

IMPD

How to Start A CrimeWatch (Neighborhood) Block Club

Description:

A Block Club is a self-help cooperative effort to reduce crime and fear of crime. This is achieved by citizens, law enforcement, and local government working together.

Members of a Block Club are not asked to be vigilantes or to assume the role of the police. However, they assist law enforcement by Observing and Reporting.

The following requirements must be completed in order to establish a CrimeWatch (Neighborhood) Block club:

1. A meeting with a District CrimeWatch Specialist.
2. A meeting with the District Community Resource Liaison Officer.
3. A membership roster submitted to the CrimeWatch Specialist.

Determine Interest:

There are some preparations to make before scheduling a meeting with the CrimeWatch Specialist, which will help organize a successful Block Club.

Identify target area. Block clubs usually consist of no more than 20 homes facing each other.

Discuss the Block Club concept with a few of the neighbors.

Identify the problems/concerns of the neighborhood.

Agree on a convenient meeting day, time and location

Contact the CrimeWatch Specialist and schedule the first Block Club meeting date and time.

Distribute meeting notices to everyone on the block to inform them of the date, time and location.

Contact the neighbors the day before the meeting to serve as a reminder.

Be polite, share pamphlets and information, but DON'T pressure a neighbor to participate. DON'T be discouraged if you do not get 100% participation.

First Meeting:

Organizing a Block Club is a positive step towards building and/or maintaining a safe neighborhood.

The first meeting is conducted by the Neighborhood CrimeWatch Coordinator. This meeting will last approximately one hour and the following will be discussed.

Introductions (have them give name, address and how long they have lived in area).

Neighborhood CrimeWatch concept (Three things it takes to make a crime)

Organizing a Block Club

Basic Home Security

Volunteer Positions. (discussed later in material)

Second Meeting:

After the meeting with the Crime-Watch Coordinator, contact your neighborhood Community Resource Liaison and schedule the second meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to begin building a strong communication system which is vital for the effective Block Club.

Information that to be discussed includes

Defines District Boundaries

Area Crime Trends

Observing and Reporting Procedures

Operation Identification (how to make your property)

CrimeWatch Report Form along with other forms and pamphlets.

You can reduce the chance of becoming a target by using,

A little Extra care
A little Extra Thought
About the security of your
Home and Neighborhood

Volunteer Positions:

There are three volunteer positions within each Block Club:

Block Captain,

Victim Assistant,

and Hospitality Person.

Block Captain: The Block Captain serves as the organizer and informer for the group.

Duties of the Block Captain:

Organizing meetings (setting Date, Time & Place.)

Notifying Neighbors of meetings (don't forget to tell CrimeWatch Office at the North District).

Completing membership roster.

Distributing membership roster to Block Club members and the CrimeWatch Office

Establish a system of sharing information with neighbors.

Submitting the Annual updated membership roster and meeting summary to the CrimeWatch Office.

Victim Assistant: Duties of the Victim Assistant include,

Offering support to a Block Club member who has been victimized.

Accompanying victim and/or witness to court.

*When necessary filling out and returning impact statements to prosecutor or detective on a case.

Hospitality Person: Duties of the Hospitality Person include:

Welcoming new neighbors.

Sharing CrimeWatch information.

Maintaining periodic contact with neighbors who have special needs.

Maintaining Block Club:

A Block Club is considered "Active" once all of the following have been completed.

1. Meeting with CrimeWatch Specialist.
2. Meeting with Community Resource Liaison.
3. Membership Roster submitted to the North District CrimeWatch Office.

However, to remain an active Block Club, the group Must meet at least once a year and submit an updated membership roster.

Block Clubs are encouraged to meet as often as neighbors determine necessary.

As crime declines, it is just as important to continue to observe and report, be aware and alert, and look to other activities to enhance the neighborhood.

Some Suggestions for neighborhood activities and meetings are:

Street and/or alley clean-up

Block Party

Tour the local Police Department and Fire Department

Invite a District Police Officer to a meeting

Invite city/County Council Person

Invite Deputy Prosecutor to discuss legal rights and responsibilities.

Invite a representative from the appropriate city Agency/Department to address neighborhood concerns.

CrimeWatch Sign Requirements:

In order to be eligible for the CrimeWatch Neighborhood sign. A Block Club must have met within the CrimeWatch Specialist and Community Liaison Officer, as well as having submitted a membership roster to the District CrimeWatch Office.

Must have at least 50% participation from the block.

Club members must come to a consensus on the Location of the signs.

Fill out and return the request for signs that will be provided, upon request, by the CrimeWatch Specialist

CrimeWatch reserves the right to remove signs from the neighborhood once it is determined that the Block Club is inactive.

The signs are not purchased. They are leased. Currently, there is no fee for leasing the CrimeWatch Sign

The Block Captain request sign order forms from the Neighborhood CrimeWatch Coordinator.

The Department of Transportation requires six to eight weeks to process and install signs.

They will not install if it is going on private property. It must be on the right of way of a dedicated street (meaning the city maintains the area).

By working together, we can build safer neighborhoods, and a safer City.

Contact Information for North District

Crime Prevention/CrimeWatch Specialist & Coordinator

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Police-Fire-Homeland Security - Animal Care and Control

*CrimeWatch Block Club leaders maintain close relations with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department and their neighbors; therefore, any CrimeWatch Block Club leader who believes himself/herself to be the subject of a criminal investigation or who becomes a defendant in a criminal action (other than minor traffic infractions) should advise your district CrimeWatch Specialist and remove themselves from the position of Block Captain, Hospitality Person or Victim Assistant. If necessary, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department may remove the Block Club leader(s) to protect the integrity of the CrimeWatch program.

12-1-10updated.