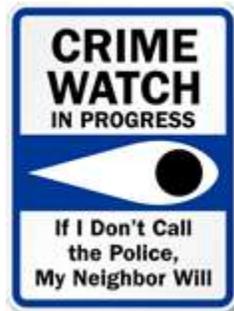


Introduction

Neighborhood Watch is the most effective means available for keeping crime out of our neighborhoods. It relies on the best crime fighting tool ever invented- a good neighbor. Fortunately, good neighbors are found everywhere. They live in houses and in apartment buildings and in urban, suburban and rural areas.

We have developed this guide to help you start your Neighborhood Watch. It explains how to work with the Anchorage Police Department and start and sustain an effective Neighborhood watch program. It also has information on special activities to help keep your group active.

Neighborhood Watch is only the beginning. It can be the basis for an ongoing dialogue between neighbors. When you are ready to set up your first meeting, call the Neighborhood Watch office at 786-8585. A crime prevention officer will assist you and tell you more about working together to prevent crime in your neighborhood.



We look forward to working with you.

Municipality of Anchorage
Anchorage Police Department
Neighborhood Watch Program
4501 Elmore Rd
Anchorage, AK 99507
907-786-8585

What is Neighborhood Watch?

Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program that enlists the active participation of community members with the Anchorage Police Department to reduce crime in their communities.

It involves:

- Neighbors getting to know each other, taking the time to care about each other, and working together in a program of mutual assistance.
- Community member training to recognize and report suspicious activities in their neighborhoods.
- Crime prevention strategies such as home security, Operation Identification and others being implemented by program participants.

The bottom line is this:

Neighbors looking out for each other!

Why Neighborhood Watch?

There cannot be an Anchorage Police Officer on every corner, so citizen involvement is essential to combat crime.

You and your neighbors are the ones who are experts about what is going on in your community.

By cooperating with each other and APD, people can help fight crime in the most effective way- Before it begins!

How do I start a Neighborhood Watch Program?

Contact the Anchorage Police Department's Neighborhood Watch program at 786-8585.

- Explain that you would like to start a Neighborhood Watch group and ask for assistance.
- Ask about convenient dates to schedule your first Neighborhood Watch meeting. Generally meetings are held on Wednesday and Thursday evenings starting at 7pm.
- A crime prevention Officer will facilitate your first meeting.

Arrange a date and time and place for the first meeting.

- Set the meeting date far enough in advance to give everyone adequate notice.
- Distribute an invitation announcing the meetings to your neighbors.
- If possible, meet in the home of a neighbor to foster an informal, comfortable atmosphere. If no one wants to host the meeting in their home, contact a local church or school and see if they will offer space for a meeting.
- Don't be disappointed if everyone cannot attend. It only takes a few neighbors to get things started.

Hold the first meeting.

- Neighborhood Watch Officer will give opening remarks.
- Provide simple refreshments such as coffee and cookies, if you so desire. This creates a relaxed atmosphere and encourages people to get to know each other.
- Your Neighborhood Watch Officer will cover the following topics:
 - Important phone numbers handout for emergency and non-emergency calls to APD
 - The Neighborhood Watch program- that it is a cooperative effort between concerned community members, APD and the Municipality of Anchorage.
 - The specific crime problems in your area and other concerns identified by the Crime Map provided.
 - Effective crime prevention techniques for home and other municipal programs available to community such as Emergency Watch and Fire Wise.
 - How participants can become the Anchorage Police Departments "eyes and ears" and help them in their investigation of crimes.
 - How to effectively report crime: what to look for; how to describe the person, vehicle or activity; and other information such as location or names, etc. that will help solve the crime.
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Select a Key Person or Block Captain.

The role of the Key Person is to:

- Be the spokesperson for the group.
- Serve as the liason between the Neighborhood Watch Officer and the group to organize and arrange meetings. Recruit neighbors to share the responsibility of hosting meetings.

- Facilitate annual or bi-annual Neighborhood Watch meetings or arrange for guest speakers to give presentations on topics of interest to the group.
- Maintain a list of all members.
- Designate work assignments such as:
 - New Neighbors
 - Vacation Home Watch
 - Block Parents
 - Developing and maintaining block map
 - Developing and maintaining a contact list with updated phone numbers and email addresses.
 - Materials Distribution

Remind neighbors to call the Anchorage Police Department with concerns- NOT the Key Person. The Key Person's role is to assist the watch but not monitor the problems.

To share the workload and responsibilities, the Key Person position can be rotated on a regularly scheduled basis. The group may decide to elect a Co-Key person to assist the Key in managing the Neighborhood watch group's activities.

Remember: If the Key Person resigns or passes on the responsibility, please notify the Neighborhood Watch office with a suggested replacement.

Develop and distribute maps.

A map will help members give the Anchorage Police Department precise information when reporting suspicious activity in your area. Copies of the block map should be given to all active program participants. The Neighborhood Watch Office can provide you a copy of the map for your area. Your group map can include any or all of the following information:

- Identify the Key Person
- Clearly identify streets, cross streets and compass points.
- Show the name, address and phone numbers of each home and identify which homes have burglar alarms.
- Identify senior citizens and/or neighbors with health problems or who need special attention.
- List the make, model and license plate numbers of all the vehicles at each home. Help neighbors by letting them know which vehicles belong there during daytime hours.
- Update and reissue this map when any information changes.

Develop and distribute a phone tree.

A phone tree is a device that Neighborhood Watch groups can use to disseminate information to the entire neighborhood quickly. The phone tree is useful when a problem is occurring in the neighborhood and you want to let everyone know fast (for instance, if a suspect is fleeing through back yards). It is also useful to communicate information about upcoming meetings or events. The phone/email tree is created using the Microsoft excel program by staff of the program.

Gather and share information.

Knowing more about your neighbors, their vehicles and daily routines will help you to recognize unusual or suspicious activities. Keep your Neighborhood Watch group informed about what is happening in the area. Some suggestions for sharing are:

- Hold regular meetings
- Plan social activities for the neighborhood, such as a block party, barbecue or other outing.
- Create a newsletter and distribute it to everyone in the neighborhood. If you live in a Home Owners Association area, you can have the newsletter included in the handout that is routinely distributed to all association members.
- Create a web page or social media page for your group.

Community Value

Now that your Neighborhood Watch network is established, be sure that everyone understands and observes the following guidelines:

- Be alert to unusual or suspicious behavior in your area. Call APD if warranted. Write down descriptions of the person (s) and license plate numbers of any involved vehicle (s).
- Tell a trusted neighbor if you will be out of town for an extended period of time. Tell them how to reach you in case of emergency.
- Look after your neighbors homes when they are away, and ask them to look after yours. This includes picking up mail or newspapers and putting back the garbage cans or recycling bins. Drive tracks on to snow covered driveways to make it appear that somebody is actively at the residence. Do not leave signals that tell burglars that “no one is home”.
- Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings often. Your local crime prevention officer will teach you about the local crime trends here in Anchorage and what you can do about them.
- Above all, get involved. It is the most effective way to reduce or prevent crime and make your neighborhood safe.
- Remember, your job is to report crime. The responsibility for apprehending criminals belongs to the Anchorage Police Department.

Program Activities

The key to keeping a Neighborhood Watch group active is maintaining interest over time. By getting everyone involved you will create a feeling of pride in your neighborhood. Neighborhood Watch can easily be adapted to meet your needs.

Active Neighborhood Watch groups can make changes through their local officials, such as improving street lighting and changing traffic flow problems. Active apartment or multi-family dwelling groups can make changes by working closely with their landlords or building managers. They can work together to improve lighting or security of individual units as well as communal areas and develop new policies or practices to improve building or property security.

Make belonging to your Neighborhood Watch group enjoyable. Remember, people will most likely become involved and remain interested if the programs are fun as well as meaningful. Use your imagination. Create a name for your Neighborhood Watch group to help foster neighborhood identity. Schedule potluck dinner, organize area clean up campaigns, or hold the ever popular block party. The Crime Prevention office and the Neighborhood Watch program offer the following presentations to active Neighborhood Watch groups:

- * Home Security
- * Personal Safety
- * Operation Identification
- * Bicycle Safety
- * Stranger Danger
- * Identity Theft

