

HOW TO ESTABLISH A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH



An important part of the Sherburne County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention offerings is the Neighborhood Watch program. We encourage everyone to get involved. To make sure the Neighborhood Watch program remains effective, certain guidelines will be met in order to become a Watch area.

- To start a Neighborhood Watch, a meeting with Deputy Roxanne Schreder, or other designee, must be held. It is important that members of the Watch area attend this meeting. Participation of at least fifty percent of the planned Watch area is expected. It is critical that those in the potential Watch area come to this initial meeting. Below are some of the topics which will be discussed at this meeting.
 - Information concerning the background and purpose of a Neighborhood Watch.
 - Crime information about your specific neighborhood or area.
 - Informative information about the Sherburne County Sheriff's Office and its operations.
 - Crime prevention information concerning current trends.
 - Information concerning Operation Identification and how to enroll in the program.
- One to two contact people will be selected at this first meeting. These individuals will be the contact people for the Watch area and will be referred to as "Crime Watch Captains."
- It is recommended that a second Crime Watch meeting be held within one year of the initial meeting and continue once a year in order to maintain communication with your neighbors. A National Night Out/Minnesota Night to Unite (on the first Tuesday in August) gathering or any neighborhood get-together can count as a meeting. We ask that you notify the Sherburne County Sheriff's Office and let us know of any event you hold so that we can document it and maintain your active status as a Crime Watch Neighborhood.

Getting Started

- Define the area of your Crime Watch – if you have questions on this, please ask. Some areas currently have 10 households or more within a watch because of the nature of the layout of the area (down a county road with acreage in-between homes) or potentially incorporate areas that cover a specific housing development or home owners association.
- Find out the interest level in your neighborhood by talking to your neighbors. This will help you determine if you will have enough involvement. (Note: Fifty percent of households need to participate to activate, and continue, the program in your area.)
- Arrange a meeting date with Deputy Roxanne Schreder and neighbors. Please provide a few weeks notice and a few dates to pick from, if possible, when contacting the Sheriff's Office for the meeting.
- Try and determine if there are specific neighborhood problems, i.e. recent thefts, animal complaints, etc, and let us know in advance.
- Plan on a one-hour presentation with time for questions.
- It's a good idea to have refreshments that either the host can provide or the participants can bring.
- Notify neighbors 10 to 14 days in advance of the meeting date. We have a sample flyer you may use if you wish. Often times a phone call reminder the night before is helpful also.

Benefits of Having a Crime Watch

- Getting to know your neighbors who will "watch out" for your neighborhood.
- Increase communication between your neighborhood and the Sheriff's Office.
- Having Crime Watch signs help to identify your neighborhood by letting criminals know you're involved. (The signs are free.)
- Neighbors who are more likely to be aware of your home and report suspicious activity.
- Possible discounts on home insurance premiums.
- Opportunity to participate in the Operation Identification program.
- Great way to involve your neighborhood in Night to Unite and the partnerships that develop from that event.