

Azalea Lakes Subdivision Association
Neighborhood Watch Program
Neighborhood Watch Manual Synopsis

This synopsis is being prepared for the residents of the Azalea Lakes Subdivision, First Filing; Baton Rouge, Louisiana in August, 2011 by Roland Richardson – Association President. This synopsis is being prepared from the currently available (2011) Neighborhood Watch Manual and sourced by USAonWatch, the face of the revitalized Neighborhood Watch initiative.

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Chapter One

USA on Watch

The National Face of Neighborhood Watch

USAonWatch was launched by a partnership of the National Sheriffs' Association, the USA Freedom Corps, Citizen Corps and the U.S. Department of Justice. USAonWatch represents the expanded role of watch programs throughout the United States - expanding beyond their traditional crime prevention role to help neighborhoods focus on disaster preparedness, emergency response and terrorism awareness.

The side notes that appear in the text are ideas to be discussed and possibly incorporated into the Azalea Lakes Subdivision Association (ALSA) Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP).

The Neighborhood Watch Program

Purpose: a safer neighborhood.

Base: cooperative efforts of neighborhood residents and local law enforcement.

System: regular meetings, specific goals, assigned responsibilities

Who: One hundred forty-seven households of ALSA, First Filing

Broader View: emergency preparedness, crime prevention, community disaster response, neighborhood unity, neighborhood cleanup, transient monitoring.

Options: neighborhood patrols, crime prevention information, home security surveys (“target hardening”, increasing lines of “defense” by identifying multiple methods that can be employed to protect the resident and stop the criminal).

Ideas – A) notifying neighbors of 1 - ‘routines and schedules’ (the “nine-to-five” or the “shift-worker”; 2- ‘vacations and business trips’. B) establishing ‘sitting eyes’ – residents who are typically home and have opportunity to watch the neighborhood; and ‘rolling eyes’ – residents who, as they are leaving or

entering the neighborhood, drive slower than normal to make note of the status or change in status of the environment.

Stop “Boris the Burglar” – the slash circle emblem over the criminal character on the neighborhood watch road sign.

Ideas – A) “ALSAonGuard” as name for the subdivision neighborhood watch program. B) Keep watch for “no-name vans” parked in unexpected locations in subdivision.

Benefits: crime reduction; a better quality of life; a greater sense of security, responsibility and personal control; build community pride and unity; prepare to help ourselves and our community; volunteer support for law enforcement; the extra “eyes and ears” of law enforcement.

“Broader Events” – occurrences happening outside of our immediate neighborhood but extremely close, i.e., incidents occurring in Azalea Lakes North Subdivision, our northern neighbor; incidents occurring in Pecan Creek, our western neighbor; or in Manchac Park, a public park to our southwest.

Benefits: crime reduction; a better quality of life; a greater sense of security and personal control; build community pride and unity; prepare to help ourselves and our community; volunteer support for law enforcement; the extra “eyes and ears” of law enforcement.

Suggest: “Neighborhood Directory” – First call numbers for every household in the neighborhood. Inclusion is optional but highly encouraged. Minimal entry would include a contact name, address, and a “first call” number. Secondary information may include a second contact name, secondary phone number(s), whether there are children, notation(s) for increased age or special needs, email address, nearest relative contact.

Who is involved?

The Law Enforcement Liaison – Cpl. Randy Aguilard

The Kleinpeter Sheriff’s Substation Commander – Capt. Steve Young

The residents of the ALSA NWP

First meeting on July 30, 2011 at the Jones Creek Library. Seventeen households represented by one or more members. This is a “seed”; it will grow – don’t be discouraged.

The second meeting was “the first Tuesday in August”; the date for the annual ‘Neighborhood Night Out Against Crime’. For 2011, the event was held on August 2, and the ‘impromptu’ (less than 36 hours notice) meeting was held in the association president’s driveway. Cookies, chips and drinks were had for refreshments. Thirty-five households were represented. Growing already.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 27, 2011 (today is 8/10/11), again at the Jones Creek Library at 10:00 a.m. Let’s hope to double attendance again.

Concerns and Issues:

- 1) Clarity with Azalea Lakes North
 - a) Define ALSA park access with regard to Azalea Lakes North residents.
 - b) Identify level of desire for access.
 - c) Define rules/costs for access
- 2) Outreach to apartments across Jefferson Highway – “front door protection”
 - a) Cooperative protection
 - b) Minimize suspicions
- 3) “Backdoors”- back to back coverage
 - 1) Minimize “passing through” attacks by criminals using one subdivision’s access to get to and from the other.
 - 2) Cooperative “lake watch”
 - a) Boats on the water without tags
 - b) Transients/Pedestrians walking on the bulkheads

Chapter Two

Starting a Neighborhood Watch

- 1) Talk with fellow neighbors about their concerns regarding crime and safety in the area.
- 2) Identify concerns and issues
 - Establish core group
 - Meet with local law enforcement representative
 - Generate plans to resolve issues
- 3) Prioritize concerns, issues, and problems
 - Conduct strategy meeting
 - identify resources
 - Define mission
 - set goals
 - agreement on need for neighborhood watch
 - setup organizational structure
 - Sheriff’s Office Liaison
 - NWP Coordinator - one
 - Block Captains - eleven
 - Azalea Lakes North Coordinator - one
 - Pecan Creek Coordinator - one
 - define neighborhood areas; ten to fifteen households in block group. Current setup creates eleven groups; five on Lake Iris Avenue and two each on Azalea Lakes avenue, Garden Oaks Avenue, and Cherry Oak Avenue, respectively
 - setup block captains
 - update master contact list; define call groups for “phone tree”
 - information handouts
 - neighborhood survey

- establish/refine coordination with Azalea Lakes North
 - Pecan Creek residents outreach
- 4) Schedule regular meetings
- Crime activity updates
 - Skill building
 - Better ideas
 - Community feedback
- 5) Extra lines of communication; performance improvement
- “News Letter” => web page
 - emergency drills

Chapter Three Organization Your Neighborhood Watch

== > Major Components

- 1) Law Enforcement Liaison – Cpl. Randy Aguiard
 - Preference for Law Enforcement of Public Safety Officer
- 2) Block Captains
 - Liaison between block residents and Coordinator
 - Establish telephone chain
 - names, addresses, phone numbers for block
 - Encourage participation of block residents; notification of meetings and training
 - “Operation Identification” – personal property marking for easy identification
 - Staying in contact with block often
 - crime problems
 - assistance needs
 - program improvement
- 3) NWP Coordinator
 - Person with “extra time”
 - Expand program; maintain master list of participants
 - name
 - addresses
 - first call, home, and work phone numbers
 - email address
 - vehicle description, license number
 - family description
 - younger adult, couples, children (number and ages)
 - elder adult, single/couple, assistance needs, nearest relative contact
 - disabled
 - mixed family; multi-generational
 - Liaison between watch members, officers, crime groups, and block captains

- Arrange training programs
- Obtain/distribute crime prevention materials, stickers, and signs
- Coordinate development of specific crime prevention projects
- Encourage "Operation Identification" – personal property marking

Suggest: NWP purchase a several engraving tools to loan out to residents for marking personal property.

4) Citizen Advisory Board

- Startup assistance
- Information, processing, training, and recruitment in non-represented areas
- Maintain communication between watch groups and the Board
- Organizing advisory committees as needed
- Support and organize fundraising
- Maintain law enforcement relationship
- Bring community issues to law enforcement and other government officials

5) Neighborhood Watch Members

- Number One Goal => Participation
- Roles
 - Block Captains
 - Phone Tree Members
 - Residents

== > Lines of Communication

1) The Phone Tree – "the chain of contact"

- Communication types
 - Sheriff initiated
 - Sheriff Liaison to "Designated Contact" Captain to all Block Captains to Call Groups to Residents
 - Neighborhood resident initiated
 - First Call to 911
 - Call Your Block Captain
 - Call your call group
 - Block Captain to "Designated Contact" Captain (or Coordinator, if first call captain is "Designated Contact" Captain
 - Block Captain calls call group
 - "Designated Contact" Captain (or Coordinator) calls other neighborhood block captains
 - Other Block Captains call related call groups
- Value of phone tree
 - to alert residents of 911 situations
 - to kill rumors and misinformation
- Use of phone tree

- rapid transfer of urgent information
 - first call to top name on list
 - calls proceed thru list to assigned numbers
 - TALK TO AN ADULT
 - last on list call back to top to verify message received

Phone Call concurrent action and motto: "Phone Rings – Lights On!". If an NWP call is received, verify that all your doors are locked and all exterior lights are turned on. The idea here is "NO DARK CORNERS" for a criminal to hide in. As safety dictates, maintain a watchful vigil until an "all clear" is given. "Phone Rings – Lights On!" immediately identifies homes that are compromised, are unoccupied, or non-participating – no lights on. These offer immediate "check here first" indications.

2) Email tree

- may be faster for some residents
 - consider text messaging also
- may not be available for some residents
- can always be used for secondary transfer of information
 - meeting reminders
 - crime activity reports
 - NWP business
 - Law Enforcement updates
- DO NOT's
 - do not "chain" emails
 - NWP emails originate from designated sources; forwarding emails is highly discouraged
 - do not include personal information
 - schedules, absences, personality comments are discouraged
 - do not include unrelated news articles, unverified information
 - misinformation causes confusion and leads to a lack of coordination and security

3) Neighborhood Map

- Lists NSEW directions
- Street labels and connecting streets
- includes squares for homes
 - full name, address, phone and email
- consider adding
 - children's names, ages
 - work number
 - out of state emergency numbers
 - nearest relative numbers
- non-participating household list address only
- notate Captains and Co-Captains

- Police Contact Name and Phone Number
- Copies Of Maps Go To All Participants

Chapter Four

Planning and Conducting Meetings

“Keep Meetings Fun, Short, and Productive!”

Meetings – general overview

- Prepare location in advance
- Start and finish on time
- Thank all participants

When required some meetings must be “In-Person”

- Establish, build, and maintain personal relationships
- Opportunity to educate and share valuable information
- Better focus on what is important
- Better group decisions
- Generate new ideas
- More uniform focus on issues and important information

Invite the Neighbors – the “Block Captain’s Walk”

- Do a simple invitation with crime data as incentive
- In person delivery
- Ask for “One Hour”
- Don’t put invitations in mailbox (stamped mail only)
 - True mailings may be used, but no “flyers” stuffed in mailboxes
- Include children’s activities
- Offer other “incentives”

Meeting Logistics

- Pick a date and time most convenient for participants
- Establish regular schedule for meetings
 - Suggest: fourth Saturday in the month
- Convenient location
 - Suggests: Jones Creek Library
- Watch group meeting
 - held in neighborhood
- Block Captain meeting with community in central location
 - faith-based organizations, schools, libraries, have meeting space
 - space requirements
 - sufficient floor space
 - comfortable seating
 - public access

- restroom facilities
- climate control
- public address system

Facilitating a Meeting

- At the Meeting
 - warm and friendly attitude / Say Hello!
 - include meet and greet time at start of meeting
 - name badges; takes care of introductions and encourages participation
 - consider an “icebreaker” exercise
 - begin and end on time
 - stick to schedule
 - establish credibility
 - set ground rules
 - time limits
 - staying on agenda
 - take a meeting minutes

The Facilitator

- Stay focused on task to ensure meeting purpose
- Encourage discussion; allow participation
- Clear summary of decisions and issues needing votes
- Direct the conversations about disagreements to maintain control
- Allow time for each speaker without dominating the discussion
- Listen for what is not being said
- Try to find and resolve sources of confusion, hidden agendas, and emotions
- At close of meeting
 - set date and time for next meeting
- Or
 - offer reminders for regularly scheduled meetings
 - give topic/purpose of next meeting

After the Meeting

- Meeting review
 - look for improvements
- Keep meeting effective to stop disappointments
- Block Captains/Coordinators should distribute meeting minutes
 - include action items and assignments
 - who is responsible for what
 - time lines for assignments
- Block Captains should follow up with non-attendees for questions about weekly discussions
 - keeps up involvement

Alternative to “in-person” meetings

- Use non-traditional methods
- Select method based on priority

- Available methods
 - higher priority
 - online chats
 - phone conference calls
 - email blasts
 - lower priority
 - flyers or other mailings

Last Words

- Respect member's time – use meetings for important information provided in person

Creative Meeting Topics

High Priority Topics

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal Safety/Rape Prevention - Street Safety - Child/Stranger Safety - Home Security - Water Safety/Boat Safety - Awareness & Patrol Techniques - Observation - Scams/Internet Crimes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Policing - Emergency Preparedness - Patrol Aspects - NW Patrolling - NW Guidelines/Purpose - Teen Vehicle Safety - Juvenile Crime Prevention |
|---|--|

Other Topics

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crime Prevention through Environmental Design - Animal Control - Dogs-What to do if attacked - Parent to Parent - Landlord/Tenant Training - Cultural Awareness/Diversity Training - Restorative Justice - Peer Courts - School Resource Officer - Volunteer Programs - Traffic Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Search & Rescue - Detectives - Arson Investigations - Hazardous Materials - Truck and Train Spills - How to be a Witness (DA's Office) - County Commissioner - District Representative - District Attorney - Defensive Driving - Terrorism Awareness & Prevention Presentation |
|--|--|

- Conflict Resolution
- Children Services to Families
- Local Fire Station
- Forest Ranger
- Domestic Violence
- Victims Assistance Programs
- Sexual Assault Services
- Red Cross
- Mediation Services
- Helping in Schools
- Parole & Probation
- Sex Offenders
- Gang Awareness
- Drug/Narcotics Awareness
- Car Failure

Additional Neighborhood Watch Activities

- Fire Prevention & First Aid – build partnerships with local agencies and non-profit organizations to hold training on fire safety skills and first aid training.
- Beautification Projects – organize a neighborhood cleanup effort; create a more attractive and livable community.
- Celebrate Safe Communities – the first Thursday in October is a time for communities to enjoy celebrating “Take A Bite Out Of Crime!” in their own neighborhoods. This celebration spotlights crime prevention efforts, enhances public awareness, and seeks to recruit year-round support. This celebration also includes safety-focused events. October is designated as Crime Prevention Month – offering opportunity to show that a safer community is no accident and crime prevention is everyone’s business every day of the year.
- Triad – a cooperative effort designed with the elderly in mind to devise strategies to reduce crimes against the senior group. This effort seeks also to deal with a sometimes exaggerated fear of crime. Triads seek also to support lonely or isolated seniors.
- Fundraising – although, it is generally not necessary to have enormous funds to operate, there will be some expenses. Brochures, meeting supplies, and other material will invoke some costs. Local law enforcement agencies may not provide desired revenues. Grants from city and private groups can be pursued. Fundraising activities by Watch members can also increase operating funds.

Suggest: One time membership contribution and a set of Spring (April 1 to coincide with subdivision dues) and Fall (October 1, crime prevention month) NWP contribution cycles at a household contribution rate of \$10 per address per cycle to defray any extraneous operating costs until a full budget is developed. Funds to be held in a separate account for the ALSA NWP group activities and expenses.

- ID Theft – cleanup of a compromised identity can be a daunting task to clean up and setup protections from future attempts. Information, downloadable materials, tips on preventing ID Theft, awareness briefings on how identities can be stolen, and free brochures for distribution can be obtained from the National Crime Prevention Council website at www.ncpc.org. ID Theft

meeting help encourage excitement for Neighborhood Watch and show that the activity is about more than just crime prevention.

- Citizen Patrols – on foot or in vehicles as a means of keeping the community safe is a neighborhood watch option. The option should be discussed with the law enforcement liaison. Two or more individuals patrol during designated tours of duty. This offers opportunity to detect suspicious activity not noticed by stationary observers. Patrol members should be trained by law enforcement. Patrol teams DO NOT possess police powers and shall not carry weapons or pursue vehicles.

Suggest: if patrol teams are established, the patrol team kit will include Maglights (4D-cell size), whistles, two-way radios (in addition to personal cell phones). Patrol base-station may be established.

- Safe Houses for Children – a safe location identified by brightly colored stickers to indicate that the occupants are block parents willing to help a frightened or pursued child if needed. Residents available for daytime assistance are ideal. Background checks will be conducted on volunteer homes (adult and teen occupants). Training on what aid should and should not be rendered will be conducted. Stickers/signs should only be displayed when block parent is home and within hearing distance of the doorbell. Officers should have a list of authorized safe house and will periodically check that only authorized homes display signs.

Chapter Five

Revitalizing & Maintaining Watch Groups

Momentum for a neighborhood watch wanes after the group becomes active and untoward activities decrease. Other activities must be found to keep the group engaged and expand the group focus. The idea of neighborhood watch as an all-hazards group is highly promoted.

- Develop an email newsletter.
- Form a recruiting team to encourage/maintain membership.
- Expand the watch program to include quality of life issues and other fun activities

“Be Creative”

- Information sharing – a vibrant newsletter on crime data and other subjects of interest.
- Exercise or Walking Groups – companion exercise is always better and allows an opportunity to observe the neighborhood.
- Garage Sale – a joint neighborhood garage sale can be used as a neighborhood watch fundraiser.
- Neighborhood Clean Up and Landscape Trimming – rent a dumpster for a day and do a neighborhood cleanup – “neighbors helping neighbors”. End the day with a barbecue.
- Winter Emergency Planning – develop an emergency plan. Catalogue resources: gas stoves, four-wheel drive vehicles, generators, chainsaws. Identify special needs individuals in the neighborhood.

- Start Up Training Sessions – participate in training sessions given by volunteers.
- Creative Pot-Luck's or Bar-B-Ques – use this as a time for the neighborhood to get together to reconnect.

[Suggest: Spring and Fall Fundraiser Parties](#)

- Local Interest Groups – get your local politicians and service groups involved.

Chapter Six

Neighborhood Watch Skills - Using Your “Eyes and Ears”

The watch group needs skills to have continued success. Skills will run the full range from crime prevention to natural disaster response. Skills are developed from training – the Neighborhood Watch Toolkit.

Observation Skills

Beginning to recognize what is normal is the first step to recognize what is not normal. Watch groups need to be trained in what to report and when to report is. Community members must cultivate the same “sixth-sense” that police officers use in recognizing what is out of place.

For proper observation of people, vehicles and incidents that occur around us, we must know what to observe. Take note of “physical setting” – location, time of day, day of week; “people” – height, weight, ethnicity, gender, clothing, number of; “specific items” – were there things that stood out, or should have; “routines” – recurring patterns, how often, who was involved.

Develop good observation skills. Practice looking at pictures of people to know how to describe them. Skin or eye color cannot be changed. Things like moles or tattoos, height and weight.

When observing vehicles, start with basic make and model, then body style, then specific model if possible. Writing the license number down – even in the dirt – makes it easier to remember. “I’m not sure” is okay – partial numbers help.

Suspicious Activity

A watch volunteer will begin with a clear and concise information on the “suspicious activity” that was observed. Suspicious activity is “any incident, event, individual, or activity that seems unusual or out of place.”

Examples:

- Loitering stranger;
- Vehicle cruising repeatedly;
- Individual peeping into cars or windows;
- High volume of traffic to and from a home on a daily basis;
- Someone loitering around schools, parks, or secluded areas;
- Strange odors from a house or vehicle;
- Open or broken doors or windows at closed business or unoccupied residence;

- Unidentified person tampering with electrical, gas, or sewer system without an identifiable company vehicle or uniform;
- Persons arriving/leaving homes or businesses at unusual hours;
- Multiple persons working in unison and exhibiting suspicious behavior;
- Signs of forced entry or tampering with security or safety systems

Police efforts are enhanced by active participation of watch groups.

Often reports are not made because there is no clear idea of what is suspicious activity, or being labeled as the “noisy neighbor”, or in the mistaken belief that someone else has already called.

Always report a suspicious activity and all crimes because police don’t know there’s a problem unless they are told.

Knowing What and How to Report

What to report; the categories:

- 1) Suspicious activities-
- 2) People and vehicles
- 3) Illegal activities
- 4) Unusual events or incidents, dangerous situations

Benefits to making reports:

- Make communities safer and more secure
- Reduce violence
- Minimize victimization
- Reduce crime
- Improve overall quality of life

How to make a report of suspicious activities or crimes in progress:

- 1) Dial 9-9-1 and call the police department or sheriff’s office
- 2) Tell the call taker what happened and the exact location
- 3) Provide a detailed description of individuals or vehicles
- 4) Remain on the phone and stay calm
- 5) Be prepared to answer follow-up questions

To emphasize the importance of making a proper call, members of the neighborhood watch group may want to arrange a visit to the 9-1-1 call center.

To help support the 9-1-1 call center effort, collect all the numbers generally used for non-emergency calls.

Teach children the importance of respecting the 9-1-1 system and how to use it if they are alone.

Children learn by “doing” but practice on a toy phone. Encourage good citizenship, teach them to watch for trouble and how to get help when needed.

[Suggest: Have a meeting to learn what happens to the information after a 9-1-1 call is made.](#)

Making 9-1-1 Calls – When and When Not to Call

When to Call

- medical emergency
- motor vehicle accident
- fire
- when a life is in danger

When Not to Call

- power outage
- asking for directions to the hospital
- asking for phone numbers of others
- requesting to speak with a particular officer
- inquiring as to the time and day
- inquiring about community activities and location

For more information about when to call and not please contact the non-emergency number of your local law enforcement and ask for an officer to discuss the topic with you.

* * * * *

REMEMBER:

Community members only serve as the extra “eyes and ears” of law enforcement. They should report their observations of suspicious activities to law enforcement; however, citizens should never try to take action on those observations. Trained law enforcement should be the only ones ever to take action based on observations of suspicious activities.

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Chapter Seven

Establishing Partnerships

Partnerships are one of the foundations of the Neighborhood Watch Program. Potential partners can be any formal or organized group that can help to improve safety, security, and quality of life. Partners can be citizen groups and/or city or regional government agencies.

Four major points to successful partnerships:

1) Communication

The agreement to share thoughts, ideas and information. Can be accomplished through various means. Requires three components – a message, a sender, and a receiver.

2) Coordination

Critical to creating and sustaining partnerships and citizen involvement. Amount or nature of activities can cover a broad range of activities.

3) Cooperation

This occurs when two or more individuals or groups agree to help each other with tasks.

4) Collaboration

An intense level of partnership based on a model of sharing power for attaining a common goal.

Some potential partners:

- Businesses
- Schools and day care centers
- Faith/Community-based organizations
- Communications companies
- Hospitals and medical providers
- Local government
- Other neighborhood groups
- Citizen Corps councils
- Local fire, EMS, and Police
- Parks and Recreation
- Code Enforcement
- Public Works
- Health and Social Services
- Local news media

Identifying Resources

Partnership involve the surrounding community. Partnerships are important for more than just training and activities, but also financial, personnel, and materials.

- Financial resources can include both individual and outside agency resources.
 - Personnel resources can include items such as individual skills or possessions.
 - Materials can range from training materials to building materials.
 - Training resources can come from individuals or outside agencies.
 - Organizations that can serve as resources include social service agencies and civic groups.
- These organizations can provide everything from speakers to volunteers.

Citizen Corps

The Citizen Corps seeks to harness the power of every individual through education, training and volunteer service to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters. For all the people who ask, “how can I help?”, the Citizen Corps was created to provide the public education and outreach, training and volunteer service. Coordination of programs, action plans, assessing threats, and identifying resources are part of the Citizen Corps purview.

Further information on Citizen Corps can be found at www.citizencorps.gov.

Citizen Corps Program Partners, five in all, serve to expand the resources and materials available to states and local communities. The five partners are USAonWatch (this document’s subject), Volunteers in Police Service, CERT, Medical Reserve Corps, and Fire Corps. Overviews of the other partner groups follows.

Volunteers in Police Service

Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers. VIPS serves as a gateway to resources and information for and about law enforcement volunteer programs.

Further information on Volunteers in Police Service can be found at www.policevolunteers.org.

CERT

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills – fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. CERT members assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event and can take a more active role in preparing their community.

Further information on CERT can be found at www.citizencorps/cert.

Medical Reserve Corps

Medical Reserve Corps strengthens communities by helping medical, public health and other volunteers offer their expertise throughout the year as well as during local emergencies. MRC volunteers work in coordination with existing local emergency response programs. MRC is administered by Department of Health and Human Services.

Further information on Medical Reserve Corps can be found at www.medicalreservecorps.gov.

Fire Corps

Fire Corps promotes the use of citizen advocates to enhance the capacity of resource-constrained fire and rescue departments at all levels. Advocates assist local fire departments in fire safety outreach, youth programs, and administrative support.

Further information on Fire Corps can be found at www.firecorps.org.

Chapter 8

Neighborhood Watch's Expanded Role

Emergency Preparedness and Homeland Security

Since September 11, 2001, with heightened alerts urged at all levels, the Neighborhood Watch program has a new challenge to rise to. That is, to become a critical element in the detection, prevention and disruption of terrorism. Communities everywhere are urged to make disaster preparedness a part of their daily lives. Regardless of the source of a disaster – natural, technological, or terroristic – the importance of preparedness is the same.

Preventing Terrorism

Because of the Neighborhood Watch's position as protector of the community, it becomes an excellent program for promoting both citizen awareness and preparedness in the war against terrorism. To that end, the Neighborhood Watch group should include as part of their efforts a Disaster Preparedness Plan. The group should also make efforts to learn how to recognize and report the signs of terrorism.

Residents are the key to building safer communities and helping protect themselves.

Terrorists use fear to gain attention and create an impression of power. Their hope is to cause panic, disruption of services, demoralization, and paralysis. Our awareness program should include the "who",

“what”, and “beliefs” of the possible terrorist systems. Understand this and moreover, the targets of these groups allow us to better use our resources and more properly address attacks.

Though a terrorist encounter may be rare, the use of common sense guidelines for observing and reporting actively increases safety and security against a terrorist threat just as it would everyday crime and violence. Active involvement of the citizens to report suspicious activity aids greatly in the opportunity for investigation.

Neighborhood Watch Activities Related to Homeland Security

- Know what to look for and how to report it.
- Have an evacuation plan for your community. Include in the neighborhood directory various contact information, plans for children and for seniors.
- Develop individual emergency plans for your family.
- Develop a preparedness kit.
- Know the local warning systems, evacuation routes, schedule, and temporary shelters.
- Potential terrorist targets in the community and consequences of attack.
- Know that reports of terrorist activity may be reported to an agency other than local law enforcement. Local emergency agencies will give directions regarding proper action via public emergency broadcasts.

Disasters: Are You Ready?

Local fire departments should have information on first aid training, CPR, fire suppression, and disaster preparedness. C.E.R.T. (Community Emergency Response Teams) have extensive training including disaster first aid, triage and medical setup, fire fighting and shutting off gas lines, building inspection and marking.

Making your family safe is the first step. Remember – 1) there may be little warning, 2) stores will become depleted, 3) everyone will need the same resources; food, water, medical supplies, and batteries. Make your family’s plan and practice it several times yearly. Rotate supplies so that resources remain fresh. Have a disaster pack ready to grab in an emergency. Individuals with disabilities may have to include extra supplies in the disaster pack. Some of Remember pets also and include their supplies.

Disaster Preparedness Kit

Preparedness kits will vary by community and by expected disaster. Part of the group’s effort should include discussions of evacuation plans and group preparation of kits via bulk purchases. Consider partnerships of local businesses for donation of supplies.

Recommended Items for a Basic Emergency Supply Kit

- Water, one gallon per person per day to accommodate at least three days.
- Dust mask and plastic sheeting.
- Battery powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert.
- Food, at least a three day supply of non-perishable goods.
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit.
- Whistle to signal for help.

- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- Can opener for food.
- Local maps.
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger

Additional Items to Consider

- Prescription medication and glasses.
- Infant formula and diapers.
- Pet food and extra water for your pet.
- Important family documents – i.e., insurance policies, identification, bank records – placed in a waterproof portable container.
- Cash or traveler’s checks and change.
- Emergency reference materials such as a first aid book.
- Sleeping bag or blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding for cold weather or cold-natures.
- Complete change of clothing. Long sleeves, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider coats also.
- Household regular (not scented, color-safe or with additional deansers) chlorine bleach and medicine dropper. Nine parts water to one part bleach to make a disinfectant solution. Sixteen drops of bleach to a gallon of water to sanitize water for drinking.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items.
- Mess kits, i.e., paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils and paper towels
- Paper and pencil.
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children.

Ready America

Through its Ready Campaign, (www.ready.gov) the U.S. Department of Homeland security educates and empowers Americans to take some simple steps to prepare and respond to potential emengencies, including natural disasters and terrorist attacks. Ready asks individuals to do three key things: get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses. Have basic supplies for at least three days. Review your supplies to account for any unique needs that may be present. Consider having a smaller emergency kit at the workplace or in the car.

Chapter 9

Basic Home Security

Although the Neighborhood Watch responsibility has expanded into other roles, its primary priority is still protecting homes. Since most burglaries and thefts are crimes of opportunity, the more obstacles in place the better the protection. Target hardening seeks to increase our defense by identifying multiple

methods that can be employed for self protection and to stop the criminal. Some common sense methods cost little in time or effort. Other steps may be more complicated. Community members should do all they can to stop burglaries – the victim will feel vulnerable and stolen items are usually not recovered.

Basic Home Target Hardening Techniques

Target hardening can range from the super sophisticated alarm system to a small noisy dog. Target Hardening is part of the Neighborhood Watch Toolkit. Local law enforcement can also assist in developing strategies. Techniques include proper doors, locks, windows and lighting. Appearance, alarms, and garages are also categories to consider.

Assessing the Structure

Start at the front door and work your way around. Observe the door, the locks, nearby windows, entry lighting, and general appearance. Is there an alarm system? Check the security for sheds or garages.

- Doors. Solid core well fitted doors with deadbolts, strong hinges in metal or solid wood frame. Hinges should be installed on the inside of the door with non-removable pins. Consider deadbolts on all exterior doors and doors to attached garages.

- Locks. Install strong reliable deadbolts with at least one and one half inch extension when in the locked position. Consider also, reinforced strike plates and extra long screws. Consider changing all locks if there is a change in ownership.

- Windows. Have locks on all the windows. Pins in double hung windows – although this can be a fire hazard while occupied – can provide extra security when you are away.

- Lighting. Though often considered for decorative purposes, lighting can expose individuals attempting to conceal themselves or commit crimes. Consider both interior and exterior lighting. Lighting audits should be conducted “after dark” to properly evaluate the artificial illumination. Work in pairs during an audit both for a proper audit and for safety. Consider installing motion sensing lights for less lighted areas.

- Garages. One of the more commonly overlooked areas. Electronic garage door openers can give a false sense of security. The door to the garage is also often ignored. When the garage door is ignored, those elements that enter the garage can enter the home. Park the cars in a garage with the garage door shut consistently will help to prevent pattern capture of “car in driveway, residents are home – no car in driveway, no one home”. Consider an automatic garage door opener that will allow the drive to stay in the car until safely parked in the garage.

Note: For those without garages, it is important that valuables are not left easily seen in the car and that the car is locked while in the driveway.

- Exterior Appearances. Have trees or bushes trimmed to prevent the creation of a secluded shelter for a criminal. This is “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design”. These are techniques that improve the appearance of property while including crime prevention elements. Elements may include fences, walkways and shrubs to direct access, limit entry or call attention to individuals deviating from a designated pathway. Planting thorny shrubs at windows, trimming shrubs and trees that can provide concealment, cutting back tree limbs at upper story windows, and using landscape designs that create maximum visibility are all suggested techniques.

Operation Identification (Operation ID)

Operation ID is a program where property is marked with a special number. This is called an owner applied number (OAN) and it can be used to report stolen items. Operation ID has shown dramatic results in reducing burglaries and theft. Burglars avoid marked items because of difficulties in re-selling the items.

Operation ID Process

- Mark valuables with driver's license number (DL), state identification number (ID), or business tax number (TX).
- To prevent changes to the OAN, start the identification with the two letters of your state, the number and end with DL, ID, or TX as appropriate.
- Never use social security numbers.
- Do not engrave paintings, antiques, or other items you may want to sell.
- Hang Operation ID decals near the doors.
- Decals and stickers may be available from police agencies or from the National Sheriff's Association

Engravers are inexpensive tools that can save thousands of dollars. Consider having an engraver to share. Engraved items that are sold should have one line passed thru the number so that it is still readable, initial it, and give the buyer a bill of sale with the item description.

Property List

Consider highly having a personal property list including CDs, DVDs, videos, and any other collectible item. Keep the list in a safe place. A list saved on a computer is no good if the burglars steal the computer. Include photos of expensive items, such as jewelry. Fill out a Property Inventory Form to aid in returning recovered property. Finally, it is imperative to maintain current and adequate insurance coverage.