schools, teenage alcohol and other drug abuse, or domestic violence. Adopt a park or school playground and paint over graffiti. Sponsor a block party, holiday dinner, or volleyball or softball game that will provide neighbors a chance to get to know each other.

Other aspects of community safety. For instance, start a block parent program to help children in emergency situations.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A WATCH MEMBER?

- Be alert!
- Know your neighbors and watch out for each other.
- Report suspicious activities and crimes to the police or sheriffs’ department.
- Learn how you can make yourself and your community safer.

WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES SHOULD I BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR AS A WATCH MEMBER?

- Someone screaming or shouting for help.
- Someone looking in windows of houses and parked cars.
- Property being taken out of houses where no one is at home or from closed businesses.
- Cars, vans, or trucks moving slowly with no apparent destination or without lights.
- Anyone being forced into a vehicle.
- A stranger sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child.

Report these incidents to the police or sheriffs’ department. Talk about concerns and problems with your neighbors.

HOW SHOULD I REPORT THESE INCIDENTS?

- Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.
- Give your name and address.
- Explain what happened.
- Briefly describe the suspect: sex and race, age, height, weight, hair color, clothing, distinctive characteristics such as a beard, mustache, scars, or accent.
- Describe the vehicle if one was involved: color, make, model, year, license plate, and special features such as stickers.
I organize a small planning committee of neighbors to discuss needs, the level of interest, and possible community problems.

I contact the local police or sheriff’s department, or local crime prevention organization, for help in training members in home security and reporting skills and for information on local crime patterns.

I hold an initial meeting to gauge neighbors’ interest; establish the purpose of the program; and begin to identify issues that need to be addressed.

I select a coordinator.

I ask for block captain volunteers who are responsible for relaying information to members.

I recruit members, keeping up-to-date information on new residents and making special efforts to involve the elderly, working parents, and young people.

I work with local government or law enforcement to put up Neighborhood Watch signs, usually after at least 50 percent of all households are enrolled.

WHAT CAN BE INVOLVED?

Any community resident can join—young and old, single and married, renter and homeowner. Even the busiest of people can belong to a Neighborhood Watch—they too can keep an eye out for neighbors as they come and go.

I live in an apartment building. Can I start a Neighborhood Watch?

Yes. Watch Groups can be formed around any geographical unit or a block, apartment building, condominium complex, or business area. They are extra eyes and ears for a Neighborhood Watch, helping neighbors to feel safe and secure.

WHAT DOES A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH DO?

The main goals of a Neighborhood Watch are to maintain a safe neighborhood, increase community awareness of crime, reduce crime, and improve the quality of life. They also help to reduce the isolation effect of crime and improve the sense of community among residents.

WHY NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

A Neighborhood Watch is one of the most effective and least costly ways to prevent crime and reduce fear. It improves relations between police and the community, builds pride, reduces crime, and helps reduce isolation of those who are new to the area. It also helps to create a safer environment for children and families.

HOW DOES A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH START?

A motivated individual or a few concerned residents can establish a Neighborhood Watch. Together they can recruit members, organize a planning committee, and work with local law enforcement to put up signs. The committee should be set up on a regular basis, such as monthly, to maintain the program's success.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR COMPONENTS OF A WATCH PROGRAM?

- Community Meetings. These should be held at least monthly and no more than six times a year.
- Citizens' or Community Patrol. A citizens' patrol can be as simple as a weekly walk or drive through the neighborhood by volunteers to alert police to any suspicious activities.
- Communications. These can be as simple as a community newsletter or as complex as a neighborhood electronic bulletin board.
- Special Events. These are crucial to keeping the program going and growing. They can include talks or seminars on current issues such as drug abuse, domestic violence, and personal safety.