



## HOW TO PLAN A BLOCK MEETING

Neighborhoods come with their own unique set of problems and concerns. Your first Neighborhood Watch meeting should result in an action plan. Promote and open discussion to establish a foundation that will reduce crime and protect against disaster either natural or man-made in your neighborhood. Subsequent meetings can resolve issues taken up at the first meeting and build upon the momentum that was established previously.

### First Neighborhood Watch Meeting

- Talk to some of your neighbors about having an informal meeting. Maybe someone will offer their home or volunteer to pass out invitations.
- Pick a time and date and inform your neighbors of the schedule by posting flyers throughout the neighborhood.
- Call the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department Community Relations Officer at 378-4211 two to three weeks in advance to discuss a date and time if you would like us to participate.
  - Have an alternate date in case your first choice is not available.
  - Normally, the Community Relations Officer will present a program 15- 45 minutes in length. The Area Coordinator or another member of the PVE Neighborhood Watch Board of Directors will attend and discuss the organization and its accomplishments within the community
- Prepare an agenda for the first meeting.
- Have writing pads, pens and membership forms.
- In order to effectively facilitate the meeting keep it focused, moving, and positive.
- Remember that you are laying the groundwork for effective solutions to fight crime in your neighborhood. Avoid leading a group gossip or complaint session.
- In order to maximize effectiveness try to keep the meeting under two hours.
- Have a sign-in sheet list at the door, or pass one around during the meeting so neighbors can fill in their names, addresses, home and work telephone numbers. It is also advisable to list if there are young children or someone that may need assistance in an emergency.

- Allow people to express anger and fear, but do not allow the venting of emotion to dominate the agenda.
- Save questions for the end of the meeting as many of the issues may be dealt with during the course of the meeting.
- Encourage neighbors to write down questions instead of blurting them out arbitrarily.
- Serve refreshments or have guests bring an item to share.
- Thank guest for participating

## **Agenda**

1. Introduce and explain a little bit about yourself and what has motivated you to implement a Neighborhood Watch Program. (2-3 minutes)
2. Explain the purpose of Neighborhood Watch and how it can be effective and successful if neighbors watch out for each other interest. (10 minutes)
3. Ask if everybody is acquainted with the neighbors in the room.
  - a. Have your neighbors introduce themselves to each other (5 minutes)
4. Discuss what individual neighbors have done or plan to do to curb crime or prepare for disasters in the neighborhood. (10 minutes)
5. Discuss suspicious or criminal activities that plague the neighborhood such as auto theft, burglary, drugs, gang activity, graffiti, etc., in a rational non-threatening way. Also discuss common concerns about threats of disaster. (20 minutes)
6. Discuss what vehicles belong in your neighborhood and their daily routines.
  - a. This assists your visual recognition of unusual or suspicious activity.
  - b. Neighbors often times recognize each other only by the vehicle they drive.
7. Discuss unusual work hours in your neighborhood.
  - a. Many people work swing and graveyard shifts and this may account for unusual traffic patterns at seemingly inappropriate hours.
8. Encourage neighbors to gather home safety information such as vacation schedule, special deliveries, unusual activity around your home, and share it with your block captain.
9. Notify a neighbor within your group when you are expecting technicians or service operators. Thieves and robbers sometimes operate under the guise of legitimate business. (Gather this information for the second meeting.)
10. Discuss the purchase of emergency supplies such as non-perishable foods, bottled water, first aid kits, flash lights, battery powered radios, batteries and emergency rain gear.
  - a. Share with each other special skills (EMT, Child Care Provider, Doctors, etc.)
11. Close the meeting on a positive note.