

Learn How to Start Up a Neighborhood Watch



Monday, January 18th, 6pm-730pm
Mission Oaks Recreation and Park District
Swanston Park, Community room
2330 Northrop Avenue, Sacramento

10 steps to starting Neighborhood Watch

1. First decide what portion of your street and other intersecting streets are the most valuable to your neighborhood watch. Determine how many homes and neighbors do you want to include. Count the houses. We really like to have at least 12 houses, but if you're up to 35 or more than you're going to need another dedicated neighbor to co-coordinate the watch with you.
2. Then, start going door to door with a flyer or letter. Leave something at the door with your contact information if they are not home. If they answer the door, introduce yourself to your neighbor. This is very important. Explain why you're interested in doing this and point out to them where you live. Tell them the importance of knowing your neighbors and sharing community information. See who is interested and who is not. Scale up or scale down, your membership area. Find out what day is best for a meeting.
3. Set a meeting date and hand out the invitation notice. Put on the notice that the meeting will be in the yard (garage, nearby church or your living room) and to bring a lawn chair.
4. Your first meeting should be highly visible. I recommend outdoors in a front yard, lighting and weather permitting. You're in charge and you run the meeting. You can have an agenda, a sign-in sheet and a question and answer session afterwards. I suggest that you do a quick round-robin and introduce everyone, asking why they came and describing where they lived and how long they have lived there. Keep their response to 60 seconds a person and tell them to only discuss recent crime. (People will talk about a crime from 10 years ago). Discuss the needs of the neighborhood and what you found out from your door to door visits and tailor the meeting to your needs.
5. Present crime statistics (www.sacsheriff.com – crime mapping or www.crimereports.com).
6. Present Neighborhood Watch program. (Attend the Sheriff's Neighborhood Watch Start-up)
7. Make sure that everyone signed in and that you have everyone's permission to put them on an email distribution list.
8. Find interested, socially friendly leaders to help and set hierarchy rules for communicating and leading the group.
9. Create an email distribution list and a roster/map. Your biggest challenge is getting a Neighborhood Watch Map and email list completed after the first meeting. If you can get past that, then you're well on your way to having a successful Neighborhood Watch. Make sure that the Crime Prevention Specialist and your members all have a copy.
10. Meet every 6 months or more often as needed. Always report crime and suspicious activity.

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