



Neighborhood Watch Handbook

APPLETON POLICE DEPARTMENT



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Neighborhood Watch Mission:

Encouraging police and community partnerships through crime prevention, education and neighborhood cohesiveness.





Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood Watch (NW) is a crime prevention program enlisting the active participation of citizens in cooperation with law enforcement to reduce incidents of crime. Participants become an extension of the Appleton Police Department's eyes and ears and may include neighbors who live on the same block(s) or multi-housing complex.

These extra eyes and ears report crime by being alert for suspicious activity. Members meet their neighbors, learn how to make their homes and families more safe and secure, and stay informed about current crime trends in the area.

Neighborhood Watch is neighbors helping neighbors, and it works. The program assists in building pride and ownership and serves as a springboard for efforts that address other community concerns.

Neighborhood Watch involves:

- A community/police partnership.
- Neighbors coming together to help each other.
- Cooperation to address community issues.
- Learning to identify suspicious activity and reporting the activity to neighbors and law enforcement.
- A voluntary program whose goals are for citizens to make themselves, their families and their homes less vulnerable to crime and to increase cooperation between citizens and law enforcement to make their community safer.

Neighborhood Watch does NOT involve:

- Citizens armed on patrol.
- Vigilante groups.
- A politically affiliated group.
- A neighborhood association.
- A law enforcement entity.
- A program that guarantees that a crime will not occur in a neighborhood.

Benefits

Prevention of Residential Crime - Over the last few decades, NW programs have contributed to declines in thefts, burglaries, vandalism and more.

Greater Awareness of Crime - The APD keeps NW members updated on crime trends and exposes members to crime prevention techniques that enhance the ability to remove and reduce opportunities for crime.

Serves as a Warning to Criminals - NW signs alert potential criminals that residents are concerned about crime and will call the police when suspicious activity is observed.

National Night Out - A registered NW group has the ability to participate in NNO and host a block party, held the first Tuesday in August. Join cities throughout the country having a potluck, ice cream social, bike parades, etc. Use your imagination and plan something fun!

The program is simple and inexpensive, yet highly effective in the fight against crime.





Neighborhood Watch Responsibilities:

NW Member Responsibilities:

-Learn your neighbor's names, including all occupants of their residences. Be able to recognize them and their vehicles without hesitation.

-Keep an eye on your neighbor's homes and report any suspicious activities to the police immediately.

-Remember that it is your responsibility to report crime and to be a good witness. Never take the law into your own hands or risk injury to yourself or others by trying to stop a crime in progress.

-Get an accurate description of the suspect or a vehicle. By being a good witness and an active participant in Neighborhood Watch, you will truly make a difference in your community.

Appleton Police Department Responsibilities:

The APD does not "run" the Neighborhood Watch program; it helps promote the program to residents. We encourage each neighborhood to coordinate its own neighborhood crime prevention activities. We provide information, guidance, encouragement, and any other assistance necessary. Ultimately the success of the program is dependent on the neighborhood residents. APD will:

-Assist in coordinating the development of a Neighborhood Watch group.

-Work as a team with the participants to inform them of criminal activity and trends through crime alerts and captain notifications via email.

-Attend neighborhood meetings if requested by the block captain(s).

-Assist groups in coordinating National Night Out events.

NW Captain Responsibilities:

We ask for one or two volunteers from each neighborhood to represent their group as the captain(s). The captain is the spokesperson for your neighborhood.

-Keep an up to date block map and/or a neighborhood roster (APD will assist in providing an electronic image of your neighborhood). The block map/roster can include neighbors' names (and children or other persons living in the household), phone numbers, pets, vehicles, e-mails, etc.

-Plan and distribute meeting information. Start up is not the only time you can meet with your group. Encourage your neighbors to attend whatever your group has planned. Be sure to reach out to the APD if you'd like an officer to present on a specific topic.

-Welcome new residents to your neighborhood and serve as a resource.

-Organize a National Night Out event in your neighborhood.

-Attend the annual Captains' Meeting in spring and the annual Crime Prevention Meeting in fall.

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS
SECURE YOUR HOME - BE ALERT - BE AWARE

Do you know the first name of at least 5 neighbors?

Would you be able to tell police the address of the house behind you, in the event you witnessed a break in?

Would your back door neighbour know your address, in the event that your home was broken into?

IF YOU SEE A CRIME IN PROGRESS - CALL 911
For non-emergencies, call - 920-832-5500

Know Your Neighbors form available to all residents via the APD website or can be sent electronically via email.



KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

SECURE YOUR HOME - BE ALERT - BE AWARE



HOUSE # _____
 NAME _____
 PHONE _____



HOUSE # _____
 NAME _____
 PHONE _____



HOUSE # _____
 NAME _____
 PHONE _____

HOUSE # _____
 NAME _____
 PHONE _____

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Suspicious Activity

The APD can not function effectively without the assistance of responsible citizens. We need your help in reporting suspicious activity. Some people fail to call because they are not aware of what is considered suspicious. Others notice suspicious activity and assume someone else will call.

We encourage everyone to call the police immediately if a situation or circumstance seems suspicious. DO NOT be concerned about bothering the police. DO NOT worry about being embarrassed if your suspicions prove unfounded. If you are in doubt, call.

The following is a short list of sample activities that should be reported to the police. This list is not intended to be complete. Use your own judgement when reporting. Call 911 when:

- someone needs emergency police, fire, or medical assistance*
- you hear alarms sounding or windows being broken*
- an unknown person is walking around your neighbor's home*
- you see someone with a weapon*
- you see someone entering or leaving a business before or after hours*
- you see occupied vehicles parked in an area for an extended period of time*
- you see apparent business transactions being conducted from a vehicle*
- someone is forcing entrance or entering an unoccupied house*



Calling 911

While some, if not all, of the listed situations could have innocent explanations, we would rather investigate a crime-prone situation than be called after it's too late.

- Remain calm and call the police by dialing 911.
- When you first dial 911, be prepared to give the operator your name, the address of occurrence, and your phone number should the line be disconnected. Remember that the dispatcher is using a computer, so even though they continue talking to you on the phone, help is being sent simultaneously.
- Describe what is happening or what you saw happen.
- Describe the suspect(s) and any vehicles. Make sure to describe one thing at a time, simply and clearly.
- Be patient. Help may be sent even before you answer all the questions from the dispatcher.
- Stay on the line until all the dispatcher's questions have been answered.
- What, when, where, and who are the most important items that you will need to relay to the dispatcher.
- What is happening?** Be as specific as possible. Try to answer the dispatcher's questions as best you can. If you don't know the answer, tell the dispatcher you just don't know.
- When did it happen?** Is the situation occurring now? Is something about to happen? How long ago did it occur?
- Where is it happening?** Give a specific address or directions.
- Who is involved?** Give directions of the victims and suspects as accurately as you can. Try to write down and remember as many details as you can. Remember to be patient with the dispatcher as best you can, even if you do not understand the relevance of the question at the time.



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.

Describing The Suspect/Vehicle

As a Neighborhood Watch member, it is imperative that you become a good witness. Being able to provide police with an accurate description of a suspect is often times one of the most crucial things a witness can do. A good suspect description will be valuable information throughout any police investigation, from helping police capture the criminal initially to ultimately getting a conviction in court.

If you see or are confronted by a suspicious person, take note of everything you can - the suspect's size, weight, build, dress, speech, any abnormalities, and the direction of travel. Use the guidelines below to record information from the incident.

Practicing to develop skill in providing quick, accurate descriptions is an excellent Neighborhood Watch meeting activity. In attempting to describe events, vehicles, or persons, write down the details of what you have observed while they are still fresh in your mind, so your descriptions to law enforcement officials will be as accurate as possible.

Keep you NW Captain informed of any crimes or suspicious activities in the area so that other neighbors may be informed. Armed with knowledge, neighbors may take action that can prevent a similar crime from happening to them. Neighborhoods with phone trees, email blasts, Facebook or Nextdoor pages are able to pass this information along to all of the neighbors in a short period of time, thus alerting the entire neighborhood to be "on the look out".

Suspect Description

Gender: Male Female Race: _____ Age: _____

Height: _____ Weight: _____

Build: Small Average Large Heavy

Complexion: Light Medium Dark Ruddy Fair Wrinkled

Hair: Short Medium Long Bald Hair Color: _____

Facial Hair: Mustache/Beard/Goatee

Glasses: Yes No Sunglasses

Identifying Marks/Tattoos: _____

Clothing description: _____

Vehicle Description

Color: _____

Vehicle Style: _____

Make: _____

Model: _____

Year: _____

License # (include state): _____

Direction of Travel: _____

How many suspect(s) in vehicle? _____

Identifying marks: _____



Crime Prevention

Record Your Valuables

A home inventory is an excellent way to expedite the insurance claims process after theft, damage, or loss. This record of your insurable assets will help you settle a covered loss or claim. It also helps the police identify your property if it is recovered. Here are a few steps to make creating a home inventory as easy as 1-2-3.

Choose A Method

While a home inventory can be as simple as a list or a visual record, an effective home inventory should include both for added security.

Home Inventory List - A comprehensive home inventory list catalogs your belongings and should include the item description, make, model, serial number, if applicable, value, and purchase date. You can create your own list using a spreadsheet or fill out a home inventory checklist that is ready to go. We provide a basic checklist in the pages that follow. **Visual Record** - A visual record of your possessions shows proof of ownership. This can be accomplished with a video walk-through of your home or through a series of photographs.

Document Thoroughly

Your home inventory should support the claims process for events ranging from the total loss of your home by fire to the theft of a few items. That's why it's important to thoroughly document your belongings to ensure proper coverage.

A good way to start is to move from room to room, listing items as you go. Don't forget to include the item in your basement, attic, garage, and any detached structures, such as tool sheds. Also, pay special attention to your most valuable possessions, such as antiques, art, jewelry, collectibles, and electronic equipment. If you have any questions about which items are covered by your policy, contact your insurance agent.

Keeping proper documentation will also help to facilitate the claims process. This documentation, which can be scanned for digital storage, includes:

- receipts
- credit card statements
- other transaction documents
- appraisals (include the appraiser's name and address)

Keep Your Home Inventory Safe

Don't let your home inventory become part of a property loss. Whichever inventory method you choose, it's important to keep a copy in a bank safe deposit box or other secure location away from your home.





Home Security

You've taken the first step by becoming part of an organized Neighborhood Watch group. The success of your Neighborhood Watch group will depend on your involvement and continued support. Below is a list of things that you can do right now.

Secure Your Home

Look around the outside of your home, paying close attention to windows and doors. Where would you break in if you were a criminal? Strengthen weak areas first. Make sure the locks on all the doors and windows work properly. Most burglaries occur because the opportunity existed. The more difficult you make it for someone to enter your home, the more likely they will move on to a less secure home.

Lighting

Lighting is one of the most effective deterrents to crime and is an easy way to increase the security of your neighborhood. Criminals hate to be seen. Some lighting tips include:

-Use dusk to dawn light on main entrance points of your home. Someone cannot lurk there unseen or so neighbors can see if someone is trying to break in your door.

-Consider motion detectors for areas of your yard that do not need to be lit all night. They can deter criminal behavior and, depending on your use, can also alert you or neighbors to activity in an area that shouldn't be in use at that time of night.

-Look at your home at night to eliminate dark spots. Identify areas that may be hidden or dark and what solutions you feel work for you.

Remove Valuables From Your Car

It only takes a few seconds for a thief to steal from your car. But most thieves are opportunists. If there is nothing to steal, the thief moves on. This applies to when you park at work or a store or in your own driveway. Take anything of value with you or, at the very least, secure any valuables in the trunk. Most importantly, lock your car doors at all times when parked.

Secure Your Garage

Remember to close your garage door anytime when you are not in the immediate area. This means at night as well as when you are in the backyard. This would be the same for any sheds or out building that may contain valuable items.

Make Sure Your House Numbers Are Visible

Police and emergency personnel will need to find your address quickly in the event of an emergency. Make house numbers visible on your home.

Vacation Security

During vacations or other trips, follow these suggestions to help make your home appear occupied. This will hopefully discourage burglars and thieves. Some of these may require the help of a trusted neighbor, but alert neighbors are your best protection against crime.

Make sure you have adequate locks on all your doors and windows. Most burglaries occur because the opportunity existed. The more difficult you make it for someone to enter your home, the more likely they will move on to a less secure home.

Vacation Security (continued)

Automatic timers can be used to turn lights on and off at staggered intervals. You can also have a radio or television set turned on occasionally so noise is heard coming from the house. Don't let your travel plans be widely known, but do ask a trusted neighbor to:

- pick up your mail, newspapers and other deliveries
- remove snow from your driveway/sidewalk
- mow your lawn if you will be gone for a noticeable amount of time
- bring your trash can down on garbage day and return it by the house when empty



Try to load your vehicle in an attached garage to avoid advertising to a passerby that you are leaving soon. Never pack your car the night before if it has to be left outside. It is only a motivation for thieves, but also a sign that you are going away.



Technology and Home Security

The Appleton Police Department has platforms on Nextdoor and Neighbors (by Ring). Both allow citizens to post items to their specific geographic neighborhood. Any citizen can download either app to receive notifications from the Appleton Police Department or their neighbors.

Neighbors (by Ring) specifically only allows crime and public safety posts. It also allows citizens to upload videos directly from any device. While citizens posting directly to these apps can be helpful in spreading the information to their neighbors, it does not take the place of reporting the incident to police.

Neither platform is meant to replace a Neighborhood Watch program but simply enhance what we already do. As crime trends and technology change, we strive to change with them and continue to provide excellent police service.

Security cameras are undoubtedly an effective burglar/theft deterrent. Criminals do not want to be seen or recorded - that's one of the main reasons why security cameras are effective. Not to mention that security camera footage is helpful to assist the police to identify thieves.



Common Questions and Concerns

Animal Control

The City of Appleton has adopted state statutes and created city ordinances concerning animal ownership to protect the public health and safety of its citizens and to promote general welfare of citizens and animals residing within the city.

Animals must be on a leash when off property - The owner or caretaker of any animal that is off their property limits shall have the animal restrained by a leash not more than 8 feet in length and under the control of a responsible person and obedient to that persons command.

Public Nuisance Animals - The owner or caretaker of any animal shall confine, restrain and maintain control over the animal so that the unprovoked animal does not:

- run at large
- attack or injure any person or domesticated animal
- act in an aggressive or threatening manner to any person or domesticated animal
- bark/whine/howl in an excessive, continuous or untimely fashion
- damages private or public property

Limit allowed - No person or household shall keep more than 6 animals, the maximum number of dogs being 3, maximum number of rabbits being 2.

Animal Care - No owner or caretaker of an animal shall fail to provide it with adequate food, water, heating, cooling, ventilation, sanitation, shelter, and medical treatment when necessary.

Abuse of Animal - No person shall beat, cruelly ill treat, torment or otherwise abuse an animal.

Removal of Waste - All pens, yards, structures or areas where animals are kept shall be maintained in a nuisance free manner. Excrement shall be removed regularly and disposed of properly so not to attract insects or rodents, become unsightly or cause objectionable odors.

Report of animal bites and scratches - All incidents occurring in the city in which any animal bites or scratches a person or another animal, or is suspected of such, shall immediately be reported to the Police Department.

Licensing/Vaccinations - Licenses and rabies vaccinations are required for all cats and dogs by the time they reach 5 months of age.

Enforcement - Violations of state statutes and city ordinances will be addressed by written warnings and/or citations. Violations of a more serious nature may be referred to the District Attorney's Office for charges.



Common Questions and Concerns (continued)

Alarms

False alarms take police and firefighters away from real emergencies. The City of Appleton has ordinances in place as part of a strategy to reduce false security alarms. Under this ordinance, alarm businesses must obtain a permit through the City Clerk's office on an annual basis. Alarm businesses are required to follow certain procedures to try to ascertain whether an actual emergency is occurring prior to contacting the police communications center to request that officers be sent.

There is a fee for alarm users who report false alarms to serve as a deterrent to those who don't properly use their alarm systems. Alarm users are encouraged to work in cooperation with their alarm business to ensure that the alarm system is working properly, that they have current information on file for keyholders, and that the alarm users have been properly trained.

Overnight Parking

City ordinance prohibits on street parking between the hours of 2:00 AM and 5:00 AM. Overnight parking may also be restricted during snow emergencies and/or special events.

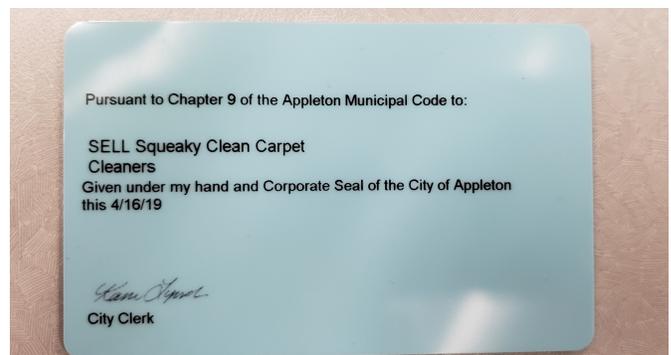
If an emergency arises, such as a mechanical breakdown, home or street construction or overflow guest vehicles, the police can give short term permission to park overnight on a street. You may request overnight parking permission for up to 7 dates per calendar month by using the online form via our website or by calling 920-832-5500.

Commercial Solicitation

In the City of Appleton, it is permissible to hang fliers soliciting business on the doors of homes. The fliers must identify the business being advertised, must be securely attached to the door, contain nothing "improper", must not be dropped to a vacant homes and must be dropped during daylight hours.

If you leave information at/on the door like a flier or hangtag, no license is required. A commercial solicitation license is required for anything other than leaving information (including knocking, ringing the bell or any contact with the resident).

A resident may ask anyone coming to their door for proper identification. A solicitor will have available their commercial solicitation license similar to the one shown below.



Resources

Appleton Police Department ~ 920-832-5500

Appleton Fire Department ~ 920-832-5810

Department of Public Works ~ 920-832-5580

DPW - Parking Utility ~ 920-832-6474

Inspections ~ 920-832-6411

www.appleton.org



APD Neighborhood Watch Contacts

NW Community Outreach Coordinator
Officer Meghan Cash ~ 920-832-5509
meghan.cash@appleton.org

NW Program Coordinator
Sara Derks ~ 920-832-5527
sara.derks@appleton.org

