DUTIES OF NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH COORDINATOR

The appointment of the proper Coordinator can determine the success of the program. This person should have prestige within the community, an ability to communicate and some free time for activities. The Coordinator is responsible for presiding over all meetings as well as:

1. Setting up the initial meeting to explain the concept of NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH.
2. Obtain Block Captains in the neighborhood to set up a file with their names, addresses and phone numbers (home, cell, and work) and emails addresses.
3. Serve as a liaison between NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH group and the police department crime prevention practitioner assigned to the area/district/zone.
4. Assist in the development of any program that would be beneficial to the community, i.e., court watch, citizen patrol, operation identification, etc.
5. Keep a master list of all participants in the NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH program.
6. Disseminate information and necessary materials to the Block Captains.
7. Attend crime prevention training sessions.
8. Schedule location for meetings (3 meetings required per year) as well as obtaining speakers for the meeting.
9. Welcome new members to your community and encourage their participation in the NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH.
10. Keep a master list on emergency telephone notification system and/or email notification system.
DUTIES OF BLOCK CAPTAIN

The Block Captains have one of the most important functions in the NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH Program, supervising the actual citizen participants who join NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH in their communities. The Block Captain is responsible for one block, usually 10 to 12 homes, and he/she is expected to:

1. Encourage neighborhood participation in the program.
2. Compile a list of names for all persons on their assigned block who wish to participate in the program, as well as their address, phone numbers (home, cell and work) and their email address.
3. Disseminate information to the citizens/residents in their assigned block.
4. Assist NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH Coordinator with neighborhood meetings.
5. Serve as the liaison between assigned block and the coordinator.
6. Attend NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH training.
7. Inform citizens/residents in assigned block of the NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH techniques, i.e., how to observe and report suspicious activities, how to join operation identification, etc.
8. Provide incentive for citizens/residents of assigned block to continue their crime prevention efforts.
9. Welcome new neighbors to the community and encourage their participation in NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH.
10. Assist in information and maintenance of telephone and/or email notification system for emergencies.
11. Relay information on community problems/suspicious activities to the coordinator so the coordinator is able to relate the information to the police department Crime Prevention Practitioner.
12. NOTE: The duties of the Block Captain will offer very little change in lifestyle for the citizen involved. Rather, it will provide a means for meeting your neighbors as well as a vehicle for making your community a safer place to live.
SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

The Lakeland Police Department can’t function effectively without the concerned assistance of responsible citizens. We are depending on you to call and advise us whenever you observe suspicious persons or actions.

Some people fail to call the police simply because they are not aware of what seemingly innocent activities might be suspicious. Others may notice suspicious activity and be hesitant to call for fear of seeming to be a “nosey neighbor” or a “crank”. Still others take it for granted that someone else has already called.

Call the Lakeland Police Department immediately about suspicious activity...and do it yourself. Don’t worry about “bothering” us because that is what we are here for. Don’t worry about being embarrassed if your suspicions prove unfounded. Think instead of what could happen if you do not act.
What Is Suspicious Activity?

Basically, anything that seems even slightly “out of place” for the area or is occurring at an unusual time of the day could be criminal activity. Some things to watch for and report include:

- A scream heard anywhere may mean a crime is being committed.
- Offers of merchandise or repair work at ridiculously low prices could mean stolen property or some type of fraud.
- Anyone removing accessories, license tags or gas from a vehicle.
- Anyone peering into parked vehicles may be looking for a vehicle to steal or looking for valuables left displayed in the vehicle.
- Someone attempting to enter a vehicle using a coat hanger or other device (Never assume that it is the owner who has locked his/her keys in the vehicle)
- Anyone tampering with the hood or trunk of a vehicle.
- An improperly parked vehicle or an abandoned vehicle (someone leaving one vehicle and driving away in another may be signs of a stolen vehicle)
- Any vehicle moving slowly and without lights, or following a course that appears aimless or repetitive (Occupants may be “casing” for places to rob or burglarize, or could possibly be a drug pusher or sex offender)
- A clean car with damaged plates
- Anyone being forced into a vehicle (possible abduction)
- Someone trying to open a neighbor’s door or window.
- A stranger inspecting or entering your neighbor’s home while they are away.
- A moving truck or van pulled up to a neighbor’s home while they are gone (Remember, burglaries often occur at times when they should be most obvious – broad daylight, in full view of observers)
- Someone carrying property such as TV’s, stereos, computers, etc., at a late hour or in an unusual place, especially if it does not appear that the property is newly purchased.
- Someone running from a home or business under unusual circumstances.
• The sound of breaking glass or other loud explosive noises (possible accident or house being broken into or vandalizing)
• Someone carrying a weapon.
• Person’s loitering around schools, parks, secluded areas or in the neighborhood
• School age children loitering around the area during school hours
• Business transactions conducted from vehicles, especially around schools, playgrounds or parks (A steady flow of strangers to and from a particular house on a regular basis could indicate drug sales or purchasing of stolen goods).
• Door-to-door solicitors without properly issued licenses and identification
• Persons around the neighborhood who don’t live there
• A stranger talking to or offering a child some candy, a gift or coaxing them to get into a vehicle
• Continuous “repair” operations at a non-business location could mean stolen property being stripped, repainted and otherwise altered
• Person exhibiting unusual mental or physical symptoms (may be injured, under the influence of drugs or otherwise needing medical or psychiatric assistance)

While this list points out many suspicious situations, it is by no means a complete record of all instances that can occur. While some, if not all of the above listed situations could have innocent explanations, the Lakeland Police Department would rather investigate a crime-prone situation than to be called when it is too late.

When To Call The Police?

Whenever you observe suspicious activity call the police. The Lakeland Police Department would rather get multiple calls concerning the same incident than no calls at all.

Often times citizens fail to act because they are not sure if what they are observing is suspicious activity.

When in doubt, call the Lakeland Police immediately,
In-progress EMERGENCY DIAL 911
Non-emergency 863.834-6966.
How To Report

The Lakeland Police need to have accurate information as quickly as possible about suspicious activity or crime in progress. Be prepared to furnish the following:

• Give your name, address and phone number.
• Tell if the crime is in progress or if it has already occurred.
• Describe the event in as brief a manner as possible. Where, when, how and who did it? Is anyone injured?
• Be precise when giving the details of the incident as the police officers respond differently depending on what type of crime is reported.
• Describe the suspect – sex, race, age, height, weight, hair color, clothing, SHOES, accent, beard, mustache, tattoos, scars, etc. Also note any distinctive characteristics or clothing. Write this down!
• Answer all questions and stay on the phone until the police dispatcher has all the needed information. Be available to assist the responding police officer(s) with additional information. (This is usually done by phone).
• If possible, after calling the police, call a neighbor so they can help watch the suspect and be able to give the police a more detailed description. (After reporting the incident to the police, notify your block captain and activate phone chain. If notification is done through email, the block captain will provide an email notice)

Remember, we are all working together to combat crime!
**Neighborhood Watch Members Responsibility**

- Watch and report suspicious activities without bias
- Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings.
- Watch out for neighborhood children and report problems to parent/police.
- **Be informed:** Read the paper, listen or watch local and national news reports and attend community meetings.
- **Be alert:** Be familiar with your environment at home, school, work, church and social events.
- **Be prepared:** Have a prepared family plan for emergencies. Create a family first aid kit, attend crime prevention classes and get involved with your local Law Enforcement and crime prevention associations.

The most crucial segment of crime and terrorism prevention is the sharing of information between partners.

**Remember never approach. Always Wait on Law Enforcement.**

Neighborhood Watch members should always report crime and suspicious activity to the Lakeland Police Department. Neighborhood Watch members are not permitted to follow, approach, stop, or detain suspicious persons. Watch members are not permitted to conduct what could be deemed as “neighborhood patrols” and as such are not permitted to carry firearms in this capacity. Neighborhood Watch members who may possess a “concealed weapons permit” are not permitted to carry a weapon to any event, activity or function of the Lakeland Police Department Neighborhood Watch Program.
FOLLOW-UP NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAMS

After establishing a new and active NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH, we have found that crimes in newly established areas tend to take a drastic drop because of immediate involvement of the citizens. Sometimes this can work as a disadvantage to the new WATCH group. Resident/citizens feel they have eliminated the crime problem and need not continue with good crime prevention practices they learned through the WATCH program, i.e., locking doors and windows and turning on outside lighting. They also feel meetings with their WATCH group are no longer needed unless there is a crime problem. That is wrong!

In order to maintain an active NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH, meetings are imperative to draw the WATCH members together to communicate. To resolve this problem we have suggested that the WATCH group hold meetings with guest speakers at least twice per year and have a social gathering at least once a year.

Listed below are some programs ideas for follow-up meetings for the NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH group:

2. Security Systems – have a representative from a security company to demonstrate residential alarm systems.
3. Locksmith – have a representative from a local locksmith talk on residential locking devices.
4. C.P.R./First Aid – paramedics talk on first aid and C.P.R.
5. ANY program the Coordinator and Block Captains of the NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH desires.
NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH FAMILY DATA SHEET

Family Name: ____________________________________________

Home Address: ____________________________________________

Phone(s)  Home: ___________________  Cell: ___________________
           Work: ___________________

Adults of Household: ______________________________________

Children (Names & Ages):
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

Individual To Contact In Emergency
Name: ____________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________

Phone: ____________________________________________________

Family Vehicles (Year, Make, Model, License Tag)
Vehicle 1: ________________________________________________

Vehicle 2: ________________________________________________

Vehicle 3: ________________________________________________
Other pertinent/important information:

________________________________________________________________________

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# SUSPECT IDENTITY CHART

**Physical Appearance:**

Sex ________ Age ________ Height ________ Weight ________

Body Build (slight, heavy, posture, proportions, etc):

________________________________________________________________________

Race or Nationality: _____________________________________________

Face (shape, bone structure, complexion): ____________________________

Eyes (narrow, wide-set, deep-set, color): _____________________________

Nose (long, short, broad, narrow, etc.): _____________________________

Chin (square, dimpled, pointed, etc.): ______________________________

Beard or Mustache: _______________________________________________

Other identifying characteristics: _________________________________

Hair (color, style, length, texture): _________________________________

Ears (noticeable shape, size, prominently sticking out): ________________

Identifying marks (scars, tattoos, birthmarks, etc.): _________________

Identifying actions (mannerisms, walking style, speech, left or right handed):

____________________________________________________________________

Weapons or equipment used: _________________________________________

Identifying comments (mention names, places, dates, etc.):

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
**Clothing:**

Hat ____________________ Coat/Jacket ____________________
Shoes ____________________ Shirt ____________________
Pants ____________________ Socks ____________________
Jewelry ____________________ Accessories ____________________

**Vehicle:**

Make ____________________ Model ____________________
Year ____________________ Color ____________________
Dents/Marks ____________________ Tag No. ____________________
Direction of Travel ____________________
IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Lakeland Police Department (Non-Emergency) . .863-834-6900
Lakeland Fire Department (Non-Emergency) . .863-834-8200
Ambulance ......................................................... 911
Abuse Hotline ...................................................... 1-800-962-2873
Aggressive Driver ...................................................... 834-RAGE (7243)
Animal Control ...................................................... 499-2600
Code Enforcement ................................................... 834-6251
Consumer Services .................................................... 1-800-435-7352
Crisis Line .............................................................. 519-3744
Down Power Line .................................................... 1-866-834-4248
Drug Hotline ............................................................ 834-2549
Florida Highway Patrol ............................................. 499-2300
Fish & Wildlife Commission (FWC) ......................... 648-3203
Florida Department of Law Enforcement ..................... 499-2334
Missing Children Information Clearing House ............. 1-800-342-0821
Poison Control ........................................................ 1-800-222-1222

ADDITIONAL NUMBERS
COMMUNITY SERVICE UNIT

Dr. Greg Robinson, Supervisor ..................... 834-6912
Susana Aviles ................................... 834-8984
George Edwards ................................ 834-3974
Adria Holmes ................................... 834-6960
Cindy Sharp .................................... 834-2973