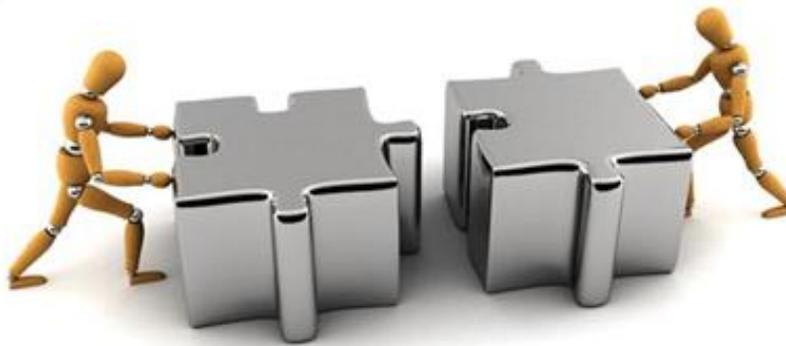


Neighborhood Watch Coordinator Guide



Neighbors working together
to make a safer community

Prince William County Police Department
Crime Prevention Unit
703-792-7270
crimeprevention@pwcgov.org
www.pwcgov.org/police

Coordinator Duties

In many cases neighborhood watches are created due to problems or potential problems in the neighborhood. The interest level in neighborhood watch and crime prevention is high when residents feel their neighborhood is in jeopardy. People will do almost anything to maintain the safety and security of their neighborhood. When crime decreases or the problem is solved, people lose interest and become complacent again. This complacency can affect the safety of the neighborhood and eventually the neighborhood watch program.

The role of the neighborhood watch coordinator is important in the success of the program! Your involvement and enthusiasm of the program will encourage participation from the neighborhood.

DUTIES:

- Act as an administrative liaison between the Police Department and the community.
- Disseminate Crime Prevention information, Crime Alerts and newsletters that are sent to you by your Crime Prevention Officer.
- Recruit new members and encourage the reporting of suspicious activity and crime.
- Maintain a roster of members involved in Neighborhood Watch.
- Hold meetings and prepare schedules / newsletter, as needed.

Who Joins Neighborhood Watch?

EVERYONE!

Get as many neighbors involved in the program as possible!

Not everyone will want to participate, that's ok. Make sure everyone knows about the program and that they are always welcome to attend the meetings or events.

Hold neighborhood watch meetings / get together in convenient locations (ex: home, clubhouse, local fire station, outside, etc). These informal meetings / events help maintain the neighborhood watch and help everyone in the neighborhood become acquainted.

Some ideas for your neighborhood watch meeting or event:

- Ice cream social
- Potluck / Barbecue
- Pool party
- Community beautification
- Flashlight walk
- Walk through the neighborhood to see Christmas lights
- Bike parade
- Pet parade
- Community clean up event

Make these functions fun and involve the children!

What do you say when..

The following are responses to some of the negative reactions you may encounter organizing a meeting on your street.

1. **“Organizing a neighborhood watch? That’s a great idea, but it’ll never work in my neighborhood. The neighbors don’t even know each other.”**

- That’s the problem and solution. How can you solve problems if you don’t know your neighbors well enough, or care enough, to recognize and address important issues?
- Some people need a reason to get to know each other, and organizing around common concerns can be just that reason.
- Experience has shown that residents respond to their neighbor’s hospitality.

2. **“I don’t want to be forced to become buddies with my neighbors. I’ve got my own set of friends outside the neighborhood.”**

- Getting involved in a block/apartment club doesn’t mean you have to become best friends with your neighbors. It means that you agree to cooperate to make your neighborhood a better place to live, because you have some level of concern about the problem and about making improvements.

3. **“I don’t want to get involved and be a nosey neighbor.”**

- Many people have discovered that getting involved doesn’t mean being nosey; it means being concerned.

4. **“We already cooperate with our neighbors to solve problems when they arise.”**

- Great! This is a chance to get all of your neighbors together, have a bigger impact on a problem, and share your experience.

5. **“We don’t have any crime in our area. This is a nice, quiet neighborhood.”**

- Organizing a group can help you keep it that way. It can be helpful in addressing other neighborhood concerns as well.

6. **“I just don’t have the time to be involved.”**

- You don’t need to meet often, maybe two or more times a year, in order to be effective. It is important that someone from your household comes so you are included in the Neighborhood Watch and get all the information. The meetings will only last 1 to 1 -1/2 hours.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much time is this going to take?

The process is fairly simple and only requires a significant time investment during the start-up phase. After that, maintenance of the watch is really fairly minimal.

How long is the training meeting?

Training meetings are typically held at 7:00 pm and last about an hour. The officer / crime prevention specialist will cover neighborhood watch guidelines, crime reporting, patrol instructions, etc.

Do I have to patrol?

There are two different types of Patrol options.

- Formal Neighborhood Watch Patrol is not a requirement but it is encouraged. Patrolling the neighborhood ensures neighbors are being “watchful” for suspicious activity. It provides a visible deterrent to criminals, keeps people involved in the program and helps the police by using their familiarity with the area to identify suspicious activity.
- Passive Neighborhood Watch Patrol is the other patrol option. This type of patrolling occurs during your and your neighbor’s daily activities. This can be done when going for a walk, jogging, driving through the community on your way home from work, etc.

What can our community do about solicitors?

There are situations in which door to door activity is not restricted. Some examples are co-op sales related to farm produce, newspapers, firewood and Christmas trees. Also political party or candidate activity and charitable, educational or religious activity are not restricted. Most private entities are required to obtain a permit. Door to door activity is not permitted one half hour after sunset to one half hour before sunrise. Signs that prohibit soliciting are not enforceable. The police can enforce signs that prohibit trespassing. Contact the non-emergency number 703-792-6500 to report a trespasser / solicitor.

Trespassing: Property owners may prohibit persons from trespassing on their property, but the person must first be put on notice. Signs are enforceable. Verbal, in-person notice will suffice. Written notice, personally served on the party, is optimal. Go to www.police/pwccgov.org for more information.

People speed in our neighborhood, what can be done?

Contact the Traffic Safety Hot-Line at 703-792-5919.

The Prince William County Police Department takes traffic safety seriously. To facilitate citizen concerns we have established a hotline that you can call to provide police with information on significant traffic violations in your community. Your information may help the Police Department determine how to allocate its traffic safety resources to keep all Prince William County roadways safer. When you call please listen carefully to the directions and provide complete information.

Patrol Ideas

If you decide to schedule 'formal' patrols *Flexibility* is the key. Each Watch sets up its own patrol schedule, and there are many different variations. The intent is to provide a visible deterrent without burning out the participants. The size of the Watch and the option you choose will determine how much coverage you can provide. All patrollers should understand the patrol instructions before doing so.

Patrol schedules should be prepared quarterly or semi-annually rather than weekly or monthly. Do not require that a replacement person be recruited when someone cannot make their patrol. This is very time consuming. Decide the best approach for your neighborhood.

Family Week Watch: This is perhaps the easiest way to schedule patrols because only one family is assigned per week. The family patrols as often as they can during their week. This option places the least amount of demand on busy schedules.

Daily: This method is the most time consuming but is also the most aggressive. Each day has a different Watch patrol team assigned to it. This works best for watches that have over 60 patrol teams and have a high incidence of crime, requiring constant monitoring.

Target Days: This works like the daily method, only for smaller watches. First, determine how many days of the week your Watch can cover, based on the number of patrol teams you have, then you schedule patrols on two or three days a week.

Patrol Instructions – Formal and Passive

PATROL WITH A PARTNER: Residents must be at least 18 years old and participated in the training session. Participants may not drink alcoholic beverages while on patrol or be intoxicated.

SCHEDULE: Random patrolling is the best. Any hour of the day is suitable. Remember holidays and special events. (Halloween, spring break, start of summer vacation)

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY: Walk or Drive your designated Neighborhood Watch area.

PATROL UNARMED: No side-arms, shotguns, pepper spray, mace or any other type of weapon. These are prohibited while on patrol.

REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY: If you suspect criminal activity, observe a crime in progress or see evidence of a crime having been committed, contact the police.

MAINTAIN HIGH VISIBILITY: It is just as important for potential law breakers to see you to deter any "would be" criminals.

DON'T DETAIN INDIVIDUALS: Not only might this be dangerous but you could also be violating their civil or legal rights.

IDENTIFY VICTIMS/WITNESSES: Urge victims/witnesses to file a formal complaint. Many crimes are not reported, remain unsolved or offenders aren't punished because people refuse to get involved.

REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY: Immediately report suspicious activity/persons to the police.

Patrol Log Report

(This sheet can be photocopied to use for recording activity while patrolling)

<u>NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PATROL REPORT</u>					
			DATE:	_____	
MEMBER(S) ON PATROL (print names):			1.	_____	
			2.	_____	
TIMES OF PATROL:			_____		
ACTIVITY REPORT: _____					

Vehicle Make:	Type:	Year:	Color:	Tag #:	Tag year:

<u>NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PATROL REPORT</u>					
			DATE:	_____	
MEMBER(S) ON PATROL (print names):			1.	_____	
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Resources

Prince William County Police
Eastern District
15948 Donald Curtis Drive
Woodbridge, VA 22191

Prince William County Police
Western District
8900 Freedom Center Blvd
Manassas, VA 20110

WWW.PWCGOV.ORG/POLICE

EMERGENCY: 9-1-1

NON-EMERGENCY: 703-792-6500

ONLINE REPORTING:

www.pwccgov.org/policereport

CRIME PREVENTION UNIT: 703-792-7270

TRAFFIC SAFETY HOTLINE: 703-792-5919

VICE & NARCOTICS: 703-686-6522

MAGISTRATE - EASTERN PWC: 703-792-7360

MAGISTRATE – WESTERN PWC: 703-792-6260

CRIME SOLVERS: 703-670-3700 OR 1-866-411-TIPS

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE: 703-792-7245

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS: 703-792-7264

RECORDS: 703-792-6562

COUNTY RESOURCES:

WWW.PWCGOV.ORG

PUBLIC WORKS - NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES: 703-792-7018

PUBLIC WORKS – STREET LIGHTING: 703-792-6825

PUBLIC WORKS – STREET SIGNS: 703-792-7070

PRINCE WILLIAM CLEAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL – 571-285-3772