



Lower Makefield Township Neighborhood Watch Association



What is a Neighborhood Watch?

A Neighborhood Watch is just that, neighbors watching out for neighbors. In today's society, people are very busy with their normal everyday routines - work, carpools, kids, extracurricular activities, etc. People often don't know more than just their immediate neighbors. A Neighborhood Watch helps bring together concerned citizens to address issues that relate to your neighborhood, and is quite simply the most effective way to reduce or prevent crime and make your community a better place to live.

Do I have to do anything?

You will need to provide certain information to your Block Captain, agree to participate in the phone chain, and must remember to provide updated information as it changes (i.e. new work phone number). Members are expected to report any unusual or suspicious behavior to the local police or to their Block Captain. When making a report, be sure to have all the information possible (car make & model, color, license plate, etc.) and remember to call immediately - any delay gives the criminal a chance to get away.

What information do I have to provide, and who sees it?

Each Neighborhood Watch is different and can be 'tailor-made' for your area. Most neighborhood watches gather the following information:

- Name (of all occupants of each home)
- Address
- Email
- Home & work phone numbers
- Age of children (with birth date for tracking purposes)
- Make, model, color, year, and license plate of all cars
- Pets
- Special considerations (i.e. If there are people who live with you who only speak Spanish, NW needs to know in case of emergency, blindness etc.)
- ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact (this is especially good information if there is a fire, if a pipe bursts or there is an accident)

All information is kept confidential. The Block Captains and the Neighborhood Watch coordinator are the only people who see this information. It is necessary to keep the information current, and that means that you must notify your Block Captain whenever there is a change in the information.

We have no problems now; why do we need this in our neighborhood?

Crime, as we are all aware, has been a growing problem all over the world in the last 30 years. But we are not powerless against crime. Much is being done – and more can be done – to reverse the trend. You can play a part in it.

The first step towards preventing crime is to understand its nature. Most crime is against property, not people. Most crimes are not carried out by professionals; nor is it carefully planned. Property crimes thrive on opportunity. They are often committed by adolescents and young men, the majority of whom stop offending as they grow older. Peak ages for offending are 15 to 18. Also, and not surprisingly, the risk of crime varies greatly depending on where you live. This reliance by criminals on the easy opportunity is the key to much crime prevention.

You've all heard the old expression, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This holds true when fighting crime. Why wait until there have been a few break-ins or some mailboxes smashed? By pulling together as a group, you can keep your neighborhood safe.

How does Neighborhood Watch work?

Your Neighborhood Watch coordinator will work closely with the local police department to empower the neighborhood, and through education and teamwork you can reduce your chances of becoming a victim of crime. This helps to give you and your neighborhood a greater sense of security, as well as an increased sense of community.

Everyone in the Neighborhood Watch plays an important role in the success of the program. First, each resident is responsible for taking certain precautions to detract criminals. For example, lock your home when you leave, and never leave your car unlocked. Have someone pick up your paper and mail when you travel. Leave lights on timers when you are gone for long periods of time. Simple steps can make the difference.

Next, always be aware of the people around you. If you notice something that doesn't look quite right, call the Police. Be sure to notify your Block Captain so that the neighborhood can be made aware of the situation. If necessary, the NW phone chain can be activated. For example, if there is a break-in into one of the homes in your area, you will be notified so that you can check your home, make sure it is secure, and to see if you perhaps noticed anything which might help the police catch the thieves.

Do I have to go to meetings?

No, you do not have to attend the meetings, but it is a good way to get to know your neighbors. The meetings are held to inform the neighborhood of the current problems in and around the township, and to discuss different safety topics.

Does it cost anything to belong?

There is no mandatory cost. Voluntary donations are collected when needed to cover the cost of paperwork, flyers, etc. A token amount of \$2 or \$5 per house once a year is usually enough to cover all expenses.

How is a Neighborhood Watch different than an Association?

An Association has rules and regulations, which everyone must follow. A Neighborhood Watch is voluntary. Most Associations involve annual dues. Neighborhood Watches donations are voluntary. A Neighborhood Watch is strictly a safety precaution/crime prevention tool used to make your neighborhood a safer place to live.