NASSAU COUNTY
SPiN
A Crime Prevention Partnership
SECURITY / POLICE INFORMATION NETWORK

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Neighborhood Watch: What is it?

Neighborhood Watch is a program which enlists the active participation of citizens in cooperation with the Police to reduce crime in their community.

Neighborhood Watch, in various forms, has been around for many years. Today it is one of the most popular and successful of all efforts to prevent residential crime. Perhaps one reason for the success of Neighborhood Watch is its simplicity. Although programs may vary the ways they are organized and the methods used to reduce the opportunity for crime, all are predicated on the need for residents to protect their neighborhood by observing and reporting suspicious or unusual activities.

What does it involve?
Neighbors knowing who their neighbors are, so they can work together in a program of mutual assistance. Citizens being trained to recognize, and report, suspicious activities in their neighborhood.

How do I get involved?
If your neighborhood does not have a program, talk with your neighbors about starting one. Contact your neighbors. You may want to provide refreshments for your neighbors, if you desire.

During the first meeting the Neighborhood Watch Program is explained. In addition, citizens learn how to report suspicious activity to the Police. The Police Department may provide area crime statistics to Neighborhood Watch groups so they will be informed about what is happening in their area. Other activities at the meeting include the identification of the watch area, selection of a chairperson, secretary and block captains, and arranging for a meeting of all the residents to kick off the program. When talking with your neighbors be sure to mention:

- Neighborhood Watch does not require frequent meetings
- It does not ask anyone to take any personal risk to prevent crime
- Neighborhood Watch leaves the responsibility of apprehending criminals where it belongs -- with the Police

What are the Benefits of Neighborhood Watch?
Many communities with active programs have experienced substantial decreases in burglary, vandalism and larceny. In addition to the prevention of residential crime, Neighborhood Watch:

- Creates a greater awareness of crime
- Increases reporting of crime and suspicious activities
- Serves as a warning to criminals
- Promotes neighborliness
- Provides residents with access to crime patterns and trends that may threaten them
- Increases arrest and conviction of criminals due to the availability of eye witnesses

(Source: USAonwatch.org)