

Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood Watch is a volunteer citizen program of mutual assistance among neighbors aimed at reducing crime in the neighborhood at the grass roots level. It involves neighbors getting to know neighbors, being alert to the potential of crime, and being willing to look out for each other's interest. Neighborhood Watch is designed to ultimately involve thousands of residents throughout Lee County because strong neighborhood involvement and neighborhood unity can deter crime. The only requirements for Neighborhood Watch are as follows:

- Participants must be alert, and willing to keep an eye on their neighborhood.
- Willingness to report suspicious activity to law enforcement.
- Willingness to learn how they can make their homes more secure.
- Watch groups must meet at least once a year, or more often as needed.

Neighborhood Watch involves a cooperative effort between the citizens of Lee County and law enforcement. Crime can occur any time and anywhere; Neighborhood Watch must be in effect 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Crime hurts everyone. Areas that have an active Neighborhood Watch Program have reported dramatic reductions in crime.

Why Neighborhood Watch?

It works by a reduction of the burglary threat. If your home has been burglarized, Neighborhood Watch can help you recover your peace of mind. By banding together with your neighbors, it can also make your community safer and stronger by forming partnerships to address community concerns.

How To Organize A Neighborhood Watch

When a citizen or group decides to form a Neighborhood Watch:

- Contact the Lee County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit at 477-1400 for training in the Watch Program and home security.
- Select a Neighborhood Watch Chairperson and Block Captains who are responsible for organizing meetings and relaying information to members.
- Recruit members, keeping up-to-date on new residents and making special efforts to involve everyone in the community.
- Schedule a meeting of their leaders and the community with the Sheriff's Office. At this meeting the Watch Program is explained and the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson and block captains are reviewed.
- Put up Neighborhood Watch signs and continue to work with the Lee County Sheriff's Office by hosting regular meetings.

Neighborhood Watch Components

1. What is Suspicious Activity?
2. How to Report Suspicious Activity
3. Telephone Chain
4. Operation Identification
5. Home Security Surveys
6. Leadership of the Watch
7. 9-1-1

What Is Suspicious Activity

- Someone running from a car or home.
- Someone screaming. If you can't determine what the screams are for, call the Sheriff's Office.
- Someone going door-to-door in the neighborhood or looking into windows and parked cars.

- A person who seems to have no purpose wandering in the neighborhood
- An unusual or suspicious noise that you can't explain, such as breaking glass or pounding.
- Vehicles moving slowly, without lights or with no apparent destination.
- Property being removed from a closed business, or residence.
- A stranger in a car stopping to beckon to a child.
- A child resisting the advances of an adult.
- Business transactions conducted from a vehicle or merchandise offered at a ridiculously low price.
- A stranger entering a neighbor's house when unoccupied.
- Anyone loitering in a parked car.
- Anyone removing accessories, license plates or gasoline from a car.
- A stranger carrying appliances, luggage, or other bundles from a neighbor's home.



How To Report

Law enforcement officers need to have accurate information as quickly as possible about a suspicious activity or crime in progress.

- Give your name, address and telephone number.
- Describe the event in as brief a manner as possible. Who, What, Where, When, and How?
- Tell if the crime is in progress or past occurred.
- Describe the suspect, if known. What sex, race, age, height, weight, hair color, clothing, accent, beard or mustache, and distinctive characteristics or clothing