



Margate Police Department

PROTECT YOUR BLOCK

Your Guide to Starting a Neighborhood Watch Group

A BRIEF HISTORY ON NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUPS:

Why They Get Started



Neighborhood watch groups sprang up in the 1970's and early 1980's as a resource to inform citizens of security and safety issues in their neighborhoods. They establish a system that can act as a monitor in addition to law enforcement.



40% Increase - Journalist Resource says that by 2000, almost 40% of the US residential population was covered by a citizen crime watch program.



16% Decrease - A study by the US Department of Justice in 2008 found that a 16% decrease in crime occurred in neighborhood watch communities.



THE PERKS OF HAVING A WATCH

A neighborhood watch is the “eyes and ears” of a community. They are the closest link to local law enforcement and advantages for having the group are invaluable. These include:

- Safer community
- Less crime and incidents
- Improved quality of life
- Relationship with law enforcement
- Stronger and more tight knit community
- Effective and low cost approach to crime
- Knowing a neighborhood has a watch program can deter criminals

MORE THAN A WATCH GROUP

Neighborhood watches are started in an effort to reduce crime rates, provide security, and bring together a community. This cause can unify and fill a neighborhood with pride.

Watches often do things for the entire community. They might even be born out of the desire to preserve parks, open spaces, sidewalks, or other infrastructure. Watches are also a great way to build relationships with law enforcement.

Since watch groups host events, plan meetings, and preserve the neighborhood, a fee often accompanies membership. Fees are likely minimal, and collected funds will go to the watch program or neighborhood if there are any needs.





HOW CAN YOU START ONE?

Start by gauging interest to see if a group is something your neighborhood wants to establish. Put together a small team that can plan, talk about needs, gauge broader interest, evaluate possible challenges, and work as the advisory board for the watch. Find a meeting location. This could be a home, church, or local community center. Plan agendas to make sure the meetings run smoothly, and mix business with some socializing so members feel engaged.

You'll need to reach out to Margate Police Department at (954) 972-7111 and ask to speak with Officer Samuel Phanor or Officer Rachel Druz bik and let them know you are interested in starting a neighborhood watch program. They can accredit you and ensure that you have filed all the appropriate forms. Lastly and most importantly—promote and market your meetings. Let the neighborhood know via social media, flyers, phone calls, or a combination of these that you are starting a program. Media and local businesses can also help build a presence.



TIME TO BUILD A SYSTEM

Built to Last a Lifetime

National Neighborhood Watch

The National Neighborhood Watch program began in 1972 through partial funding from the National Sheriff's Association and a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Relieve Anxiety

Oftentimes people are reluctant to start watches due to the fear of retaliation. They believe that criminals will harm them. This is most prominent in communities with gang violence. Many law enforcement agencies do provide outlets to provide information anonymously, but if you are a witness to crime it is vitally important for prosecutors to hear your testimony. Encourage members that participation won't place them at risk, and relieve any anxieties they may have.



TIME TO BUILD A SYSTEM

Continued...

Block Captains

As a block captain you will inform the neighborhood of what is happening on their specific street corners. Captains will also communicate with us to let them know what's happening in the neighborhood as a whole. Block captains are the connecting point between the neighborhood and watch leaders.

Communication is Key

Establish the method that you'll use to communicate regularly. Whether that be e-mail, social media, phone, newsletter, or a combination of many channels.

Know Your Neighborhoods

Have names, phone numbers, and a map of participants and their households. This can help you get to know each other, and have an idea of who hasn't been involved yet that you may want to invite.

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. The image shows a street intersection with several cars. Houses with various roof colors (brown, grey, blue) are visible, along with bare trees and green lawns. The right side of the image is overlaid with a dark blue gradient containing white text.

TIME TO BUILD A SYSTEM

Continued...

Contact the Margate Police Department

We have eligibility requirements before we can issue your neighborhood watch signs and recognize your group as an official Margate neighborhood watch group. We need to identify the number of houses or members that are willing to join the group as well as the registration and appointment form to be completed.

Watchers are NOT Vigilantes

It's important to stress that watch groups **ARE NOT** vigilantes and will never assume the role of the police. Suspicious activities that are seen need to be reported to law enforcement.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

EVERY COMMUNITY NEEDS
EYES AND EARS.



Involve Everyone

No matter what size or age, everyone in the neighborhood is of value. Recruit them and bring them together. More people means more coverage.

Meetings

Bring guest speakers and relevant entertainment or information to meetings to keep the cause fresh and people excited. Make sure these meetings are accessible to everyone, and they accommodate people with disabilities.

Don't be Aggressors

Patrol programs are useful ways to monitor the neighborhood, but never assume the role of aggressor. The role of a watch is to deter and monitor crime, not to be the hand of justice.

Have Home Security and Display Signs

Encourage residents to purchase home security systems and display yard signs. This will further deter burglars. Other home security features like motion sensor lights or security cameras are important as well.

Be a Community

These groups can extend their reach away from just crime. Things like gang violence, drug abuse, elderly issues, crime in schools, and sexual assault prevention brings neighbors together through events, activities, awards, et cetera.

READY TO GET STARTED?



CONTACT US TODAY

Step 1:

Call the Margate Police Department at (954) 972-7111 and ask to speak with Officer Samuel Phanor or Officer Rachel Druzvik and let them know you are interested in starting a neighborhood watch program. Discuss the types of crime or issues that are prevalent in your neighborhood, and what type of neighborhood you live in (apartment, subdivision, rural homes, etc.).

Step 2:

Contact your neighbors to find out who is interested. Visit them door-to-door. Going door-to-door, text message or a closed Facebook Group is a great way to promote Neighborhood Crime Watch! Let's get started today and keep our community safe!

#MPDPROUD