

MELBOURNE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT PRESENTS

Neighborhood Crime Watch

The Neighborhood Crime Watch program in Melbourne Beach is sponsored by the Melbourne Beach Police Department, and is a program which involves total citizen participation and involvement in a self help cooperative battle against crime. Its primary purpose is the protection of our community and our property.

Crime can create a climate of fear and mistrust. One of the most effective and least costly answers to crime is neighborhood watch groups. Watch groups are a foundation of community crime prevention.

Overall Goals

The overall goals of the Neighborhood Crime Watch are:

- 1. To increase public education concerning local problems and effective preventive measures which lead to improved residential security.**
- 2. To implement community-based and coordinated programs that are designed to increase the level of community awareness and mutual concern for the protection of homes within a given community.**
- 3. To enhance community and police relations.**

NCW Structure

The Coordinator

The NCW program is spearheaded by the program coordinator. Like all other participants, is a volunteer, working as the liaison between the community and the

police. They work directly with the patrol officer in that geographical area, the assigned community policing officer, and the designated block captain and community members.

The Block Captain

The Block Captains are directly responsible to the coordinator. They receive information from the members and relay that information to the coordinator. Information that is received from the coordinator is likewise, passed to the members.

The Members

The members are the ever important hub of this wheel of security. Their eyes and ears, what they observe and hear in terms of suspicious activity most often are a vital link to solving crime.

Starting a Neighborhood Crime Watch

The following steps were developed to assist in starting a Neighborhood Crime Watch (NCW), or other community policing programs.

Step 1: Initial Presentation

An officer from the district in which the program is to be established will give an initial presentation on Neighborhood Crime Watch. The next step will be to select the persons to represent the neighborhood in the capacity of Coordinator and Block Captain.

Step 2: Signup Members

The coordinator and block captain will gather the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all those interested in becoming involved in the program. That

information, along with a map of the area listing streets, ect. will be sent to the police department's community policing officer. The community policing officer will provide to the coordinator materials for all members who have signed up.

Step 5: Program Information

Program information will be forwarded to the community policing officer. The community policing officer will then contact the coordinator and develop the relationship necessary for smooth and cooperative effort between police and the community. With guidance from law enforcement, the watch trains its members in home security techniques, observation skills, and crime reporting. Residents also learn about the types of crime that affect the area.

Step 6: Periodic Review

Hold regular meetings to help residents get to know each other and to collectively decide upon program strategies and activities. Proper vigilance must be practiced for the program to be successful. Information regarding crime and suspicious activity must be disseminated throughout the program in a timely manner.

Tips for Success

- **Involve everyone-- young and old, single and married, renter and homeowner.**
- **Consider linking with an existing organization, such as a citizens' association, community development office, tenants association, housing authority.**
- **Canvas door-to-door to recruit members.**
- **Get information out quickly. Share all kinds of news.**
- **Gather the facts about crime in your neighborhood. Check police reports, do victimization surveys, and learn resident's perceptions about crime.**
- **Don't forget events like National Night Out or potluck dinners that give neighbors a chance to get together. Such items as pins, t-shirts, hats, or coffee mugs with the group's name enhance identity and pride.**
- **It's essential to celebrate the success of the efforts and recognize volunteer's contributions through such events as awards, annual dinners, and parties. To help meet community needs, Neighborhood Watches can sponsor meetings**

If you would like to start your own Neighborhood Crime Watch please contact the Melbourne Beach Police Department, our Neighborhood Crime Watch Coordinator Cpl./Detective Griswold will be available to assist you in the process of organizing your Neighborhood Watch in your area. You can also e-mail Detective Griswold at melanieg@melbournebeachfl.org