



## How to start a Neighborhood Watch Group

### How to get started?

There are two ways to start a group:



Residents of a neighborhood – as individuals or members of a group – may approach the police with a view to setting up a watch group within their neighborhood;

Police may decide that a certain neighborhood could benefit from a watch group and make the initial move. They may assist with the initial organization of the programme and provide crime statistics related to that particular community. Commonly, police in each given area should assist and give their support wherever possible.

A need to get together to fight crime may be triggered by a number of incidents occurring in a neighborhood such as:

- Too much violence.
- An ever present threat.
- Escalation of robbery incidents in the neighborhood.
- Signs of drugs dealings in the neighborhood.
- String of break-ins.
- Continuous vandalism.
- Loitering by unknown persons with the area.

Once a crime has been anticipated and appraised in a neighborhood, an activity plan is developed that will enable members of the neighborhood concerned to effectively keep that particular crime out of their area, with the assistance of the police.

## Neighborhood Watch Committee:

A neighborhood watch committee should consist of the following:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Co-opted members

The purpose of the committee is to oversee the activities of the neighborhood watch programme and organize internal meetings. Committee members also arrange conferences, community policing workshops and seminars to discuss crime – prevention related issues, especially the prevailing crime trend in concerned /targeted area. Seminars/workshop should be conducted the police in partnership with the community to share, view and exchange information on crime prevention strategies.

Committee members should understand their duties and the role they have to play. For example:

1. As a leader of a committee, the chairperson is tasked with the principal role of overseeing and arranging neighborhood watch meetings
2. Be a spokesperson for the group.
3. Serve as a liaison between the police and the neighborhood watch group.
4. Recruits neighborhood to share responsibility of hosting meetings.
5. Designates work assignments such as enrolling new members, vacation home watch, block parents, patrol fund raising, development of crime prevention material and distribution etc.
6. To share the workload and responsibility, the position committee/chairperson's can be rotated on a regularly scheduled basis.

It is important to note that the chairperson should give people a chance to speak and ensure that discussions are held in a relaxing atmosphere. He/she must be skilled in handling people.

## Secretary:

The secretary is regarded as the hub of the committee around whom its work revolves, through taking of minutes and keeping records. The secretary performs administrative duties diligently and efficiently. The secretary ensures that the chairperson is kept fully briefed at all times by means:

1. Keeping and distributing records of meetings.
2. Minutes taking.
3. Compiling agenda.
4. Writing reports.
5. Booking meeting venues.
6. Prepare sitting arrangements.

## Treasurer:

1. Manages the funds of the committee.
2. Acts as a watchdog by monitoring financial implication of projects and activities.
3. Keeps all financial records of the committee.

## Neighborhoods watch meetings:

1. Arrange a date, time and place for the first meeting way in advance to everyone involved adequate time.
2. Make sure the time is convenient for neighbors, stakeholders as well as the police officer that will be attending.
3. Distribute flyers announcing the meetings and remind everyone a few days before to ensure their attendance.
4. The location should be suitable and make everyone feel comfortable.

### What is a Neighborhood Watch Group?



- It is crime prevention initiative that involves the active participation of residents – working together with the police – to reduce the incidence and fear of crime in the communities.
- Neighborhood watches are the most effective means available for keeping crime out neighborhoods.
- Benefits of a neighborhood watch group:
  - Neighbors get to know each other and develop a program me of mutual assistance.
  - Neighbors are educated in crime report, identifying suspects and learning crime prevention techniques.
- It encourages members to keep a watchful eye on neighbors homes and to be alert to any suspicious or unusual activity that is happening close by.

Where can you form a Neighborhood Watch Group?

- Apartment buildings
- In cities and urban areas
- Town house complexes
- Locations
- Villages
- Cattle posts

### Why is a Neighborhood Watch Group important?

When there is a need to fight crime in a specific neighborhood caused by the following:

- House break –ins
- Mugging
- Loitering by unknown persons in the area
- Drug dealing
- Vandalism

### Where to get assistance:

At your local police station pr ask for assistance from your community policing office or community affairs office.

### Contact Details:

- Office of the Inspector General
  - Private Bag 12024
  - Ausspannplatz
  - WINDHOEK
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