



Somerset Police Department

465 County Street
Somerset, Massachusetts 02726
508-679-2138 / 508-676-1893 fax



George M. McNeil - Chief of Police

Establishing a Community Watch Program

The Intent of the Community Watch Program

- To form a partnership with the community to identify, appraise and reduce crime as well as improve overall quality of life for the citizens of Somerset.
- To bring ownership to the community, and put the neighbor back into the neighborhood.

Forming a Community Watch Program

- Institute the want for a Community Watch Program.
- Select a Chairperson and Block Captains to organize the CW program.
- Select a location to hold the CW start-up meeting.
- Select a date for the start-up meeting.
- Contact Somerset Police Department and invite an officer to present the CW program to the group.
- Prepare objectives for the start-up meeting.
- Market the CW meeting to your neighbors.

Specific Responsibilities

Chairperson - is responsible for overseeing the operation of the CW Program in his/her community.

- Work with the community to increase their awareness of the CW Program.
- Handle incoming calls/emails from the Block Captains.
- Pass on information received from the Somerset Police (SPD).
- Insure that the community is holding regular CW meetings.
- Arrange for the SPD to provide topic specific training (I.e. Home Security, Reporting Suspicious Activity).
- Maintain a comprehensive list of Block Captains and the CW Participants including all contact information.

Block Captain - Responsible for getting their neighbors involved in the CW program.

- Dispense information received from the Chairperson via telephone, or email/newsletter.
- Create a Block Map with the current information of their neighbors (i.e. name, address, telephone, and email).
- Keep track of any medical problems or unique circumstances their neighbors might have.
- Coordinate all activities for their block and for the neighbors they are responsible for.
- Greet any new neighbors who move into their community and educate them on the CW Program.

A committee will need to identify some preliminary goals

Goals are:

- Specific so you have a clear idea of what actions need to be taken.
- Measurable so you know when the goal is achieved.
- Challenging, but realistic.
- Have significance to you and the community.
- Motivating and challenging without being rigid.

Set a date for the achievement of the goals listed:

- Long-range goals - accomplished in a three to five year period.
- Short-range goals - accomplished in a six months to one year period.

Immediate Goals Must Be Accomplished Consistently To Move Forward To The Short Range Goals.

- Determine the concerns of the community in regard to the crimes occurring in their area.
- Ascertain from the SPD the reported crimes occurring in their area.
- Design programs to address the concerns of the community.
- Advance and maintain the programs so that the community will participate.
- Evaluate the success of the Community Watch Program as it relates to crime reduction and the fear of crime.
- Address other issues of concern that the community may have.

Biggest Killers of a Community Watch

- Lack of clear and varied goals.
- Lack of strong community involvement.
- Lack of ongoing leadership.

Purpose of a Community Watch Program in Your Neighborhood

- Reducing the risk of being a victim of a crime.
- Being better prepared to respond to suspicious activity.
- Greater access to criminal activity information (crime statistics).
- Getting to know your neighbors.
- Reducing the fear of crime, thus bettering quality of life.
- Allowing other issues of concern to be addressed.

What Makes a Community Watch Program Successful?

- It is essential to have a many people as possible in the community involved in the program (all demographics within the community).

Communicate With the Community Watch Participants

- People need to know what's going on.
- People need to feel like their ideas and input is valued.
- People need to feel that the Community Watch program is working.

Maintaining an Active Watch Group

- Hold regular meetings.
- Get creative with your meeting plans, i.e. cookouts, pool parties and BBQ's, something that provides a place to bring children.
- Share relevant information (good of bad) with your watch group.

Communication Is the Key

- Meeting announcements should be to the point and timely so that people can mark it on their calendars.
- Encourage Block Captains and other Neighbors within the community to take a leading role at the meetings.
- Keep meetings on target.
- Develop a website to keep your neighbors informed.
- Develop an email tree to keep you neighbors informed.
- Develop an electronic bulletin board where your neighbors can have an ongoing dialog with each other.
- Recognize your neighbors for the good things they do within your community.
- Make sure the community knows that you are getting things done.
- Encourage social events.
- Be conscious of the tone of voice and language used when communicating with people.

Community Watch Participants

- Do not take any risks to prevent a crime; it's more important to be a good witness.
- Pay attention to detail (provide identifying information) when observing suspicious people, vehicles, or activities and report then to the Somerset Police Department.
- Keep an eye on your neighbors' houses and report all suspicious activity.
- Get to know neighbors; it is important to recognize them and their vehicle without any hesitation.
- Notify a trusted neighbor when they are going to be away so they can watch the house.
- Attend as many Community Watch meetings as possible.
- Implement all security precautions suggested by the Somerset Police Department.
- Properly identify all property using the Operation ID guidelines.

Community Watch is Not

- A vigilante force working outside the normal procedures of the law.
- A program designed for participants to take personal risks to prevent crime.
- A 100% guarantee that crime will not occur in your neighborhoods.

Please watch for updates on Nextdoor.com

Contact Patrolman Shaun Kelly for any information pertaining to this program

508-674-3521 ext. 161 or email at s_kelly@somersetpd.org