

HOW TO CREATE A NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK WATCH

Presented by: Building Stronger
Neighborhoods Committee



Getting Started

- Starting a Block Watch is one of the most effective and least costly ways to prevent crime and is easy to do.
- Start by teaming up with your local C.O.P.S. Shop. You can either go into your local shop or complete a Block Watch Representative application on the C.O.P.S. website, www.spokanecops.org.
- Once your application is approved, a volunteer from that shop will call you to help set up a time and place for your first meeting. A volunteer Block Watch Coordinator will also be available to host your first meeting, helping you to become established, create a Block Map, and suggest ways to keep your members engaged.



Once You're Approved

Now it's time to create your Block Watch:

- Talk to your neighbors. Try to get folks involved by explaining to them how working together can help keep your neighborhood safe.
- Create a Block Map. This is an important communication tool that includes contact information for all of your neighbors to be distributed to all of your neighbors. This should be updated every year with your neighbors and your local C.O.P.S. Shop to keep the information current and accurate
- After your first meeting, communication is key. Be alert, know your neighbors, and look out for each other. Be ready and encourage others to report suspicious behavior

How to Keep a Block Watch Going

- It can be difficult to keep the community continually engaged in Block Watch. Folks watch out for each other for awhile and then the neighborhood remains calm and neighbors lose interest, become less vigilant, and become disengaged. Until something happens again. Prevent your Block Watch from falling into this trap with these simple suggestions:
 - ✓ Schedule and plan meetings as often as possible, at a minimum once a year, and make them interesting. Consider having open house parties during the holidays, barbeques during the summer, potlucks any time
 - ✓ National Night Out is a great time to get together with your Block Watch. Across the city, groups come together for this event, hosting barbeques and potlucks the first Tuesday of every August. Some of these parties have even gone beyond that, including outdoor games, movies, a moon bounce, you name it (For more information on NNO, check out the C.O.P.S. website or natw.org).

How to Keep a Block Watch Going

- Consider having guest speakers at your meetings, such as your Neighborhood Resource Officer, Community Corrections Officers, Code Enforcement, Mental Health professionals, etc. Your local C.O.P.S. Shop can also help set this up.
- Consider creating walking Neighborhood Observation Patrols (NOPs) where neighbors walk the neighborhood at a specified time together as often as possible. Encourage folks to NOP when walking their dogs, going to the park, or sitting on their porch. The more eyes more often, the better.
- At gatherings, welcome new neighbors. Remember to update and distribute the Block Map and when you need a replacement, reach out to your neighbors and your local C.O.P.S. Shop for assistance.