



# HAND BOOK

How To Get A Watch Going, and Keep It Going

2009 Version

[ottawapolice.ca/neighbourhoodwatch](http://ottawapolice.ca/neighbourhoodwatch)

**The Members of the Ottawa Neighbourhood Watch Executive Committee and the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators wish to thank the Ottawa Police Service for their support in funding the translation, printing and distribution of this Handbook.**

## **DISCLAIMER**

**The Ottawa Police Service offers no guarantee or assurance that the handbook will prevent criminal activity in your area.**

**The Ottawa Police Service is not liable for any activities or initiatives taken directly from or based upon this handbook.**

**September 2008**

## **WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH PROGRAM!**

This is a unique opportunity for YOU and your family to benefit from a local partnership between the Ottawa Police and the many communities which it serves. We are a community-based network of Volunteers who take pride in our own neighbourhoods by providing “eyes” on the street to gather information about possible crime activity, suspicious individuals, and suspected damage to property. We operate at “street” level; we create positive bonds with assigned local Community Police Officers; and we increase the knowledge of how to prevent crime in our communities.

Your participation is important to make all our fellow citizens feel ‘safe’ in a secure neighbourhood. Participation is totally voluntary; no ongoing activity is necessary other than to follow simple steps included in this booklet. There are no costs to participation; we all benefit from the time proven maxim –“Neighbours helping Neighbours” to build safe communities.

Neighbourhood Watch is recognized as an important **Crime Prevention Program** of our Ottawa Police Service --- it will only continue to expand by citizen participation. We hope you will read this booklet, share it with your family, friends and neighbours.

Thank you for expressing interest in the Neighbourhood Watch Program. We hope to welcome you as a new member.

Harry Kingston  
Chair – Ottawa Neighbourhood Watch Executive Committee

September 2008

# CONTENTS

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| <b>1. Introduction</b>  | <b>Pg.# 5</b>    |
| <b>2. History of Neighbourhood Watch in the Ottawa area</b>               | <b>Pg.#6</b>     |
| <b>3. Why Neighbourhood Watch</b>   | <b>Pg.#7</b>     |
| <b>4. Neighbourhood Watch: what it is ----and is not</b>                  | <b>Pg.#8</b>     |
| <b>5. Starting a Watch -----How to get a Watch going</b>                  | <b>Pg.#9-11</b>  |
| <b>Step 1. Level of community interest</b>                                |                  |
| <b>Step 2. Watch boundaries</b>   |                  |
| <b>Step 3. Canvassing</b>   |                  |
| <b>Step 4. Hold a public meeting</b>                                      |                  |
| <b>Step 5. Completed registration forms /Naming Watch</b>                 |                  |
| <b>Step 6. Signage</b>  |                  |
| <b>Level of Participation</b>   |                  |
| <b>Vertical Watches (Apartments or High-Rise Condominiums)</b>            |                  |
| <b>6. Street Signage</b>  | <b>Pg.# 12</b>   |
| <b>7. Watch Roles and Responsibilities</b>                                | <b>Pg.#13-14</b> |
| <b>Coordinator</b>  |                  |
| <b>Block/ Street Captain</b>  |                  |
| <b>Member</b>   |                  |
| <b>8. Role of Neighbourhood Watch Community Associations</b>              | <b>Pg.#15</b>    |
| <b>9. Role of Ottawa Neighbourhood Watch Executive Committee</b>          | <b>Pg.#15-16</b> |
| <b>10. Role of the Community Police Centre Officer for the NW Program</b> | <b>Pg.#16</b>    |
| <b>11. Things Every Member Should Know</b>                                | <b>Pg.#17-18</b> |
| <b>When and How to Call the police &amp;City Services</b>                 |                  |
| <b>12. How to Keep a Watch Going</b>                                      | <b>Pg.#19-20</b> |
| <b>13. Dormant Watches and Defunct Watches</b>                            | <b>Pg.#20</b>    |
| <b>14. Appendices</b>   | <b>Pg.#21-26</b> |
| <b>A. NW Process Flow Chart</b>   |                  |
| <b>B. OPS NW Organizational Chart</b>                                     |                  |
| <b>C. Other OPS Core Crime Prevention Programs</b>                        |                  |
| <b>D. When You Make a Call</b>  |                  |
| <b>15. Abbreviations and Glossary</b>                                     | <b>Pg.# 27</b>   |

# INTRODUCTION

The Neighbourhood Watch Program is one of several core crime prevention programs supported by the Ottawa Police Service (OPS). The Program is community driven and thrives on neighbours watching out for neighbours.

It is designed to help:

- Reduce crime in their community
- Encourage neighbours to be alert to potential crime and take appropriate actions
- Combat crime before it starts by reducing the opportunities for crime to occur.

This manual is intended as an operating guide for use by; people interested in the formation and operation of a Neighbourhood Watch, Ottawa Police Service (OPS) volunteers acting as Neighbourhood Watch Program Volunteers on behalf of their respective Community Police Centre (CPC), and Community Police Centre Officers (CPCO) who are responsible for the delivery of the crime prevention programs.

It introduces and explains the general concepts and practices, required in the formation, management, coordination and preservation of Watches.

A Neighbourhood Watch, also referred to as a Watch, signifies a group of neighbours bonded together to reduce or prevent crime within a defined locale, for example, a neighbourhood, (several streets within a specific geographical area), a city street or block, apartment or condominium or a rural area.

# HISTORY OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH IN THE OTTAWA AREA

In Ottawa, during the winter of 1979-80, some residents of Abbey Road became so concerned about a rash of “break and enters” in their neighbourhood that they organized a meeting with the Ottawa Police to look for remedies. Sergeant Brian Skinner used the Seattle Neighbourhood Watch concept to develop a pilot project on Abbey Road.

Thus, Abbey Road, combined with adjacent sections of Alta Vista Drive and Balfour Avenue, comprising a total of seventy homes, became the first Watch in Ottawa, and the first in Eastern Canada. John Dolan, a retired civil servant and resident of Abbey Road agreed to lead the Watch, and continued to do so until 1991. By that time, the Ottawa Neighbourhood Watch Program, operating in close partnership with the Ottawa Police Service, had grown to about two hundred Watches, representing about twenty-five thousand households.

During the 1980s, many separate Neighbourhood Watch Programs were established in the outlying cities and townships, and the former cities of Ottawa, Kanata, Nepean, Vanier, Rockcliffe Park, Cumberland, and others. In each of these communities, the original model was adapted to meet particular needs and local circumstances. When these communities were amalgamated into the new City of Ottawa in 2001, all these NW programs were brought under the purview of the Ottawa Police Service. The Neighbourhood Watch Renewal Group (NWRG) was created to develop and implement citywide Neighbourhood Watch Program standards. The group consisted of police personnel and Neighbourhood Watch representatives from across the expanded city of Ottawa. Thus, “How to Get a Watch Going and Keep it Going: An Introductory Manual” was developed and approved by the Ottawa Police Service to provide an introduction to the Neighbourhood Watch Program. Also, with the advent of community policing in the 1990s, Community Police Centres were established and assigned primary responsibility for the administration of crime prevention programs such as Neighbourhood Watch, Business Crime Prevention Program, Child Print, Home Security Inspection, and Operation Identification.

## WHY NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Who needs it? I'm already doing all that stuff. Dead bolt locks, keeping an eye on strangers, knowing who's on vacation, whatever, I don't need someone to come in here to tell me how to do it.

A rugged individualist; the world needs more of them. Many citizens, especially in rural areas, have always lived by the motto of "people helping people"—they were "neighbourhood watching" long before anyone thought of establishing a formal program, and they don't need to be told how to be good neighbours. Does the Neighbourhood Watch Program have anything to offer to people such as these?

People form associations to achieve collective goals; and associations give focus and voice to the ideas and energies of its members when there are problems to be solved or issues to address. People form associations to protect the environment, to oppose drunk drivers, to save heritage buildings...and also to prevent crime.

An obvious advantage to participation in Neighbourhood Watch is that it facilitates access to program literature, Neighbourhood Watch signage, and Community Police Centre (CPC) infrastructure services, e.g. photocopiers, fax machines, etc., but more importantly, it facilitates a linking of arms with your neighbours and your police service, both at neighbourhood and city-wide levels, to address crime prevention issues.



**“NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH? NO OFFENSE, BUT I VALUE MY PRIVACY. I MIND MY OWN BUSINESS AND I EXPECT MY NEIGHBOURS TO DO THE SAME. WHAT’S WRONG WITH THAT?”**

*Nothing at all. We all value our privacy. But Neighbourhood Watch is simply a program designed to help prevent neighbourhood crime – it could be physical assaults, vandalism, or whatever is deemed as a crime in progress or suspicious. One of the ways its members achieve this goal is by being alert to the behavior of strangers. A Watch isn't meant to be a Social Club, but it's a whole lot easier to identify strangers once you get to know your neighbours and for this reason, watched neighbourhoods do tend to be more cohesive, caring communities. So, bottom line, it really comes down to deciding what kind of a community you want to live in, and what level of participation makes it work for you.*

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH: WHAT IT IS

Neighbourhood Watch is an organized group of citizens devoted to the reduction and prevention of crime in their neighbourhoods. Very few people are in a position to protect their homes and property all of the time. Vacations, business and shopping trips, or an evening out will leave your home temporarily unattended and vulnerable.

Neighbourhood Watch is neighbours watching out for neighbours. Your neighbours know who you are, when you are likely to be in or out, what type of car you own, and may be the first to notice a burglar at your window or door. A police officer patrolling your community wouldn't recognize a stranger in your yard - but your neighbours would.

For Neighbourhood Watch to be totally effective, each resident should take an active role in both security improvement and observation.

People learn:

- How to make their homes less inviting as a target for thieves at no cost by having a home inspection to make their home more secure
- How to participate in Operation Identification, making their personal property more difficult for burglars to dispose of
- How to mobilize individuals to reduce or prevent criminal activities in their neighbourhoods.
- How to be more aware of suspicious behaviors and how to take the appropriate action
- How to report the incidence to the coordinator and the Ottawa Police Service

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH: WHAT IT IS NOT

Membership in a Watch is not about and does not involve

- being a busybody
- time-consuming duties and obligations
- being a vigilante
- fees for service



### WHAT DOES A BURGLAR LOOK LIKE?

*After working in her side garden one Saturday afternoon, an elderly resident of Caledon Avenue came around the corner of her house to find two teen-age girls on her front steps. They claimed to be looking for their lost kitten, but as she soon discovered, they had actually entered her home and stolen all the money from her purse. The neighbourhood was not deserted that afternoon; nor were the neighbours inattentive – it's just that the girls did not look "suspicious". And by the time the lady was able to alert her neighbours, the girls were long gone. The lessons seem to be that you can't even putter in your garden these days without locking your doors – and that burglars may not look anything like what you expect.*

*Helene Dudas Watch Coordinator*

# STARTING A WATCH

## HOW TO GET A WATCH GOING

Before attempting to start a Watch in your neighbourhood, you should contact the nearest Community Police Centre (CPC). The Community Police Centre Officer (CPCO) or the Neighbourhood Watch Program Volunteer will advise you on how to get started, provide you with introductory pamphlets and sign-up sheets, which are useful in the door-to-door canvassing of the residents in your neighbourhood.

### How to contact your CPCO

Look in the Ottawa Police Service “red pages” in the front of the telephone book, or visit the police web site [www.ottawapolice.ca](http://www.ottawapolice.ca). You can also call (613) 236-1222.

The following steps are suggested guidelines and sequence of events to follow. Each new Watch determines what works best for them.

#### Step 1.

Be prepared to present an expressed level of interest in your area for a Neighbourhood Watch in order to assist the Community Police Centre Officer or the Neighbourhood Watch Program Volunteer to start the process.

#### Step 2.

Decide on the boundaries for your Watch. Will it be for example, a city block, an apartment building, a housing development or a rural route? Areas of responsibility should be kept within manageable limits. A useful rule of thumb is when it comes down to making phone calls, or ringing doorbells, no one should be responsible for much more than ten households. This suggests a natural Watch size of approximately one hundred houses or apartments. A Coordinator maintains contact with no more than ten Block Captains, each of whom keeps in touch with roughly ten to twenty households.

#### Step 3.

Enlist the support of some immediate or key neighbours to assist with the door-to-door canvassing of your neighbourhood. Request that they become potential members of the Watch by completing the registration form. If you live in an apartment block you should enlist the support of the building owner at the earliest opportunity. Discuss and agree upon a canvassing strategy and timetable for this activity to be completed. Do not be disappointed if initial response is lower than expected. You can conduct follow up canvassing, or gain more members at your Kick Off meeting as described in the next step.

#### Step 4.

Hold a public meeting. Choose a meeting place handy to your area. Verify with your Community Police Centre Officer as to their availability prior to setting a date. The Ottawa Police Neighbourhood Watch Program Volunteer should also attend your meeting to provide helpful advice and assistance. You may wish to consider inviting your local City Councillor. The meeting should be well publicized to obtain a good turnout. Photocopying of your flyer can be done free of charge at your local Community Police Centre.

Your reasons for holding the meeting may be;

- a. A Kick Off meeting, to inform in detail the residents within your designated area about the Neighbourhood Watch Program, and the other crime prevention programs offered by the Ottawa Police Service.
- b. A meeting to introduce registered and potential Watch members to the Community Police Centre Officer. You may use this occasion to finalize your Watch membership registration, and identify Block/Street Captains.

#### Suggested Meeting Checklist;

1. Find a local meeting place that's free, conveniently located, wheelchair accessible, and a suitable size i.e. community centre, school, or church.
2. Establish a time and date convenient for residents and the Community Police Officer.
3. Promote the meeting by flyer, email, and word of mouth to every resident in the area. The meeting should be promoted as an opportunity for problem solving through dialogue with your Community Police Centre Officer.
4. Prepare a meeting agenda that includes:
  - a. Welcome and introduction of speaker (s).
  - b. Discussion of area crime conditions and problems.
  - c. Discussion of crime prevention strategies, and the Neighbourhood Watch Program.
5. Set up the meeting place to encourage interaction by all participants. Set up reception tables so that attendees may be able to sign up for the new Watch.

## Step 5.

Name your Watch. One of the easiest ways to identify your Watch is using your street name of your more populous street. To ensure proper documentation from the start, provide the Community Police Centre with the original copy of the completed registration forms of all Watch members and a copy for the coordinator's file.

## Step 6.

Obtain Signage. The Community Police Centre Officer and the Coordinator will decide on the most effective location for the Neighbourhood Watch street signs. A 50%+ membership is required for signage approval. The ideal area covered by a Watch is one with limited number of entrances, so that signs can be placed to inform people that it is a Neighbourhood Watch area.



### **WHAT CAN I DO TO BUILD MY MEMBERSHIP?**

*You need 50%+ resident registrations within your designated boundaries to have Neighbourhood Watch street signs installed. Don't be intimidated by that number. Every neighbourhood has its own character, and what works for one may not work for another. Would your neighbours go for a block party, a community fun day and BBQ, or if in winter perhaps a skating party at the local outdoor rink? Remember to invite your Community Police Centre Officer and the Neighbourhood Watch program volunteer to these events. They can bring the necessary literature and registration forms. The residents will welcome the opportunity to know and speak with their community police centre officer, and the officer and Neighbourhood Watch program volunteer can promote the program, as well as enjoy meeting the residents. A short article in the community newspaper, enumerating the reasons why a Neighbourhood Watch would benefit your area may motivate some residents to join. Some of your neighbours may have other ideas that would better suit your area.*

## LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The higher the participation rate in a Watch area, the more effective that Watch will be. If participation is less than 50%, you can still be a Neighbourhood Watch, but would be classed as a Micro Watch, with all the same level of support from your CPC, and CPCO. The only difference will be lack of street signage.

If you were able to gather only a handful of your immediate neighbours to participate (1-6 members), your Watch would be classed as a Mini-watch.

While the effectiveness of these types of Watches may be less significant, it is recognized that these members establish a foundation for later growth, and are allowed participation in the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators Association.

## VERTICAL WATCHES (APARTMENTS OR HIGH-RISE CONDOMINIUMS)

Starting a Watch in an apartment building or high-rise condominium is much the same as starting a Watch in a residential area. You should enlist the support of the building owner or your Condominium Association at the earliest opportunity. The Watch still requires a Coordinator, Floor Captains rather than Block/Street Captains and the occupants are the members. The steps remain the same, though getting a meeting site is much easier, as most apartments and high-rise condominium have a meeting room. The Watch roles and responsibilities remain the same.



### THE FORT KNOX CAPER

*When you live in a vertical community, you really have three front doors: the vestibule entrance, your apartment door and the garage door. Our residents are constantly reminded not to allow strangers through the vestibule door. The entrance to our underground garage requires a key or electronic swipe to gain entry, but we still urge residents always to keep their cars locked and to remove valuables from their parked cars. Imagine our surprise when a vehicle was stolen from our hitherto impregnable underground garage. We later learned that some enterprising youngsters had ducked under the entrance door after a car had entered, and stolen a vehicle that was left unlocked, with the keys in the ignition and the electronic swipe for the exit door conveniently left attached to the keys! In fairness, I must add that the vehicle owner had been intensely preoccupied in looking after sick parents.*

*The moral is - no matter how much you may labour to make your building as impregnable as Fort Knox, the villains will exploit any momentary weaknesses to make off with your vehicles and your valuables*

*John Mew, Condominium Coordinator*

# **STREET SIGNAGE**

Neighbourhood Watch street signs are intended to act as identifiers in neighbourhoods where there is an active Neighbourhood Watch program in place.

## **REQUIREMENTS TO HAVE A STREET SIGN INSTALLED**

1. The Watch must meet the active Watch criteria- which is a participation rate of 50%+ of the designated Watch boundaries.
2. The number of signs and the exact installation location will depend on the Watch configuration, with the decision reached by the Community Police Centre Officer (CPCO) and the Coordinator, as to the most effective location in the Watch community, as Budget constraints must also be considered when making the decision.
3. The Community Police Centre Officer (CPCO) will complete for each sign to be installed a Neighbourhood Watch Street Sign Action Form indicating:
  - The street address
  - Nearest intersection or cross street
  - Direction the sign is to face, (i.e. North, South, East West)
  - Name of the Community Police Centre and the officer name and numbers
  - Name of the Watch, name of the coordinator and phone number.
4. The Community Police Centre Officer will submit the form on line after printing a copy for the CPC Watch file.
5. OPS Community Development Section submits the request to Infrastructure Services & Community Sustainability at the City of Ottawa who is responsible for the sign installation. It will take approximately 6-8 weeks. Signs cannot be installed once the ground is frozen.
6. If after eight weeks the sign is still not installed, the coordinator is to advise the Community Police Center Office (CPCO).

# WATCH ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each new Watch generally elects from its members, a Coordinator and several Block/Street Captains to help the Watch run more smoothly, and to facilitate communication between Watch members. In its initial stages a Watch may have these positions filled by residents who volunteer their services in these capacities.

## WATCH COORDINATOR

Each Watch has a Coordinator who is responsible for the overall operation of the Watch. The Coordinator serves as the Watch's contact with the Community Police Centre (CPC) and the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators Association (NWCA) and is expected to perform the following tasks:

- inform the Neighbourhood Watch Program Volunteer of any criminal activities reported with the Watch
- arrange for an alternate Coordinator in your absence and the required number of Block Captains
- organize general meetings of the Watch and meetings with the Block Captains as required
- disseminate information on crime stats, crime prevention tips etc. to the Watch via the Block Captains
- recruit replacements for departing and/or retiring Watch Coordinators and Block Captains
- attend meetings of the quarterly NWCA, or, if unable to attend, arrange for an alternate
- promote Neighbourhood Watch within your community meetings
- maintain close contact with the NW Program Volunteer
- provide updates to the CPC of the Watch membership list on an annual basis
- determine best location for Watch signage and initiate request



**“I’D LIKE TO HELP BUT I REALLY DON’T HAVE A CLUE ABOUT CRIME PREVENTION. BESIDES, I’M ALREADY INVOLVED IN A LOT OF OTHER STUFF- WOULD THESE DUTIES TAKE UP A LOT OF MY TIME?”**

*There are no necessary prerequisites for becoming a Coordinator. You don’t have to be a community leader. You just have to be a good citizen, and care enough to want to make a difference in your neighbourhood.*

*Once a Watch has been solidly established, no Coordinator should ever be required to regularly liaise with more than ten (10) Block Captains, nor any Block Captain with more than their given ratio. During periods of elevated criminal activity, there may be more meetings needed to address problems and more frequent communications with members; but at these times there are always more residents willing to get engaged and share the workload.*

## BLOCK/STREET CAPTAIN

The Block/Street Captain is normally responsible for monitoring 10-20 homes, substitutes for the Watch Coordinator as required, assists the Coordinator in managing the Watch and is expected to perform the following tasks:

- welcome new neighbours, inform them about the program and invite them to join
- set an example by adopting appropriate home security measures and being a good neighbour
- maintain an accurate list of members within his/her area of responsibility and advise the Coordinator of changes as they occur
- report incidents of crime or attempted crime to the coordinator after ensuring the police have been alerted
- disseminate information on criminal activity, crime stats, crime prevention tips etc. to the Watch members within their block/street area
- arrange for an assistant/alternate to take over during his/her absences
- communicate the concerns of Watch members to the Coordinator

## WATCH MEMBER

Your only duty is to look out for your own best interests and those of your family and neighbours. You can do this by:

- remaining alert to any suspicious activity and reporting it promptly to the police, then to your Block/Street Captain
- keeping your own home secure
- monitoring your neighbours' homes during their absences
- attending Watch meetings
- just being a good neighbour, the kind you would like to have living next door



### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW THE COMMUNITY POLICE CENTRE OFFICER?

*A vital component for effective Neighbourhood Watch programs is the partnership between the community police officers and the Watch coordinators. Each must know who the other is, and how to contact him/her swiftly. The officer/ coordinator partnership is especially important when a pattern of crime or suspicious behavior begins to surface in a neighbourhood. If two similar incidents occur within a short time frame, a pattern of crime may be starting. By sharing information and promptly alerting Watch members, the officer and coordinator work together to end the outbreak at an early stage.”*

*Sheila Urquhart, Riverside Park*

# ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

Currently, the interests of Neighbourhood Watch members are represented by two organizations. These organizations are designed to provide a mechanism of communication across the various Watches in the city, and to work closely with the Ottawa Police Service as a partner on the overall strategic direction of Neighbourhood Watch as a Crime Prevention Program. These organizations are:

**Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators Associations (NWCA)** are established to represent the interests of Neighbourhood Watches within the geographic areas covered by each Ottawa Police Service (OPS) zone. Each NWCA will:

1. Provide a forum for local problem solving, discussion of crime prevention techniques and activities and the sharing of best practices;
2. Facilitate effective communication among Watch Coordinators and between Coordinators and the Community Police Centre.

These NWCAs operate at the local level and are expected to function in accordance with accepted guidelines for operating a meeting; including nomination of a Chairperson and providing a formal agenda and minutes. The NWCAs are made up of the Watch Coordinators, the respective Community Police Centre Officer (CPCO), and the Ottawa Police NW Program Volunteer, where available. NWCAs operating within a Community Police Centre zone of operation are required to elect a Delegate to sit on the ONWEC Executive as a voting member.

*It may, for practical purposes, be necessary to combine into a single Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators Association (NWCA), Watches of more than one Zone, or Watches from geographical areas where CPC's were closed.*

## OTTAWA NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (ONWEC)

**ONWEC** is a citywide committee made up of police personnel, NW Coordinators from the OPS zones, and a Community Development representative.

The **ONWEC Executive** and OPS Business Owners provide guidance for ONWEC activities. The Executive of ONWEC is comprised of the following positions:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- OPS Business Owners
- Community Development representative.

This committee was established to represent the collective interest of all the watches in the city of Ottawa. The responsibilities for ONWEC are:

- To ensure that all Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator Associations (NWCAs) are represented on the committee.
- To provide a forum for the discussion of the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator Associations (NWCAs), issues and concerns, and the development of policies and/or proposals to address the same.

- Provide guidance to NWCAs, and Community Police Centre Officers (CPCO) as requested.
- To ensure that the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator Associations (NWCAs), are kept up to date on all matters pertaining to the Neighbourhood Watch Program (NWP).

## COMMUNITY POLICE CENTRE OFFICER FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH PROGRAM



### WHAT EXACTLY IS A CPC?

*A Community Police Centre (CPC) is a community policing unit of the Ottawa Police Service established to address ongoing community problems and reduce the incidence of crime through targeted crime prevention programs. They are resource and problem-solving centers serving the residents within their designated areas.*

### Community Police Centre Officer for the Neighbourhood Watch Program Will

- Provide a necessary link in the creation, rejuvenation and ongoing activities for the Neighbourhood Watches.
- Ensure training of Watch Coordinator(s) and Community Police Centre Neighbourhood Watch Program Volunteers
- Ensure the Community Police Centre has the most update Neighbourhood Watch material and documents.
- Maintain regular communication with Coordinators in the community.
- Promote Neighbourhood Watch

# THINGS EVERY WATCH MEMBER SHOULD KNOW

## How to Call the Police – Do’s:

Whether you’re calling to report a crime in progress or just something that arouses your suspicion, remember the following Do’s and Don’ts:

### DO

- identify yourself as a Watch member;
- be prepared to describe the persons, vehicles or circumstances as fully as possible;
- ask for an “incident” number to facilitate a follow-up inquiry at a later date;
- record the time and date of your call;
- keep the suspects and incident under surveillance from a safe distance until Police arrive;
- make a second call if the activity gets worse; and
- inform your Block Captain or designate when time permits.

**DON’T** Attempt apprehension or pursuit of a suspect.

**DON’T** Attempt to confirm your suspicions by approaching a home or vehicle where a crime may have taken place, or may still be in progress. Go immediately to a safe distance, call 9-1-1 and wait for the police. If you approach the scene of a crime, you may encounter a dangerous criminal, or destroy useful evidence. For example, Police Canine Unit tracking dogs can only follow the trail of the last person who was on the scene.

## Make the Right Call!

Every call is important, but not all calls are life-threatening, and not all calls are police emergencies. Whatever the case, we’re here to help.



### *make the right call!*

**9-1-1** 

Life-threatening Emergency or Crime in Progress

**613-230-6211**

Other Emergencies

**613-236-1222, ext. 7300**

**TTY**  **613-760-8100**

Call Centre: To report a theft, property damage, missing person or stolen vehicle.

**613-236-1222**

**TTY**  **613-232-1123**

Community Police Centres and all other enquiries

## How the Police Respond to Calls for Service

The Ottawa Police Service has three categories of calls:

- **Priority 1 calls (911)** — urgent and/or life-threatening situations, including crimes in progress. Police strive to respond to these calls within 15 minutes, 90 percent of the time.
- **Priority 2 calls** — urgent but not life-threatening situations. The service standard here is expressed as an average response time of two hours or less
- **Priority 3 calls** — Community Police Centres and all other enquiries. Here, the response is within 24 hours.

The Police Service also has alternative responses — those responses that do not include dispatching officers, such as taking reports over the phone or referring calls to the Neighbourhood Officers, School Resource Officers, or Community Police Centre Officers.

**Emergency situations are any crime in progress, and can include the following:**

- Assault
- Break and Enter/Burglary
- Fire or Explosion
- Gun shots
- Homicide
- Odour of Gas
- Person with a Weapon
- Police Officer in Trouble
- Purse Snatching/Robbery
- Serious Injury
- Serious Vehicle Accident
- Suspicious Person
- Suspicious Vehicle

**Non-emergency police situations include:**

- Graffiti
- Lost or Recovered Property
- Minor Vehicle Accident
- Narcotic Information
- Some Thefts
- Traffic Conditions and Parking
- Vandalism

**When to Call 311**

The City of Ottawa is on call to answer your questions with one easy number: 3-1-1 or 613-580-2400.

The City launched the 3-1-1 service connecting residents with its "one-stop" Contact Centre, providing answers on everything from recreation and marriage licenses to recycling and parking.

The Contact Centre is open Monday through Saturday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Only urgent calls such as broken water mains, traffic lights not functioning, or bylaw services such as noise complaints, parking enforcement or animal control services will be accepted outside of business hours.

General Inquiries: 3-1-1 (613) 580-2400  
Toll-Free: 866-261-9799  
TTY: (613) 580-2401-TTY/Teletypewriter users only  
[Other City of Ottawa phone numbers.](#)

*All of these avenues of action are completely confidential. You can always reinforce that you do not wish an officer attend your address, but that you can be called privately. When reporting to the Police or Bylaw, remember to ask for the incident number related to your call.*

**CRIME STOPPERS**

**How Does Crime Stoppers Work?**

Any individual with knowledge of a crime can call **(613)-233-TIPS (613) 233-8477 or 1-800-222-TIPS** to relay clues or other information. Anyone who wishes to remain anonymous may do so, and his or her information will be identified by a code number only. [www.crimestoppers.ca](http://www.crimestoppers.ca)

# HOW TO KEEP A WATCH GOING

Watches are created either to help prevent crime or to solve a specific crime problem in a neighbourhood. If the neighbourhood remains relatively crime free, or the problem is solved, the level of active crime prevention may begin to drop and complacency sets in.

So, how do you keep Watch members motivated to maintain alertness and reinforce good crime prevention? The secret is to keep communications flowing, coordinator to block/street captains to members, and members to block/street captains to coordinator. Emails have become a quick and easy way to communicate with residents; however don't forget the ones without computers. In such cases, the block captain can either give them a phone call or deliver a printout of the email. As always, the best method is the one that works for you and your neighbours.

The following suggestions are a few of the ways you can keep your Watch going.

- If your neighbours like to socialize the suggestions found in the text box “how to achieve 50%+”, can also be effective in maintaining contact with your Watch members.
- Your local Community Police Centre (CPC) has readily available a vast number of leaflets, pamphlets and booklets on safety tips. Also found at your CPC are publications put out by the Ministry of Consumer and Business Communication Services, i.e. their yearly calendar contains a different safety tip for each month. These are all available free of charge. It is wise to call your CPC prior to going, in order to ensure there is an adequate supply to meet your needs.
- Your Neighbourhood Watch Community Association (NWCA) meetings are a wonderful source of information to share with your members. Your Community Police Centre Officers make you aware of the current crime trends in their catchment area. What ever happens in one neighbourhood can easily move to another, so this gives everyone a heads up.
- A newsletter highlighting these relevant agenda items, or if applicable a synopsis of a presentation given by an invited Ottawa Police Service Officer specialty branches, (e.g. guns and gangs, computer crime, drug or fraud sections,) informs your members as to what is happening, and how the police are dealing with the various threats to your community's safety.
- Photocopying of your newsletters can be done at your CPC free of charge. Some NWCA open their meeting to include block/street captains and individuals considering starting a Watch.
- Another helpful resource is the Ottawa Police Website. [www.ottawapolice.ca](http://www.ottawapolice.ca)
- The Crime Analysis and Statistics site provides crime statistics for your surrounding areas.
- The Media Room – Subscription Centre- Subscribe to media releases dealing with crimes, requests for public assistance etc.
- Resources link provides Safety and Prevention tips.
- Last but not least, in some Community Police Centres, the officer emails a monthly safety tip to all the coordinators in their catchment area.

## DORMANT WATCHES AND DEFUNCT WATCHES

One indicator of success in the Neighbourhood Watch Program is the total number of registered Watch members. For this number to be meaningful and reliable, it is necessary to maintain accurate membership lists of all functional Watches.

**Once a Watch is established, it doesn't take a lot of effort to maintain it; it's a lot cheaper to keep a machine well oiled than to replace rusted-out parts.**

### *When is a Watch no longer considered an active Registered Watch?*

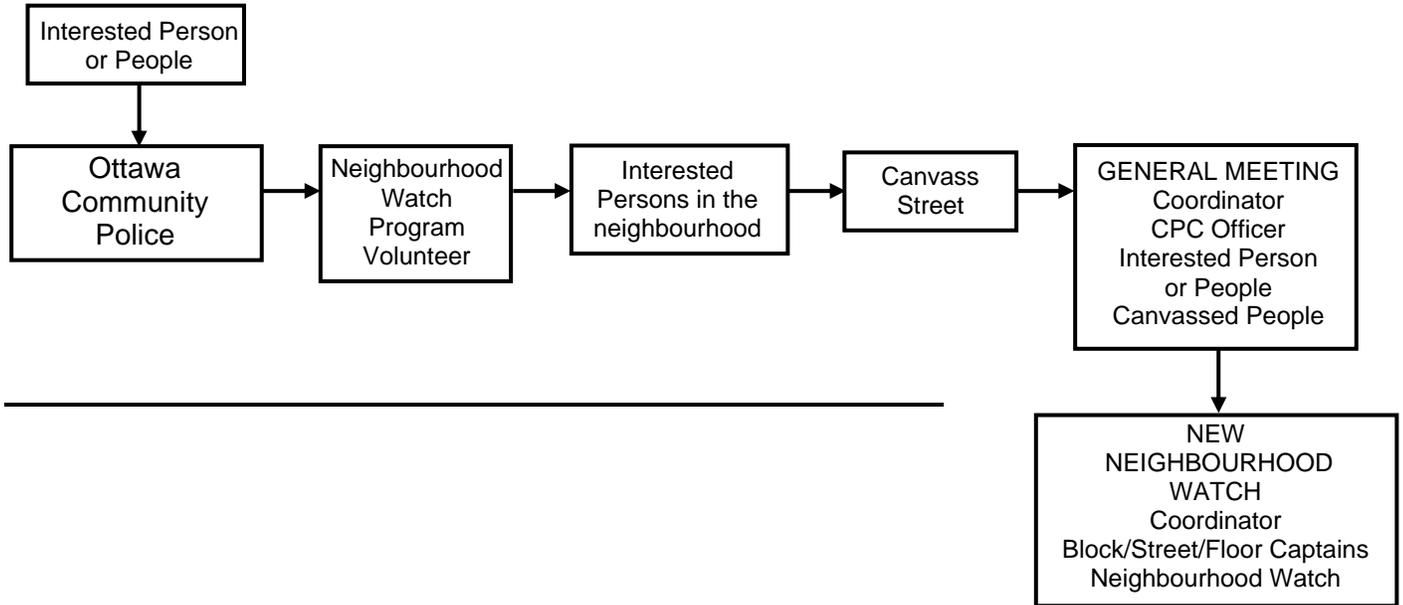
- A Watch ceases to function when there is no longer a Watch member willing to take responsibility for maintaining the Watch or act as the point of contact between the Watch and the local Community Police Centre.
- When the list of registered Watch members is no longer current.

As soon as it becomes apparent that a Watch has ceased to function, it's supporting Community Police Centre Neighbourhood Watch Program Volunteer or police officer will undertake a process to rejuvenate it, i.e. contact the members on the most recent members list, or distribute flyers door to door. **If all efforts fail, the Watch will be considered defunct, and as the Watch is no longer active, any existing Neighbourhood Watch street signs will be removed.**

Why is formal termination necessary?

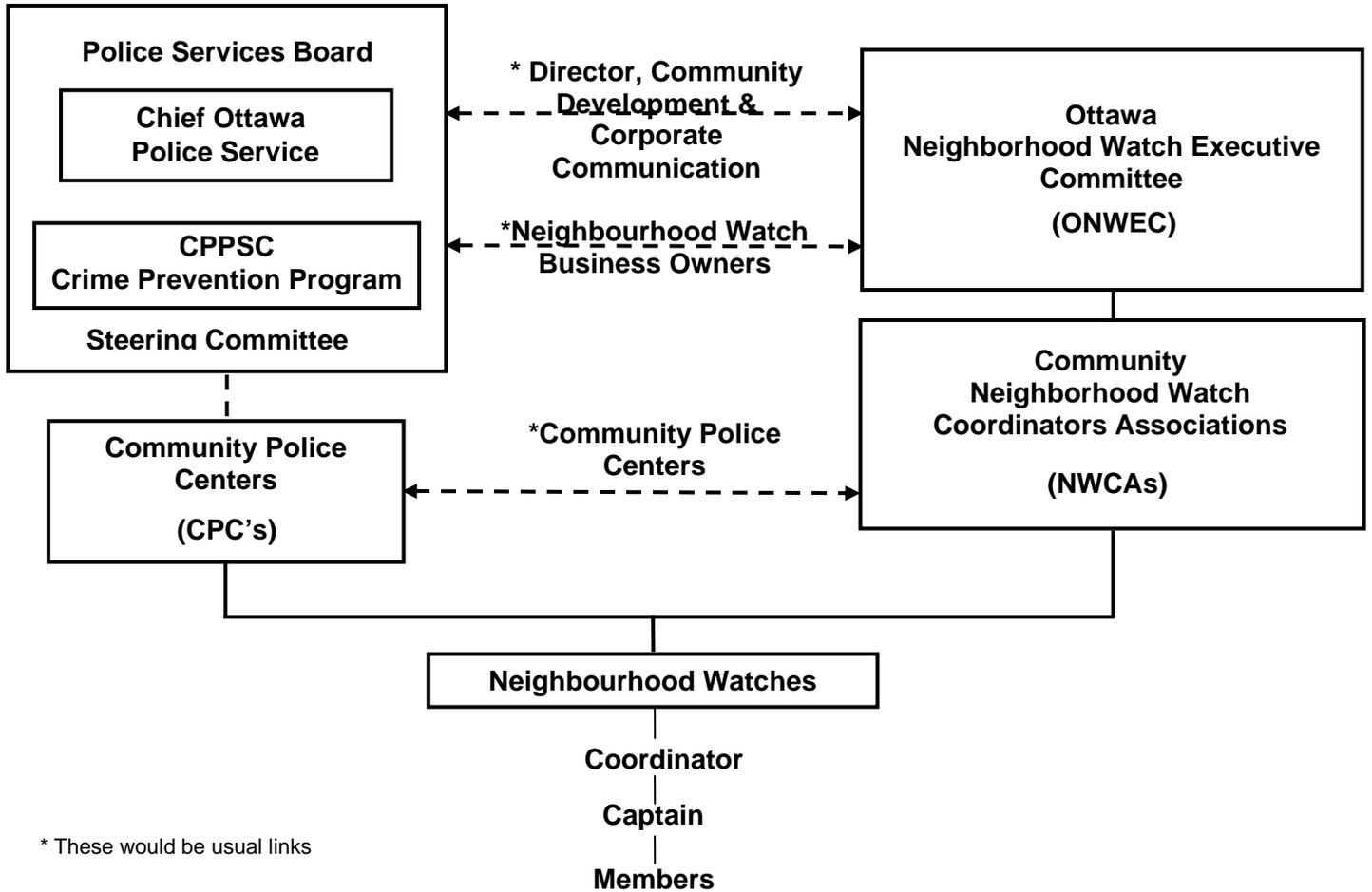
Since significant resources are being committed to crime prevention programs, it is important for the police and the public to know whether a program is a success or a failure.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH PROCESS FLOW CHART



Nov 2008

## Neighbourhood Watch Organization / Relationships Chart



\* These would be usual links

## APPENDIX C: OTHER OPS CORE CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Please visit [www.ottawapolice.ca](http://www.ottawapolice.ca) for a full list of crime prevention program, events as well as other community policing activities, or contact your Community Police Centre (613) 236-1222. You can also sign up to receive media releases and find recent Crime Statistics and trends for your neighbourhood



### HOME SECURITY INSPECTION

Home security inspections allow community members to take an active role in making their homes less susceptible to criminal activity. Based on proven crime prevention principles, residents learn how to make their homes safer.

At your request, police representatives visit your home (house, condo, apartment, etc.) to provide a safety audit - assessing ways to make your home safer. The audit is based on a checklist, and participants are provided with a website link containing a booklet that identifies safety improvements, provides crime prevention tips and promotes other crime prevention initiatives offered by the Police Service



### CHILD PRINT

Child Print provides families with practical information that could be provided to police should a child go missing. The Child Print program strives to make communities safer for children, and teaches children and adults street safety tips.

Interested parents or guardians are encouraged to visit their local [Community Police Centre](#) to get a copy of the [Child Print booklet](#) and have their child or children fingerprinted by a Police Centre representative. Parents/guardians are encouraged to keep an up-to-date record of each child that includes fingerprints, recent photograph and descriptive details, as well as the names and phone numbers of the family doctor, dentist and friends. The program - often available at community events across the city - is a great way for children to make positive contact with police and learn valuable prevention and street proofing tips.



### OPERATION IDENTIFICATION

Operation Identification encourages community members to mark or identify valuables as a proactive measure against theft. Marked stolen articles are difficult to sell, and they are more easily traced.

Contact your local [Community Police Centre](#) to borrow an electric engraver - **free of charge** - to mark your personal possessions using a unique identifier, like a driver's license number. The borrowing period is generally three days. In addition, you are encouraged to photograph or videotape the contents of your home that can't be engraved, including jewelry, silverware, figurines, paintings, etc. Window stickers for your home are also provided to alert people that you have taken proactive measure to deter theft by participating in the Operation Identification Program.

## BUSINESS CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAM

### Business Watch and Business Security Assessment

The Business Crime Prevention Program promotes communication and education for small businesses who have walk-in clientele and less than 20 employees.

Community Police Centres provide an important link to businesses by providing them with practical crime prevention tools to combat criminal activity like theft, fraud, robberies and mischief.

Make your business a less inviting target for criminal activity -- contact your nearest Community Police Centre to obtain your free Business Crime Prevention package.



### CRIME STOPPERS

Crime Stoppers is a community program that helps stop crime in its tracks. Crime Stoppers gathers clues that law enforcement agencies need to solve major crimes. By offering cash rewards and providing a single number to call with information relating to any crime, Crime Stoppers encourages local citizens to provide clues that can be vital in the solution of a crime. Crime Stoppers programs have been highly successful in reducing the crime rate in many other cities in Canada and the United States.



### CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM

The program is designed to help owners, managers, residents and police work together to keep illegal and nuisance activity out of rental communities.

- Multi-faceted approach to crime prevention geared specifically for the rental community.
- Partnership between police, landlords and residents.
- Copyright program (Mesa Police) that utilizes a three-phase certification process.
- Comprehensive screening process for new residents and renewed leases.
- Benefits to all partners involved.



### BLOCK PARENT

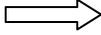
Following the **closure of the Block Parent® Program** in the city of Ottawa in 2008, Ottawa Police would like to remind residents, particularly parents, schools and groups who work with children that the Block Parent® Program no longer exists in the city of Ottawa.

#### **Block Parent® Window & Street Sign Recall**

Block Parent® window signs should be returned to the nearest police station. If you locate a street sign, please notify your CPCO to enable for its removal.

The Ottawa Chapter of Block Parent® has provided more than twenty years of community service in Ottawa. Volunteers who kept the program viable during that time should be commended for their important work and years of dedication

## Appendix D: WHEN YOU MAKE A CALL

| SITUATION   | Your 1 <sup>st</sup> Call    | Then   |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Crime in progress</b><br><br><b>Urgent or life-threatening</b>             | <b>Call 911</b><br>Identify yourself as a Neighbourhood Watch member, provide dispatcher with as much detail as possible  | Notify your Block/Street/Floor Captain who will then notify the Coordinator. If unable to reach the above call the Coordinator |
| <b>Suspicious Activity</b><br><br><b>Urgent need but not life-threatening</b> | <b>Call (613) 230-6211</b><br>Advise dispatcher of the activity going on. Give as much info as possible. Description of individual or car and the direction of travel.  | <b>Same as above.</b>  |
| <b>Non Urgent Case</b>  | <b>Call (613) 236-1222 ex 7300</b><br>This number is for administrative purposes, should you need to make a report of any kind (Call Centre) or contact various departments or officers.  | As above only if it could benefit the safety of the community. If a private matter no need.                                    |
| <b>City Services</b>  | <b>Call 311</b><br>The Contact Centre is open Monday through Saturday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Only urgent calls such as broken water mains, traffic lights not functioning, or bylaw services such as noise complaints, parking enforcement or animal control services will be accepted outside of business hours.<br>General Inquiries: 3-1-1 (613) 580-2400<br>Toll-Free: 866-261-9799<br>TTY: (613) 580-2401<br>TTY/Teletypewriter users only<br><a href="#">Other City of Ottawa phone numbers.</a>   | As above if it will benefit the Neighbourhood Watch residents.   |
| <b>City Service</b>   | <br>211 is an easy-to-remember, three-digit, non-emergency telephone number that connects callers to a full range of community, social, government and health service information in Ottawa.<br>Bilingual and certified information and referral specialists answer 211 calls Monday to Friday, from 7:00 a.m to 9:00 p.m and Saturday and Sunday from 8:00 a.m to 6:00 p.m. It is complemented by an on-line directory. 211 is free, confidential and multilingual (150 languages). | As above if it will benefit the Neighbourhood Watch residents  |

**If you are in doubt as to which number to call dial 911.**

All of these calls for action can be completely confidential. You can always reinforce that you do not wish an officer attend your address, however that you can be called privately.

When reporting to the police or By-law, remember to ask for the **incident number** related to your call.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY**

### **NWP:**

Neighbourhood Watch Program; a program aimed at reducing crime; one of five city wide crime prevention programs of the Ottawa Police Service; it comprises all the neighbourhood Watches in the City of Ottawa.

### **WATCH:**

A Neighbourhood Watch; a group of residents of a community bonded together with the objective of preventing and reducing crime within a defined neighbourhood.

### **COORDINATOR:**

Is a person who has agreed to be responsible for a Neighbourhood Watch. The Coordinator serves as the Watch contact with the Community Police Centre, and is assisted by an appropriate number of Block/Street/Floor Captains.

### **BLOCK/STREET/FLOOR CAPTAINS**

Are generally responsible for monitoring 10-20 homes, appropriate number of apartments or units, and assist the Coordinator in managing the Watch.

### **MEMBERS**

As a member of a Watch your only commitment is to look out for your own interests and those of your neighbours.

### **OPS:**

Ottawa Police Service

### **CPC:**

Community Police Centre; a unit of the OPS established to deliver a suite of crime prevention programs and to provide a visible police presence within communities.

### **CPCO:**

Community Police Centre Officer; the OPS officer who manages the centre's operations including the delivery of the NWP and the other crime prevention programs throughout the CPC catchment area.

### **NWPV:**

Neighbourhood Watch Program Volunteer; a member of the OPS Volunteer Roster with specialized training, knowledge and experience with respect to the NWP, who assists the CPCO.

### **NWCA:**

Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators Association; established to represent the interests of Watches within the catchment area of one or several CPCs

### **ONWEC:**

Ottawa Neighbourhood Watch Executive Committee; established to represent all Watches in the City of Ottawa and is responsible for addressing their collective interests to the OPS, the Police Services Board, municipal government and the public.