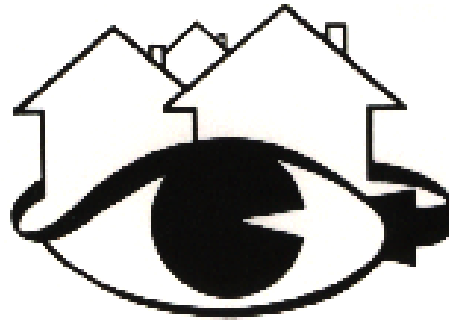


# CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH



## COORDINATORS AND BLOCK CAPTAINS

### Training Guide



**Virginia Beach Police Department**  
*A Nationally Accredited Police Department*



# CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM

Revised 11/16/10

## I. DEFINITION

A program involving the joint efforts of the Police Department and the Community - designed to enhance neighborhood security, heighten the community's power of observation, and to encourage mutual assistance and concern among neighbors.

## II. NEED

Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program that stresses education and common sense. It teaches citizens how to help themselves by identifying and reporting suspicious activity in their neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Watch Program draws upon the compassion of average citizens, asking them to lend their neighbors a hand. Visible signs of the program are seen throughout American on street signs, window decals, community block parties and service projects.

Neighborhood Watch is one of the oldest and best-known crime prevention concepts in the United States. In the late 1960s, an increase in crime heightened the need for a crime prevention initiative focused on residential areas and involving local citizens. The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) responded, creating the National Neighborhood Watch Program in 1972 to assist citizens and law enforcement. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, strengthening and securing communities has become more critical than ever. In 2002, the NSA - in partnership with USA Freedom Corps, Citizen Corps and the U.S. Department of Justice - launched USAonWatch, which is the face of the revitalized Neighborhood Watch initiative, and represents the expanded role of watch programs throughout the United States.

Every day, situations call upon people to be the eyes and ears of law enforcement. USAonWatch empowers citizens to become active in homeland security efforts through participation in Neighborhood Watch groups. The renewed emphasis on emergency preparedness and response may provide the right incentive for citizens to participate in Neighborhood Watch in their community

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM

The main objective of Neighborhood Watch is to reduce the incidence of crime by:

1. Increasing citizens' awareness of burglary and other neighborhood crime through a continuing information program.
2. Making recommendations to assist citizens in making their property more secure.
3. Developing a neighborhood action program where neighbors help watch each other's property and report suspicious persons and activities to law enforcement agencies.
4. Encouraging all citizens to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in reporting crimes.

#### IV. STATISTICS & BOUNDARIES

Statistics for the neighborhood as well as a map of the community's boundaries will be provided at the initial meeting for the prior year. Public access to reported crime and traffic accident reports is available through ePRO (electronic Police Reports Online), on the city website at [www.vbgov.com](http://www.vbgov.com). City maps showing the precinct boundaries are also available on the ePRO home page.

#### V. PROCEDURE

1. An initial meeting for the community will be organized by the citizen(s) requesting the program. The Crime Prevention Officer should have at least two weeks' notice of this initial meeting. At this meeting, the citizens will be informed of the police departments' requirements and the neighborhood's responsibilities in fulfilling them to become an active Neighborhood Watch.
2. The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator and Block Captains (ideally, one Coordinator for every 200 homes and one Block Captain for every 10 - 15 homes) will meet with a Crime Prevention Officer at another meeting set up by the Coordinator, to cover the responsibilities of the Block Captains on home security in depth.
3. Those citizens wishing to participate in the Neighborhood Watch program will provide their name, address, phone number and, if they desire, email address on the Neighborhood Watch roster. The initial roster can be compiled by going door-to-door through the community or at a community gathering or meeting. A sample roster can be found at the end of this document and may be copied and used to sign up participants. The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator will maintain a copy of this roster and will provide the original to the Crime Prevention Officer once it has been completed. This roster is considered private and confidential and the information therein shall not be distributed to anyone outside of the program or the police department.

#### VI. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

##### Neighborhood Watch Coordinator

1. Coordinates any Neighborhood Watch meetings.
2. Assures that literature is distributed to those who are unable to attend the meetings.
3. Acts as main point of contact for the program in their neighborhood.
4. Acts as the liaison between their neighborhood and the Police Department's Crime Prevention Officer.
5. Oversees the Block Captains.
6. Provides yearly update information to their Crime Prevention Officer.
7. Attends Neighborhood Watch training provided by the Crime Prevention Unit (or sends a Block Captain or representative if unable to attend).

##### **\* Beginning January 2011 \***

Neighborhood Watch coordinators, or their designee, are required to attend the following meetings: Steering Committee meetings – minimum 4 times per year (one each quarter).

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting in their precinct – minimum 2 times per year. Please remember to sign in at the meetings, including your neighborhood name, so we can accurately document attendance!

##### Neighborhood Watch Block Captain

1. Coordinates a block watcher meeting with the homes that he/she is responsible for and/or personally visits each home/apartment unit in their area, distributing the proper information on home security and operation identification to their neighbors, encouraging their participation.
2. Acts as a liaison between the Coordinator and their area of responsibility and disseminates information communicated to him/her which may assist the police.

3. Keeps their Block Watchers (homeowners) updated on new crime prevention strategies.
4. Invites new residents throughout the year to join the program.
5. Participates in Operation Identification.

## VII. ADDITIONAL PROGRAM MATERIALS AVAILABLE

1. Steering Committee and CAC Brochures - with information on meeting times and locations.
2. Neighborhood Watch Trifold - this brochure describes how the program works
2. Home Security Booklet - a detailed guide for protecting home and property.
3. Crime Prevention Pamphlets - information on various subjects, (i.e., home security, personal safety, ID Theft/Fraud, Business Watch, Bicycle Safety)

## VIII. REQUIREMENTS

Eighty percent (80%) of the residents in the community/area requesting the Neighborhood Watch program must agree to participate. Participation includes agreeing to look out for each other, receiving home security information, and agreeing to identify/inventory their belongings. Once eighty percent (80%) of the residents have joined the Neighborhood Watch program, that area will be designated as a Neighborhood Watch community.

An annual updated roster is required by July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year to the Crime Prevention Office. Areas reaching Neighborhood Watch status after November 15<sup>th</sup>, are exempt from the update requirement until the second July 1<sup>st</sup> following the date of their designation.

## IX. NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH SIGNS

1. The City of Virginia Beach Crime Prevention will furnish one 21" x 21" reflective sign to each Neighborhood Watch community. The sign will read as follows:

‘WARNING PROTECTED BY NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH’

2. All Neighborhood Watch signs are property of the City of Virginia Beach. The City will maintain any/all signs and they will remain displayed as long as program requirements are met.
3. The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator will provide the precinct Crime Prevention Officer with a map showing the requested locations for the signs are to be placed. The Crime Prevention Officer will coordinate the installation of the signs with a representative from the city of Virginia Beach Traffic Engineering Department, based on guidelines set by Traffic Engineering. Sign installation can take several weeks to a month depending on many factors, please be patient and if it takes longer contact the Crime Prevention Officer.
4. To maintain the integrity of the program, the annual update requirements must be met or the City of Virginia Beach will remove the Neighborhood Watch signs. Updated rosters are to be submitted to the Crime Prevention Office by July 1<sup>st</sup> every year. The community coordinator and the Crime Prevention Officer will sign a sign agreement at the time the initial rosters are submitted.

## HOME SECURITY TIPS

Improved security will protect your new stereo and your television, along with your family. If you still think you will never be a kidnapping victim, could you say the same about burglary? What did the new stereo cost you, how much time and irritation goes into reporting the crime, computing depreciation for the insurance company? Why not put half the time into better security?

A home security survey can be coordinated for your home by contacting the precinct you live in and request to speak with a crime prevention officer.

Here are a few security tips you that the homeowner can take care of.

- Change all locks when moving in after previous tenant or owner.
- Do not leave keys in a "hiding place" outside the home.
- Never answer the door to a stranger; always speak to them through a closed, locked door. Instruct children never to open the door to unexpected visitors.
- Develop a sufficient rapport with your neighbors to be able to watch out for each other's homes, especially during trips, vacations, etc.
- Keep shrubbery trimmed back, especially around entrances and windows. Overgrown shrubs and foliage can shield intruders.
- Security lighting is a must on the outside, especially around entrances to the residence. A timing device for lights inside the home is also recommended.
- Do not give out your phone number in response to a "wrong number." If the caller asks, "that number is this?" you reply by asking, "What number are you calling?"
- Your children should be instructed in the proper use of the telephone. Teach them not to give out personal information.
- All home phones should have police, fire, and ambulance phone numbers posted on or by them. Remember 911 or 385-5000 (non-emergency).
- Keep a running inventory, including model and serial numbers, of your personal belongings. If stolen you will have this information to give to the police and your insurance company.



## **OPERATION IDENTIFICATION**

Most burglars sell what they steal, making it hard for police to trace stolen goods. Once it has left your home, that television or bicycle looks just like thousands of others. Unless you can prove it is yours, the police cannot return it. To help protect your property, join

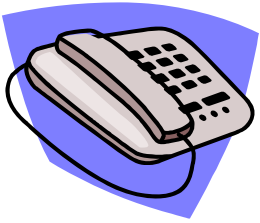
### ***“OPERATION IDENTIFICATION”***

Make a complete inventory of all items containing serial numbers. Photograph valuable jewelry and other items that do not contain a serial number. Put the inventory and photos in a safe place. For items which do not have a serial number, you can purchase or borrow from the Crime Prevention Unit an electric engraving pen or an inexpensive diamond-tipped marking pen from a hardware or department store. Videotaping your items is another way to identify your property. For more information on other ways of marking your property, such as a UV pen or data dots, contact your Crime Prevention officer.

Remember to inventory televisions, radios, appliances, golf clubs, tools, bikes and items such as these. If police recover your property, the pictures and serial numbers will help prove that the items are yours. Such records are also useful in filing insurance claims.

Finally, let the burglars know that your goods are marked and can be traced. Get your community to be an active Neighborhood Watch and participants can receive Operation Identification stickers. Display these stickers on your front window, front door, or on any other clearly visible location.





## REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES TO THE POLICE

**Non-emergency: 385-5000**

**Emergency/Crimes in Progress: 911**

CIRCUMSTANCES	POSSIBLE CRIME
Going door to door in a residential area, especially if one or more persons go to the rear of the residence.	Possible burglary suspects or trespassers.
Waiting or loitering in front of a house or business, if business is closed or house is unoccupied.	Possible burglary suspects.
Forcing entrance, or entering your neighbor's house, when it is unoccupied.	Possible burglary, theft, or trespassing.
Person running, especially if something of value is being carried.	Possible suspect fleeing the scene of a crime.
Much human traffic to and from a certain residence if it occurs on a daily or regular basis.	Possible vice or fence operation.
Person screaming.	Possible rape or assault.
Persons loitering around school, park, or secluded areas.	Possible car thief or theft from a vehicle.
Persons loitering around cars or going car to car peering into them, especially in parking lots or on streets.	Possible car theft or theft from a vehicle.
Persons detaching mechanical parts or accessories from a vehicle.	Possible theft or vandalism.
Objects thrown from a vehicle.	Possible disposal of objects or evidence of a criminal act.
Property in homes, garages or storage areas is suspicious if accumulations are large, or items are in good conditions but not in use.	Possible stolen property.
Property offered for sale at a very low price.	Possible stolen property.
Property in vehicles that is not normally found in vehicles (television sets, stereos, guns or auto parts), especially if observed at an unusual hour.	Possible stolen property.
Property carried by persons on foot, especially suspicious, at an unusual hour or unusual place. Very questionable if a person is running and property is unwrapped.	Possible property just stolen in a burglary or robbery.

VIRGINIA BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CRIME PREVENTION UNIT

Every precinct has a crime prevention officer available to you. Here are the addresses and phone numbers of the four police precincts as well as the Crime Prevention Unit. *Please call the Crime Prevention office to contact your crime prevention officer.*

**Crime Prevention Office**      2441 Princess Anne Road, Bldg. 15      385-1006  
Virginia Beach Police Department

Mailing address:      Crime Prevention Unit  
2509 Princes Anne Road, Bldg. 11  
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

**Police Precincts:**

First Precinct	2509 Princess Anne Road, Bldg. 11, 23456	385-4377
Second Precinct	820 Va. Beach Blvd., 23451	385-2700
Third Precinct	926 Independence Blvd., 23455	385-2703
Fourth Precinct	840 Kempsville Rd., 23464	385-2800

VIRGINIA BEACH CRIME PREVENTION  
STEERING COMMITTEE

What is the Virginia Beach Crime Prevention Steering Committee?

The Steering Committee is a group of concerned citizens working with criminal justice professionals to promote and support crime prevention activities in our community.

Who are the members of the Virginia Beach Crime Prevention Steering Committee?

A wide range of organizations are represented on the Steering Committee including: Women's Clubs, Juvenile Court Services, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, (RSVP), the Police Department, the Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, and private citizens not affiliated with any particular organization.

What activities are supported by the Steering Committee?

Among the crime prevention programs and activities supported by the Steering Committee are: Neighborhood Watch, RESPONSE, Victim-Witness activities and various educational activities.

For further information on the Virginia Beach Crime Prevention Steering Committee, please call the Crime Prevention Office at 385-1757.



Neighborhood Name \_\_\_\_\_

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH LISTING

YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

Block Captain: Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

BLOCK WATCHER (Homeowner)		PARTICIPATION (Circle One)		OPERATION ID (Circle One)	
Name:	_____	Yes	No	Yes	No
Address:	_____				
Phone:	(H) _____ (W) _____				
E-Mail:	_____				
Name:	_____	Yes	No	Yes	No
Address:	_____				
Phone:	(H) _____ (W) _____				
E-Mail:	_____				
Name:	_____	Yes	No	Yes	No
Address:	_____				
Phone:	(H) _____ (W) _____				
E-Mail:	_____				
Name:	_____	Yes	No	Yes	No
Address:	_____				
Phone:	(H) _____ (W) _____				
E-Mail:	_____				
Name:	_____	Yes	No	Yes	No
Address:	_____				
Phone:	(H) _____ (W) _____				
E-Mail:	_____				