

# Block Watch Manual



*The Heart of a Community Block Watch is – YOU!*

**Presented by:**

The West Hartford Police Department Community Relations Division

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## What is A Neighborhood Block Watch

A Neighborhood Block Watch is a crime prevention program which brings together active participation between citizens, local law enforcement, city officials, and city departments to reduce crime in our neighborhoods.

### It Involves

- Neighbors getting to know each other and working together in a program of mutual interests and assistance.
- Citizens being trained to recognize and report suspicious activities in their neighborhoods; and implementation of crime prevention techniques, such as home, garage and personal safety and security. Operation Identification and much more.
- Neighbors looking out for each other.

### Who can Participate

- Renters, home owners, landlords, local business, men, women, young people, elderly people, children, people in single family homes, people in apartment buildings, etc.
- *Everyone -**this means you!***

### Why have a Neighborhood Block Watch

- Over 40 million crimes are committed every year and the number continues to grow.
- There cannot be a police officer on every corner all the time, so citizen involvement is crucial to combat quality of life issues and other social crisis.
- No one can know what is really going on in your neighborhood like you and your neighbors.
- With cooperation by you, your neighbors and the police, crime can be fought in your neighborhood in the most effective way, **before it begins!**

## **Benefits of a Block Watch**

- An organized Block Watch has a presence that makes politicians and the Police Department more accountable.
- Organized Block Watches have access to reported criminal activity and more readily gain shared information of crime prevention techniques such as home security.
- Develops a greater sense of security.
- Neighbors learn to recognize and support each other.
- Neighbors form bonds of friendship that last.
- Neighbors are better trained to recognize and report crime accurately.
- Block Watches have proven to reduce property crimes and quality of life issues in their area.
- A single Block Watch can be the impetus to change the environment of a neighborhood and create a community.

## **How to build a Block Watch**

### **1. Contact the West Hartford Police Department's Community Relations Division 860/523-2013**

- A. The police department can help you organize meetings.
- B. They will have crime prevention materials they can bring to your meeting.
- C. The Liaison Officer can inform your Block Watch about the crime currently happening in your neighborhood.

### **2. Talk to your Neighbors...**

- A. Talk to your neighbors and explain the importance of a Block Watch and ask if they would be interested.
- B. Ask their opinion about what bothers them the most in your neighborhood.( drug houses, speeders, litter, nuisance properties, absentee landlords, burglaries, etc.)

C. Ask them what would be a convenient time/day of the week to attend a meeting.

D. Tell them that we can also have neighborhood block parties.

E. Remind them that a Block Watch is to be the extra eyes and ears of the Police Department. **Citizens are never to put themselves in danger.**

F. Be sure to invite the properties on the streets which back up to your property and those which back up to the houses across the street

### **3. Arrange the "Ice Breaker" first meeting...**

A. Welcome everyone and ask them to wear name tags and sign in.

B. Opening remarks from yourself and /or coordinator.

C. Have everyone introduce themselves and state their address.

D. Neighbors will learn basic education about the police department, suspicious activities, who patrols area, etc.

E. Explain the purpose of the meeting. *This allows for a discussion on what is going on from both the resident and police view points.*

F. Block location map is explained and developed.

G. Ask for volunteers to host meetings, be a block parent, be a co-captain, or make phone calls.

H. Discuss ways to encourage participation, i.e. Neighborhood clean up, block parties.

I. Schedule next meeting and length of time between meetings.

J. Thank everyone for coming and encourage them to talk to other neighbors and invite them to the next meeting.

## **Responsibilities of a Block Watch Captain**

- A Block Watch Captain is the spokesperson for the group and the liaison between the CRO (Community Relations Officer) of your Police Department and your Block Watch group.
- You will need to keep an updated map of the Block Watch Area. This will have the names, addresses, and phone numbers of your members. A copy of this map is also given to your CRO.
- Organize the Block Watch meeting by making arrangements to secure a location for the meeting and prepare an agenda that can be distributed to your members. Distribute information via mail, email, and phone.
- A valuable suggestion is to incorporate a guest speaker from one of the city's departments. (*i.e. Department of Sanitation, Fire Department, Department of Neighborhood Services, etc.*)
- You will have to pass on any valuable information received from your Councilman, Police Department and other City Departments. Having an email loop within your neighborhood will assist in expediting the information.
- Encourage all neighbors to be alert to the activity in the neighborhood and to report odd and suspicious behavior to the Police. It is also important that they then let you, the captain, know what was reported.

## **How to maintain a Block Watch**

- The key to keeping a Block Watch active is maintaining people's interest over time.
- Your goal is to create the *small town feel*, where people care for and about each other. To this end you must see this organization not just as a safety meeting but as a place to build long term relationships and encourage a stronger community. Block Watches can be a lot more than just a meeting. Think of having a neighborhood clean up, a Halloween Party, a Summer Block Party, or sponsor a National Night Out event. Active Block Watches can have a direct effect on a city by partnering with their local police department, elected officials and city departments on public issues. Large or small; it is only by working together that you can accomplish meaningful change.

### **Listed below are activities your fellow Block Watches have utilized!**

- Invite other speakers such as your councilman and Town department supervisors.
- Develop an email contact list.
- Create a neighborhood newsletter.
- Solicit local businesses for financial support.
- Service exchange with neighbors, i.e. Babysitting, yard work, picking up your mail when you are out of town.
- Develop a schedule to check on your elderly and handicapped.
- Create opportunities for the youth of your neighborhood.

## THE BASICS

- How to contact the police - either **911** for an **emergency** or **523-5203** for a non-emergency.
- What is an emergency - something that needs immediate police intervention -anything involving personal safety or any criminal act in progress.
- What is suspicious - anything out of place in the neighborhood -people you aren't familiar with or cars parked with occupants.

## OTHER RESOURCES

If you would like additional information these internet web sites are very helpful:

[www.westhartford.com/policedept](http://www.westhartford.com/policedept) – West Hartford Police Department's website

[www.ct.gov/dps](http://www.ct.gov/dps) - Connecticut State Police to locate registered sex offenders

[www.familywatchdog.us](http://www.familywatchdog.us) – locates registered sex offenders by where they live and work

[www.policevolunteers.org](http://www.policevolunteers.org) - ideas for organizing and keeping volunteers within police departments

[www.nationaltownwatch.org](http://www.nationaltownwatch.org) - national site for Night Out events

<http://www.ncpc.org/topics/neighborhood-watch> - Crime prevention information

Involve local businesses in your efforts. *They have a stake in the neighborhood as well.*

# Sign In Sheet

<b>Printed Name</b>	<b>Email Address</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>
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**METAL BLOCK WATCH SIGN ORDER FORM**

(Please Print)

Block Watch/Neighborhood Association Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Precinct: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity of Signs Ordered: \_\_\_\_\_ @ Current Price Each Total Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**By placing this order and signing below, I agree to adhere to the rules and regulations concerning Metal Block Watch signs. The Town of West Hartford has made a “notable exception” by allowing these metal BW signs to be installed in the right-of-way, and therefore, I understand and agree to the following:**

- Metal Block Watch signs will not be personalized;
- My BW must provide its own mounting hardware, post and installation at their expense;
- We agree to follow and comply with all local and State Ordinances regarding installation;
- Signs must not be mounted on telephone poles without first obtaining express written permission from the respective telephone company;
- I must have permission from the property owner before mounting any signs on private property;
- Maintenance of the signs is my BW’s responsibility. Any sign that is damaged, defaced or in any deteriorating condition breeds disrespect and should be promptly repaired, removed or replaced;
- If your BW is no longer active or has disbanded, the Metal Block Watch signs must be removed;
- In the event your check is returned for insufficient funds and the funds are not collected, the West Hartford Police Department will retrieve the signs;
- Please allow at least 2 to 3 weeks from receipt date of your order and payment for delivery of signs.

**Failure to comply with these regulations may result in the removal of the Metal Block Watch signs by the West Hartford Police Department.**

I further understand that I will be contacted at the phone number and/or e-mail address shown above when the signs are ready, and at that time delivery arrangements will be made. Please make checks or money orders (NO CASH) payable to: **West Hartford Police Department**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

**WHPD ORDER RECORD**

Date Request Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Delivered by and date: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 7/14/08

Verified by WHPD employee: \_\_\_\_\_



## MEETING AGENDA

**Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**MEETING DESCRIPTION:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**GOALS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**LOCATION:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**BOARD MEETING TOPICS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**GENERAL MEETING:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**OLD BUSINESS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**NEW BUSINESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

### ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

### MATERIALS/RESOURCES NEEDED:

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### ASSIGNMENTS/TASKS:

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