

The role of the community

Citizens should actively seek explanations about community policing so that they understand the concept and the impact it may have on their community. Police in return will use the resources of the community and the knowledge of its members to uncover the real problems and find creative solutions to resolve them. Citizens contribute their concerns, ideas and values to preserve the safety of their community.

This can be achieved through the following:

1. Report crime. This can be done at your nearest police station, by calling 10111, sending an sms to City Police sms line 4444 (Windhoek only), through tip-offs, as an informer or NamPol suggestion boxes.
2. Identify crimes that are of concern in your area (e.g. housebreaking, drug dealing, domestic violence etc.) and report it to police.
3. Cooperate with police by giving tip offs or become an informer to supply police with information to assist during investigations.
4. Assist in problem solving initiatives in order to live in their communities peacefully.
5. Initiate and establish crime prevention programmes (e.g. Neighbourhood watch group forums)



When community policing works, both police and community members benefit from the improved relationship.



The role of the police

The role of law enforcement broadens with community policing. Police must be committed to improving the safety and quality of life in the community that they serve. This can be achieved through:

1. Initiating, sensitizing and advising residents to establish crime prevention programmes. It is not the duty of the police to recruit and mobilize communities to establish forums/groups.
2. Initiate meetings with local authorities and communities to help tackle problems and issues that are of concern. At these meetings, the role of police is to attend, mediate, give support and feedback (where necessary) to concerns raised and maintain community contacts by interacting with stakeholders.
3. Address the most urgent concerns of community members by reacting and giving feedback on time.

4. Patrol in high crime reported areas, hot spots and neighbourhoods to reduce the fear of crime.
5. Conduct ongoing public awareness campaigns on community policing activities in order to educate the public and for better crime control and prevention.

Who Should Be Involved?

1. **Community members:** People living in a designated area and neighbourhood e.g. Okuryangava, Laerveld, Windhoek North, Klein Windhoek, Brakwater etc. Community members are key to improving the safety and quality of life in their community. Through community policing, these members can be volunteers, reservists and involved in the neighbourhood watch.
2. **Community based groups:** Groups of individuals who share certain interests in the community such as victim groups, support groups or community development co-ops eg. Farmers Associations, Youth against Crime, Women and Men network etc.
3. **Local councils:** Local municipalities and town councils are key in community development projects and partnering with law enforcement agencies.
4. **Traditional/community leaders:** Leadership helps drive the process of achieving specific goals at town hall meetings, neighbourhood association meetings etc.
5. **Religious leaders/churches:** These are key in assisting police to educate the public on social evils such as drug abuse, alcohol misuse, domestic violence etc.
6. **Business sector:** Businesses can help identify problems and provide resources for responses, often including their own security technology and community outreach. They can also assist in disseminating information about police and business partnerships and initiatives to the public at large.
7. **Law enforcement agencies:** They exist to maintain law and order, advice and educate on laws of the country, community policing activities and in forming partnerships with stakeholders.
8. **Media:** The media is a powerful educational tool for communication with any community. They can assist with publicizing community concerns and available solutions, such as services from government or community agencies or new laws or codes that will be enforced. In addition, the media can have a significant impact on public perceptions of the police, crime problems, and fear of crime.

Crime prevention and community policing

Crime prevention is the real focus of community policing. Crime prevention and community policing share a common purpose-making the public feel safer. Crime prevention is the heart of community policing. And what the community wants most from the police is for crimes not to happen. They want crimes to be prevented. An effective way to achieve this is through community policing.



What you can do to assist:

- Establish neighbourhood watch forums
- Join a neighbourhood watch group in your area, if there is no group in your area, start one!
- Be a partnership institution by assisting a neighbourhood watch group in your area
- Become a reservist
- Report crimes by alerting police of any criminal activity in your community
- Do not harbor criminals
- Do not buy stolen/suspicious goods

Importance of police/community partnerships

Once Nampol have established a good reputation with its community, it must always work to keep their respect. By working in partnership with the community we can improve upon both our reputation and how the community views us as an organization and as individuals.

The concept of community policing is based on preventing crime. It was introduced by Sir Robert Peel of the London Metropolitan Police in 1829. Through the years the Namibian Police Force (NamPol) has looked at various ways to improve their services, to respond to calls from the community and to minimize crime. Community policing was one such way of achieving this. There are many definitions of community policing but every definition shares the same idea: **that the police and the community must work together to define and develop solutions to problems**

In NamPol, community policing is defined as a proactive approach by police to tackle community-based problems, through partnering with stakeholders to come up with long lasting solutions to bring peace and tranquility in neighbourhoods, by minimizing crime.

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With the inception of community policing in Namibia, communities nationwide can be assured of the assistance of the Namibian Police Force at all times. Your cooperation with the police will help to create better and safer neighbourhoods for all of us.”

Lieutenant General S.H. Ndeitunga, Inspector General of Namibian Police Force

An initiative of the

Community Policing Sub-Division
National Police Headquarters
Windhoek
Namibia
Tel.:+264 61 209 3111