



How to Start a Neighborhood Watch Group

The Oakland Police Department encourages you and your neighbors to form a Neighborhood Watch group on your block. It is easy to do, and is one of the most important things you can do to prevent crime. Below are frequently asked questions about Neighborhood Watch. Please call the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, Brenda Ivey at 777-8621 for more information.

What is Neighborhood Watch?

Neighborhood Watch is a partnership between neighbors and the Oakland Police Department to improve safety and prevent crime. Forming a Neighborhood Watch group on your block is the first step to making and keeping your neighborhood safe.

What will I learn?

- Who your neighbors are and how to work with them to prevent crime
- How to use a neighborhood map and roster to communicate
- How and why crime happens
- How to improve home security and personal safety
- How to recognize and report suspicious activity
- How active Neighborhood Watch groups with visible Neighborhood Watch signs can deter crime
- What the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council in your beat is and what it does

Who can participate?

Anyone who lives in Oakland can participate in Neighborhood Watch whether you live in an apartment, condominium complex, townhouse, or a single family home.

I'm Interested! What are the next steps?

1. Call the Oakland Police Department, Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, Brenda Ivey at 777-8621.
2. Contact your neighbors; find out the best time for them to attend a meeting (typically a weekday evening about 6:30 or 7:00 PM).
3. Schedule the meeting.
4. Distribute flyers inviting neighbors to the Neighborhood Watch meeting about 7 to 10 days before the meeting. The Police Department can supply flyers.
5. On the day of the meeting, give your neighbors a call or flyer to remind them.

What happens at the meeting?

A Police representative will discuss:

- Crime in your neighborhood/beat
- How and when to contact the police
- Neighborhood Watch program requirements - and how and why it works
- What you can do to make your home more safe and secure
- What the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council is, and what it does
- What is National Night Out and how it can help you organize your neighborhood

What are the requirements to be an official Neighborhood Watch group?

- Schedule and hold two Neighborhood Watch meetings
- Complete a roster of members' names, addresses and telephone numbers
- Complete a neighborhood map
- Select a Block Captain and an Alternate for the group
- Decide how many signs you want and where the signs should be installed
- Send a copy of the completed map and roster to the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator.

What is a Block Captain?

The Block Captain and the Alternate are liaisons between the Neighborhood Watch group and the police department. They make sure the map and the roster are complete and the Neighborhood Watch signs are purchased and installed. They also schedule Neighborhood Watch meetings, maintain a current membership roster and map, and distribute flyers or other information as provided by the police department. Many groups rotate the Block Captain and Alternate responsibilities.

What about the Neighborhood Watch signs?

Every official Neighborhood Watch group must have at least one Neighborhood Watch sign. The sign acts as a crime deterrent by notifying people who enter the area that the neighborhood is watching and knows how to contact the police.

Communication and Meeting Topics?

Neighborhood Watch groups communicate by using telephone rosters, flyers, emails, fax rosters, websites and newsletters. While some groups have formal meetings, others prefer to be more relaxed with barbecues and block parties. However they communicate, most groups focus on safety and crime prevention. The police department is a resource that offers brochures and videos on topics such as:

- Personal Safety and Crime Awareness
- Child, Teen or Senior Safety
- Halloween, Summer or Holiday Safety
- Scams or Fraud Schemes

To obtain brochures or borrow a video, call the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, Brenda Ivey at 777-8621.

Is disaster preparedness training available to our group?

Citizens of Oakland Respond to Emergencies (CORE) trains residents to respond to emergencies. CORE I focuses on home and family preparedness, Core II focuses on neighborhood preparedness and response and Core III focuses on emergency response in a hands-on training. All Neighborhood Watch groups of 10 or more can elect to have CORE I training in their neighborhood. For more information on CORE call 238-6351 or visit www.oaklandcore.org or ask the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator about it.