (criminal activity);
- Someone, especially a female or juvenile, being forced into a vehicle (kidnapping, assault, or attempted rape);
- Business transactions taking place in it, especially around schools or parks (sale of stolen items or drugs);
- Persons detaching mechanical parts or accessories from it (theft or vandalism);
- Objects being thrown from it (disposing of contraband).

Reporting of Events, Vehicles

Practicing to develop skill in providing quick, accurate descriptions is an excellent NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH meeting activity.

In attempting to describe events, vehicles, or persons, write down the details of what you have observed while they are still fresh in your mind, so your descriptions to law enforcement officials will be as accurate as possible.

Describing Events

When describing events, write down:

- What happened;
- When it happened;
- Where it occurred (note the nearest cross street, home address, or landmark in relationship to the event);
- Whether injuries are involved (Be prepared to report visible or suspected personal injury. Be as specific as possible - this could save a life!);
- Whether weapons are involved (this information, whether observed or suspected, is vital to responding officers).

Describing Vehicles

When describing vehicles, write down:

- Vehicle license number and state make and type of vehicle, color, and approximate age;
- Special designs or unusual features, such as vinyl top, mag wheels, any body damage, pinstripes, etc.;
- Direction of travel.

Describing Persons

In preparing descriptions of persons, it is important to write down the following:

- Sex;
- Race;
- Age;
- Height (estimated from eye contact level measured against your height);
- Weight;
- Hair (color and length);
- Hat;
- Facial Hair (beard/mustache);
- Shirt/tie;
- Coat/jacket;
- Trousers;
- Shoes;
- Any peculiar or distinguishable mannerisms, physical disabilities, disfigurements, scars or tattoos;
- Voice characteristics;
- Direction of movement.

Home Security Inspections

Your crime prevention officer can provide WATCH members with home security inspection checklists so that homeowners or the block captain can conduct preliminary surveys.

It might be wise to have homeowners sign a disclaimer relative to these inspections if done by other than the homeowner.

**To make a difference –
Be the difference**

Home Security Measures

Remember that the key factor in most crimes is opportunity:

**If They Can't Get at It,
THEY CAN'T TAKE IT!**

Follow a regular plan of home security to deter potential burglars or other intruders.

- Use a timer or photoelectric cell that automatically turns a living room light on at dusk, particularly if you are going to be away at that time;
- Leave a radio on with the volume turned low when leaving home, even for short periods;
- Always close and lock garage doors;
- Secure automatic garage door transmitter within your car;
- Secure all obvious (and not so obvious) points of entry to your home. Pretend you are the burglar and stand outside your home and plan how you would get in; then install secure locks on all doors and windows;
- Lock up all ladders, ropes, or tools that could help a burglar gain entry;
- Keep all shrubbery trimmed near your doors and windows- don't provide concealment or climbing platforms for the burglar;
- Illuminate entrances, preferably with vandal-proof fixtures;
- Keep your grass cut, your leaves raked, etc., to indicate a well cared for and occupied home;
- Empty your mailbox or arrange to have it emptied as soon as mail is delivered;
- Install new locks when moving into an apartment or previously owned home;

- Keep extra keys out of sight and in a safe place; never hide a key outside--most hiding places are obvious to burglars;
- Avoid displaying valuable items near windows with open drapes or shades;
- Never leave a note on the door explaining why you are not at home;
- Never leave doors or windows unlocked when leaving home;
- Display only your last name on your nameplate or mailbox;
- Start a "buddy system" with you neighbors in order to watch each other's homes; watch for "movers" or "repair people" at a house where no one is home.

When Planning a Trip

- Use "call forwarding" if available in your area. (Call forwarding can give callers the impression that residents are home when they are actually away, by transferring your incoming calls to another telephone number.)

When Leaving for Several Days

- Don't cancel your paper or mail deliveries; ask that your neighbor pick them up every day;
- Have the drapes periodically opened and closed; and have different lights turned on and off so the house appears occupied;
- Store all your valuables;
- Leave a key with a friend or neighbor; ask that the house be checked periodically;
- Tell police when you are leaving and when you plan to return; they will check on your house periodically;

- Consider asking friends or relatives to live in your home while you are away;
- Leave a car in the driveway, or ask neighbors to park in it;
- Ask your neighbor to put some trash in your trashcans.

Despite precautions, if intruders are determined to enter and burglarize your home, they can probably do so. However, burglars usually seek the easiest target and you can take steps to make your house less vulnerable.

Telephone Security

- Never give personal information (name, age, address, etc.) to a stranger on the telephone;
- Never let a stranger on the telephone know when you will or will not be home;
- Never let a stranger on the telephone know you are home alone; instruct babysitters never to tell anyone who calls that they are home alone with children;
- Teach children old enough to be left alone never to tell a stranger who telephones that parents are gone. Teach them to say, "My mom can't come to the phone now. May I take a message?"
- Credit card/Social Security #, etc. Do not give out a credit card or social security number to someone whom you do not know or whom you did not call.

Making it Tough for the Burglar

Alert program participants in communities across the country are making things hard for potential criminals by:

- Arranging for home security inspections by crime prevention officers to identify security vulnerabilities;
- Upgrading locks, security hardware, and lighting; and installing alarms when security inspections show particular hazard;
- Training family members to keep valuables secure and to lock doors and windows it is a good practice to keep doors lock when anyone is at home or not;
- Asking neighbors to watch for suspicious activity when the house is vacant;
- Marking valuable property with an identifying number (Operation I.D.) to discourage theft and help law enforcement agencies identify and return lost or stolen property;
- Encouraging home builders to use effective door and window locks and to provide outside lighting for all new home and apartment construction;
- Organizing WATCH groups to assist children, the elderly, and other especially vulnerable persons if they appear to be distressed, in danger, or lost;
- Meeting in neighborhood groups with trained crime prevention officers to discuss needs and crime prevention strategies;
- Developing neighborhood “fan” or telephone tree systems for quickly alerting each other about criminal activity in the area;

- Encouraging the development of signals for use in adjacent residences when someone needs help;
- Arranging for ongoing programs where crime prevention experts can present home and neighborhood security tips at regularly scheduled meetings.
- Obtaining and studying informative materials from the National Sheriffs’ Association, the National Crime Prevention Council and local agencies;
- Identifying the area’s participation with decals and metal road signs

Using Internet “Links” to gather Information

Listed below, are some internet “links” that provide an incredible amount of information on several key topics you should be familiar with for family safety and homeland defense purposes.

Crime Prevention

Neighborhood Watch
www.usaonwatch.org/

Community Oriented Policing Services
www.usaonwatch.org/Resources/COPS.htm

National Association of Town Watches (NATW)
www.usaonwatch.org/Resources/NATW.htm

National Crime Prevention Council
<http://www.ncpc.org/>

Center for Problem Oriented Policing
www.popcenter.org/

Clallam County Sheriff’s Department
www.clallam.net/LawEnforcement/

Volunteers in Police Service
www.usaonwatch.org/Resources/VIPS.htm

Emergency Preparedness

American Red
Cross www.redcross.org

Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention
www.cdc.gov

Federal Emergency Management
Agency www.fema.gov

Citizen Corps – Are you ready?
www.citizencorps.gov/ready/

Safety and Security

Crime Stoppers International
www.c-s-i.org

Federal bureau of Investigation
www.fbi.gov

International Association of Chiefs of
Police
www.theiacp.org

McGruff House Program
www.ncpc.org/programs/McGruff_House/

Operation Safe America
www.safeamerica.org

Security Industry Association
www.securitygateway.com

U.S. Department of Justice
www.usdoj.gov/

Mental Health Services

American Psychological Association
www.apa.org

National Assoc. of School Psychologists
www.nasponline.org

National Center for Children Exposed to
Violence
www.nccev.org

National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov

United Way of America
www.national.unitedway.org

U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services
www.hhs.gov

School Safety and School/Parent Programs

Afterschool Alliance
www.afterschoolalliance.org

Center for the Prevention of School
Violence
www.ncdjdp.org/cpsv/

National Safety Center
www.nssc1.org

U.S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov

Victim Services

National Center for Victims of Crime
www.ncvc.org/

National Organization for Victims
Assistance
www.try-nova.org

Tips for Using Internet Links

If you are viewing this document on your computer, you should be able to “click” on the underlined link, and it should open your web browser and locate the site for you. If it does not, then copy the link into your web browser (MS Explorer, Firefox, etc.) where the web address usually goes, and it should open to the page. Last, but not least, you could simply type the information directly into your web browser. Should you experience any difficulty, just notify us by e-mail and we will get back to you shortly.

Why the emphasis on email?

We acknowledge the frustration that can occur when someone cannot be reached by phone. E-mail also allows for us to receive your concerns or questions in a clear and easily read format that we can pass straight through to whomever we deem would be best to address any issues you may raise.

It ensures that an accurate account is always passed forward. It also saves all of us time and allows for a faster response than trying locating someone by phone..