

Neighborhood Watch Manual



Irvine Police Department

Crime Prevention Unit

“In Partnership with the Community”

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What is Neighborhood Watch?

A Neighborhood Watch program is a group of people living in the same area who want to keep their neighborhood safe by working together with local law enforcement to reduce crime and sustain neighborhood quality of life. The program provides residents with crime prevention strategies and information to help them identify and report potential criminal activity in their neighborhoods. Neighborhood Watch groups focus on observation and awareness while promoting social interaction and watching out for each other.

Neighborhood Watch brings an extra layer of safety to the neighborhood. The communication between residents and the police department's assistance with crime prevention information, will help to reduce crime and increase quality of life. The increased communication provides a sense of security and improves neighborhood engagement so that residents feel a sense of connection and involvement.



Roles Involved in Neighborhood Watch:

Irvine residents can start or join any Neighborhood Watch group. This list provides residents with a general idea of roles and responsibilities, but each group can delegate the roles and responsibilities as they see fit for their members. The goal is to establish long term neighborhood watch groups where residents know each other and participate to help make their neighborhood safe.

Law Enforcement

- Promote Neighborhood Watch program.
- Mentor groups when they form.
- Build and maintain community partnerships.
- Provide Neighborhood Watch materials to block captains.
- Inform block captains on what is happening in the city and in their neighborhood.



Block Captains

- Act as a liaison between residents and law enforcement.
- Establish and maintain a method of communication with your local group.
 - NextDoor, Facebook group, email chain, text message, etc.
- Recruit and encourage neighbors to join.
- Distribute information to members.
- Arrange meetings or events with their local members on a regular basis.

Resident Participants

- Report suspicious activity to Law Enforcement.
- Stay informed and connected.
- Attend group meetings and activities.
- Encourage neighbors to join.
- Participate in safety education.



Starting a Watch Group:

Below are five simple steps to start a watch group:

1. Sign up for Irvine Neighborhood watch interest list at <https://city-of-irvine-police-neighborhood-watch-program-cityofirvine.hub.arcgis.com/>
2. Talk to and recruit neighbors.
3. Plan an initial meeting.
4. Develop a plan to maintain communication, connection and dissemination of information.
5. Look out for each other and report suspicious activity to law enforcement.



If you would like a police officer to give a presentation at one of your meetings, please go to: <https://www.cityofirvine.org/ipd-divisions-bureaus-units/crime-prevention> Irvine Police Department Crime Prevention Unit and complete the “Request Officer Appearance or Police Presentation” form.

Crime Prevention

The Irvine Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit takes a proactive approach in preventing crime by offering a variety of free services to the community.

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[Request Officer Appearance or Police Presentation®](#)



Meeting Outline:

The initial meeting is designed to provide an introduction to the Neighborhood Watch program. It covers topics that directly affect your area. The subsequent meetings can be more or less informal with the intent to keep members updated and stay connected. Meetings can be in person or virtual. Below are examples of a typical meeting agenda and some suggested topics of interest.

Suggested Meeting Agenda:

- Introduction
- Ice breaker
- Mission and roles of a neighborhood watch group*
- How to Report a Crime
 - When to call
 - Who to call
 - What information to provide
- Topics, issues, or concerns relevant to your area
- Crime prevention basics and safety tips
- Future meeting plans



*-Neighborhood Watch **is not** a group that takes the law into their own hands. Members **do not** assume the role of Law Enforcement or seek to enforce laws, but work in partnership with Law Enforcement.

Additional Topics to Consider:

- Topic-of-the-Month Presentation
 - Home security, bike safety, package thefts, garage burglaries, etc.
- Activities to booster neighborhood cohesion
- Visit us at: <https://www.cityofirvine.org/ipd-divisions-bureaus-units/crime-prevention> for a list of Brochures and potential topics to discuss during your meetings.

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BROCHURES

ATM Safety.pdf (PDF, 2 MB)
Avoid Text Regret.pdf (PDF, 5 MB)
Bank Safety Tips (Chinese).pdf (PDF, 3 MB)
Bank Safety Tips.pdf (PDF, 2 MB)
Bicycle Safety Administrative Citation Program.pdf (PDF, 4 MB)
Bicycle Safety Tips for Parents and Students.pdf (PDF, 6 MB)
Bike Theft Prevention.pdf (PDF, 3 MB)
Catalytic Converter Theft Prevention.pdf (PDF, 3 MB)
Combating Theft at Fitness Centers.pdf (PDF, 3 MB)
Community Traffic Safety Tips (Chinese).pdf (PDF, 3 MB)
Community Traffic Safety Tips (English).pdf (PDF, 3 MB)
Coyote Quick Facts.pdf (PDF, 9 MB)
Crime Prevention for Seniors - Chinese.pdf (PDF, 5 MB)

How to Keep Watch Group Engaged:

Maintain regularly scheduled meetings to keep members engaged during periods of decreased activity.

Educate members on a variety of topics to keep their interest, such as bike safety, crimes in schools, victim services, and home security.

Organize social events with neighbors such as a block party, potluck dinner, or sporting activity for bonding and connection.

These events promote getting to know your neighbors. Even simply greeting each other will help promote community engagement and promote active participation. The more residents get to know their neighbors, the easier it will be for community members to spot “suspicious” activities.

Eye Spy - What to Watch for:

It is important to always be alert and observant of your environment. By keeping watch you will know better when to report suspicious activity. Residents can play a large role in reducing crime in their neighborhood. Below are examples of what to watch for and things to report immediately to Law Enforcement:



- Someone in distress and shouting for help.
- Someone looking into windows and parked vehicles.
- Unusual noises (cutting saw during late hours of the night, glass shattering, vehicle alarms, etc.)
- Property being taken from a house when no one seems to be home.
- Vehicles moving slowly without an apparent destination or circling around the neighborhood multiple times.
- Strangers talking to a child unknown to them.

How to Report a Crime:

Call Police

When reporting a crime in progress or crime that just occurred with a suspect that may still be in the area, get to a safe location and call 911 immediately. Do not confront or try to investigate on your own. Avoid putting yourself in danger by calling Law Enforcement. Consider several factors when reporting crimes in progress.

When you are reporting a crime that may have occurred several hours or days ago or an incident where no suspect information is available, please call our non-emergency number at 949-724-7000.

When reporting crimes or suspicious activity, try to remember as much information as possible, such as direction of travel, means of travel, vehicle description, height, and personal identifying features like scars, tattoos, and clothing. If possible, write down what you saw as soon as possible or take a photo or video. You will be surprised how time may change your perception.

Online / Video / Access Irvine App

The Irvine Police Department has established two systems to report minor incidents remotely (petty theft, vandalism, mail theft, etc.). Residents can report these via web based online platform or residents can schedule a video conference to report incidents with an officer virtually. These systems are not intended to take the place of delivering police services in person. Residents can also submit crime tips through our Access Irvine App (download via App store or Google Play).

Residents can report hate crimes or incidents anonymously. To access our online system, please visit us at www.cityofirvine.org/ipd. Once there, click on “Online and Video Crime Reporting” near the bottom of the page under services.

The screenshot shows the Irvine Police Department website. The 'SERVICES' menu is expanded, and a red arrow points to the 'ONLINE AND VIDEO CRIME REPORTING' option. Other visible options include 'ACCESS IRVINE MOBILE APP' and 'FINGERPRINTING'. The page also features a message from the Chief of Police, Michael Kent, and a 'FEATURED NEWS' section.

Staying Connected

Address:

1 Civic Center Plaza
Irvine, CA 92606

Phone numbers:

Main Line:

949-724-7000

Non-emergency dispatch:

949-724-7200

Crime Prevention:

949-724-7193

Graffiti Hotline:

949-724-7196



Social Media:

Facebook:

Irvine Police Department

Twitter:

@IrvinePolice

Instagram:

Irvine Police

Line (中文):

@323tqdr1