

**GET INVOLVED—
HELP STOP
VIOLENCE TO
ENSURE SAFER LIVES**

- COMMUNICATE WITH LOCAL NEIGHBORS
- REGULARLY CONTACT THE POLICE TO KEEP THEM UP-TO-DATE WITH IMPORTANT INFO (CRIME, ROBBERIES, SUSPICIOUS PERSONS, ETC.)
- GET INVOLVED WITH AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION THAT YOU FEEL WILL HELP BENEFIT THE DAILY LIVES OF OTHER INDIVIDUALS—INCLUDING YOURSELF.
- GATHER THE FACTS ABOUT CRIME IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD BY: CHECKING POLICE REPORTS, PARTICIPATING IN VICTIMIZATION SURVEYS, & LEARNING RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT CRIME
- SPREAD THE WORD TO GET OTHER MEMBERS INVOLVED AS WELL—THE MORE THE BETTER!
- SPONSOR CLEANUPS, ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO BEAUTIFY THE AREA, & ASK THEM TO TURN ON OUTDOOR LIGHTS AT NIGHT.
- ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCHES TO SPONSOR MEETINGS TO ADDRESS MAJOR ISSUES (I.E.- DRUG ABUSE, GANGS, SELF-PROTECTION TACTICS, ISOLATION OF THE ELDERLY, CRIME IN THE SCHOOLS, & RAPE PREVENTION)
- MAKE AN EFFORT TO INVOLVE EVERYONE—THE MORE PEOPLE WHO ARE INVOLVED THE BETTER BECAUSE TEAMWORK IS USUALLY MORE PROFOUND THAN INDIVIDUAL INSIGHT.

**NEIGHBORHOOD
WATCH**



PROGRAM IN FORCE

**Our neighbors report all
suspicious activity to the
Bowie Police Department**



Bowie Police Department
15901 Excalibur Road
Bowie, MD 20716

Phone: 240-544-5700
Fax: 240-544-5794
Anonymous Tips:
240-544-5770
Dispatch 301-352-1200

**CITY OF BOWIE
POLICE DEPARTMENT**



**Starting a
Neighborhood
Watch**

Neighborhood Watch, Block Watch, Town Watch, Apartment Watch, Crime Watch—no matter what it's called, this is one of the most effective & least costly answers to crime. Watch groups are: a foundation of community crime prevention; they can be a stepping stone to community revitalization.

Bowie Police Department
15901 Excalibur Road
Bowie, MD 20716

Tel: 240-544-5700

Phase One: Getting Started—Meetings, Block Captains, & Maps

- Form a small planning committee of neighbors to:
 1. Discuss needs
 2. The level of interest
 3. Possible challenges
 4. The Watch concept
- Contact the local police/sheriffs' department, or local crime prevention organization in order to discuss Neighborhood Watch & local crime problems.
- Invite a police/law enforcement officer to attend your meeting.
- Publicize your meeting at least 1 week in advance by:
 1. Advertising with door-to-door fliers
 2. Returning phone calls from the day before
 3. Choosing a meeting place that guarantees easy access to people with disabilities
- Hold an initial meeting to evaluate neighbors' interest
- * Establish purpose of program
- * Identify issues that need to be addressed
- Emphasize the fact that a Watch group is:
 - * an association of neighbors who look out for one another's families and their properties.
 - ◆ ****Alert the police of any suspicious activities in progress.**
 - ◆ ****Collaborate to make one's community a safe and secure place to live in.**

Phase 2: After the neighborhood decides to adopt the Watch idea, Elect a chairperson.

- * Ask for block captain volunteers who are responsible for:
 1. Relaying info to members on their block
 2. Keeping up-to-date info on residents
 3. Proposing specific efforts to involve the elderly, working parents, & young people
- ◆ Block captains serve as: liaisons between the neighborhood and correspond information about meetings & crime incidents to all residents.
- Establish a regular means of interacting with Watch members—e.g., newsletter, email, fax, etc.)
- Prepare a neighborhood map containing names, addresses, & phone numbers of participating households & distribute to members.
- * With guidance from a law enforcement agency, the Watch trains its members in: home security techniques, observation skills, & crime reporting.
- Before you post Neighborhood Watch signs, check with law enforcement to see if they obtain eligibility requirements (e.g.-# of houses that participate in the program.) Law enforcement may also be able to provide your program with signs. If not, they can probably tell you where you can order them.
- Organizers & block captains must emphasize that Watch groups are **NOT** vigilantes and **DO NOT** obtain the role of the police.

Helpful Tips for Success

- Hold regular meetings to help residents get to know one another & decide upon program strategies/activities.
- Consider getting involved with an existing organization such as a citizens association, community, development office, etc.
- Canvas door-to-door to recruit members
- Involve everyone in the neighborhood
- Gain support from the police/sheriffs' office
- Both of these types of agencies are considered to be major sources of information on:
 1. Local crime patterns
 2. Home security
 3. Other crime prevention education
 4. Crime reporting