
UNIVERSITY HILLS

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

PROGRAM

University Hills is a great place to live. A neighborhood Crime Watch program can make it even better by instilling a greater sense of security and well-being among residents, reducing fear of crime and creating a closer and friendlier community.

WHAT IS NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

Neighborhood Watch is one of the oldest and most effective crime prevention programs in the country, bringing citizens together with law enforcement to deter crime and make communities safer.

Sponsored by the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), Neighborhood Watch can trace its roots back to the days of colonial settlements, when night watchmen patrolled the streets. The modern version of Neighborhood Watch was developed in response to requests from sheriffs and police chiefs who were looking for a crime prevention program that would involve citizens and address an increasing number of burglaries.

Neighborhood Watch counts on citizens to organize themselves and work with law enforcement to keep a sharp eye and ear on

their own communities. Neighborhood Watch is based on the concept of cooperation, and nationwide statistics prove that it works. When citizens take positive steps to secure their own

property, and neighbors learn how to report suspicious activity around their homes, burglary and related offenses decrease dramatically.



BECOME OUR COMMUNITY'S EYES AND EARS!

The reason that a Neighborhood Watch program works is that the community is working with, instead of relying on, the Police Department to combat crime. Residents literally

become the "eyes and ears" of the police by immediately reporting suspicious activity. The police cannot be everywhere, all the time; they need the community to assist them in their efforts to protect and serve.

Neighborhood Watch is not a vigilante group working outside the normal procedures of law enforcement. We do not encourage anyone to take personal risks to prevent a crime. Our weapon is the telephone!

There are three things we need to establish a neighborhood Crime Watch Program for our community.

1. INTEREST

2. SUPPORT

(which we have from the Hyattsville Police Department)

and most importantly,

3. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION from the community

We are looking for volunteers who are interested in becoming block captains. Block captains are integral to keeping the block actively involved in crime prevention efforts, as well as facilitating information exchange between neighbors.

If you are interested in becoming a block captain, please contact Randy Fletcher, the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator. We will be launching a kick-off meeting in June to share information on crime prevention. You can join www.crimereports.com to track the crime in our community.

Randy Fletcher
Neighborhood Watch Coordinator
301-422-1002 or
randy@exartedesign.com

SECURITY TIPS

Home security is a basic component of Neighborhood Watch. If a burglar needs more than one or two minutes to break into a home, chances are he will leave for fear of being seen or of making too much noise. Although there is no guarantee against break-ins, there are a few simple steps residents can take to reduce their chances of victimization.

- Make sure that your address is visible on your house and can be read from the street, especially at night.
- Good outside lighting can be a deterrent to burglars. Light those areas that are accessible to prowlers and visible to your neighbors. These include all doors and windows.
- Install photoelectric timers on your outside lights so they will go on and off with the rising and setting of the sun. Do not leave porch lights on during the day—to burglars it's a sure sign that no one is home.
- Expose your house to the neighborhood.
- Make sure bushes do not hide your door from view, making it possible for burglars to spend more time breaking in.
- Bushes should be trimmed to below window level so that burglars can't have a secluded place to break into. Also, your visibility to your neighbors houses will be improved.
- Trim larger shrubs three feet up from the ground to increase exposure of anyone hiding behind them.
- Asking neighbors to watch for suspicious activity when the house is vacant

RECOGNIZE SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

BE ALERT. Anything that seems slightly "out of place" or is occurring at an unusual time of day could be criminal activity. Do not attempt to apprehend a person committing a crime or to investigate a suspicious activity. Call the police immediately, and do not worry about being embarrassed if your suspicions prove to be unfounded. Law enforcement officers would rather investigate than be called when it is too late. The following incidents MAY indicate possible criminal activity and should be reported:

- Open or broken doors and windows at a residence
- Unusual noises, such as gunshots, screaming, or dogs barking continuously
- Sound of breaking glass
- Loitering around or peering into cars
- Slow moving vehicles
- Parked or occupied vehicles containing one or more persons, especially at an unusual hour