



MARGATE POLICE DEPARTMENT
NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH - COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE



MPD'S NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

A Healthy Community Program



**Your Guide to Starting a Neighborhood
Watch Group**



WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?



1. Neighborhood Watch is a police department facilitated community action and problem-solving program.
2. Neighborhood Watch encourages community collaboration as a way to maintain a healthy and vibrant neighborhood; an element shown by research to significantly reduce your risk for residential crime.
3. Through collaboration, neighbors develop a plan to communicate and tackle issues like crime and suspicious activity.
4. Neighborhood Watch is not a guard duty.
5. Neighborhood Watch teaches neighbors to look at their community in a new way - understanding what is normal and identifying what is suspicious. Neighborhood Watch then teaches neighbors what resources to use and when to use them.
6. Through Neighborhood Watch you will learn:
 - a. About your neighbors.
 - b. About the Margate Police Department.
 - c. About crime and police activity in your area.
 - d. How to effectively communicate with your neighbors.
 - e. How to call the police and what to say.
 - f. How to resolve the neighborhood issues that concern you.

LET'S GET STARTED...

1. What area are you trying to organize?

- a. A block or street?
- b. A homeowners' association (HOA)?

2. If you chose (a), a block or street:

- a. Look at a map and count out a group of 12-20 homes that surround you. Include all the homes on the map. This is called a "Neighborhood Watch Block," and is a reasonably managed group of people.

3. If you chose (b), your HOA:

- a. Look at a map and divide the area into groups of 12-20 homes.
- b. Each group of 12-20 homes will be called a Neighborhood Watch Block. The group of Neighborhood Watch Blocks will be called a "Neighborhood Watch District."

4. Select a Neighborhood Watch block captain.

- a. You need one person per Neighborhood Watch block to be the block's captain.
- b. A Neighborhood Watch block captain is the spokesperson for the block and the liaison to the police department.

BLOCK CAPTAINS START HERE



BLOCK CAPTAINS...

1. Contact Margate Police Department's **Community Relations Unit** to obtain the "Neighborhood Watch Needs Assessment Survey."

- a. E-mail: communityrelationsunit@margatefl.com or call 954-972-7111.
- b. The Needs Assessment Survey gathers information necessary to personalize and facilitate your first Neighborhood Watch meeting.
- c. In preparation for your meeting, information on the survey is analyzed and used to gather resource information and educational materials.

2. Introduce yourself to your neighbors.

- a. Personally speak to the residents in your block of 12-20 homes.
- b. Use the first page of this guide to share the goal of the Neighborhood Watch Program.
- c. Let neighbors know that participation does not require a great deal of their time; it is about getting to know each other and understanding resources like the police department.

d. Give a resident at each house a Needs Assessment Survey.

Let the neighbor know the purpose of the survey.

Let the neighbor know this is a great opportunity to be heard.

e. Arrange to collect the surveys.

Allow neighbors to be anonymous.

Do not use mailboxes as it is against federal law.

f. Ask your neighbors what day would be best for a Neighborhood Watch Meeting.

Meetings are typically held Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm.



SCHEDULE A MEETING ...

1. Once you have the majority of the surveys returned, it is time to arrange for your first Neighborhood Watch Meeting.

- a. E-mail communityrelationsunit@margatefl.com or call 954-972- 7111.
- b. About 3 weeks advanced notice is needed.
- c. Meetings last between 1½ - 2 hours, depending on participation.
- d. Traditionally and logistically, meetings are held in the block captain's home.
- e. Inside is usually better for lighting, sound and temperature.
- f. Crime and police activity are not appropriate subjects for children; please do not have children at the meeting.

2. Return the surveys to the police department well in advance of your first meeting (2 Weeks Prior). Mail or hand deliver the surveys to the Police Department:

Community Relations Unit
5790 Margate Blvd.
Margate, FL 33063

3. Distribute the invitation.

a. The **Community Relations Unit** will email or bring you a personalized invitation for your meeting.

- i. Have neighbors mark their calendars now.
- ii. Send a reminder a day or so before the meeting.



MEETING PREPARATION...

- 1. Create a map of your Neighborhood Watch Block.**
 - a. Include the streets and all the houses on your block.
 - b. This will create a visual image and a quick reference.
 - c. Put the name, address and phone number on each house.
 - d. Make copies to distribute to each neighbor at the meeting.

- 2. Consider offering simple refreshments such as cookies and coffee.**
 - a. Allow neighbors to help you.
 - b. Ask for volunteers to complete tasks.
 - c. If you want to be more elaborate, have a potluck before the meeting.
 - d. Please, no alcohol.

- 3. Provide and distribute name tags.**
 - a. Remember you want your neighbors to get to know each other.
 - b. Write names and street numbers on the tag.

- 4. Assign tasks.**
 - a. Have someone take attendance.
 - b. Have someone take notes.



WHAT'S NEXT...?

1. Gather important neighborhood information.

a. Remember this information helps you and your neighbors establish what is normal so you can take action when something is suspicious. It also gives you valuable resources to help your neighbors when necessary.

b. Examples are: work schedules, work phone number, contracted services (gardeners, nannies, and housekeepers), vehicle information and vacations.

2. Create a plan for neighborhood communication. Methods for enhancing communication are: e-mail trees, newsletters, regular social gatherings and telephone trees.

3. Follow-through with the action plan developed at the first meeting. **Assign tasks to get the ball rolling.** Set a time to check-in to see how the tasks are developing toward the neighborhood goal. Regularly let the entire group know about the plan's progress.

Keep in touch with the your Community Relations Officers. If you need resources, clarification or other help, do not hesitate to e-mail or call.

954-972-7111 or Email: communityrelationsunit@margatefl.com

