

# Neighborhood Watch Meeting

## Study Guide

*Crime Prevention is the anticipation, recognition, and appraisal of a crime risk and the initiation of some action to remove or reduce it.*

### **Neighborhood Watch:**

No one person or law enforcement agency can be aware of every situation that occurs in a neighborhood at all times. That is why neighbors are the best defense against crime. The Neighborhood Watch program is the perfect place to start in making a neighborhood a safer place to live. This program is a cooperative effort between local law enforcement agency and an individual neighborhood. By working together, we have more educated citizens, more 911 calls, and overall we can have less crime. Neighborhood Watch is simply neighbors watching out for one another and reporting suspicious and/or criminal activity immediately. This begins with getting to know each other. Otherwise, how can people tell a neighbor from a stranger? It is important that citizens become the eyes and ears of the police by reporting suspicious activity that is not a part of the neighborhood's routine.

Neighborhood Watch also promotes neighborliness by encouraging residents to get to know and interact with their neighbors, including exchanging information concerning vacation plans, vehicles belonging to their household, etc. This program also encourages people to be observant of their neighborhood and to attend meetings designed to strengthen neighborhood safety and security. Neighborhood watch captains have an important role in their neighborhoods as they are the main source of information sharing between your neighborhood, the police department, and vice versa. Just like other neighbors, the captains are also responsible to being observant of suspicious activity and reporting them by calling 911.

Neighborhood Watch requires 50% of a neighborhood to participate and of that 50%, 50% of them must participate in Operation ID. They neighborhood is also required to host two meetings per year.

### **Operation Identification:**

Operation Identification is a program to prevent theft and burglary by permanently marking and registering valuable property and notifying potential thieves and burglars that this action has been taken.

The program has four major advantages regarding property marked in accordance with the program guides:

- Deters Crime; thieves and burglars are less likely to steal an item that can be positively identified and that will be difficult to sell.
- Positive Identification; The owner of stolen or lost property can easily be located through existing records.
- Helps Criminal Prosecution; the arresting officers can more readily use the stolen property in pursuing the case through the courts.
- Aids Recovery; Stolen and/or lost property are more likely to be returned to the owner.

Mark anything of value that can be marked. If an item is an heirloom or would lose its value if marked with an engraver then DO NOT engrave it! Follow the same procedure you would to have that item insured, photograph it and file that photo with a written description of the item. Be sure to have something else in the photo to show the size of the item.

### **Identity Theft:**

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2016), over 17 million Americans fall victim to identity theft every year and it is viewed as one of the top growing crime in the country. Identity thieves will often use their victim's good credit history to open new accounts including credit cards, utility accounts, checking accounts, and many other online accounts. It is always recommended to carefully review bank and credit card statements for any abnormal purchases as well as reviewing your free annual credit report. You can also consider taking stronger steps such as freezing your credit

report to prevent anyone from obtaining your credit report without a unique pin number. By freezing it, it prevents new accounts or credit cards from being opened under your name.

### **Burglary Prevention:**

In 2018, there was an estimated 1.2 million residential burglaries (11.9% decrease from 2017) in the United States. Some of these burglaries could have been prevented simply by making a home more difficult to enter and less appealing to burglars. Remember: Keep your doors and windows locked and your garage doors closed, whether you are at home or not. Most burglaries are committed through unlocked doors/windows.

- Deadbolts must throw at least one inch and be made of hardened steel. The cylinder guard must be tapered, round, and free spinning to make it difficult to grip with pliers or a wrench.
- A heavy duty strike plate will increase the security of the door frame and make it harder to be kicked in. The heavy duty strike plate uses between four and six, 3 inch screws instead of two or four, quarter inch screws that are in regular plates.
- Bushes/shrubs should be pruned to a maximum height of 3 feet and/or any bushes/shrubs near windows should be pruned at least 6 inches below window level. Trees should be pruned to remove most or all branches less than 6 feet from the ground.
- Criminals are less likely to target areas where they feel their actions will be seen, recognized, and reported. Good lighting can be used to minimize hiding spots for criminals and maximize the ability of property owners, surrounding neighbors, and passers-by to observe activity on the property.
- Review what items you keep on your property. Don't allow a would-be burglar to use your own ladder or accessible tools against you to break into your own home.

### **Miscellaneous**

- Crime Prevention Officers strive to be proactive and work to reduce to eliminate crime issues or opportunities before they occur whereas traditional police work tends to be reactive and puts focus on high crime areas after crimes have been reported.
- Even when homes have security systems, locking doors and windows should always be a top priority. Security systems are not perfect and can malfunction or be defeated under certain circumstances.
- Make sure that your house numbers are visible from the street at all times. This is very important and can save police officers, fire fighters, and paramedic's valuable time when responding to your home.



Crime Prevention strives to remove the opportunity