

7 ways knowing your neighbor can help prevent crime

While the police are the ones making arrests, the small town or small community vibe that can be generated through a sense of community in a neighborhood is an invaluable resource to police and local communities.

1. Strong neighborhoods can provide extra eyes and ears for local police

A vigilant community or neighborhood can help provide extra eyes and ears for their local police officers. Jobs as officers is to protect property and the people in the community, and, they can't have somebody sitting on every street at all times... by helping them, that helps us. We provide officers the tools and the information they need to investigate the case and locate the person responsible for whatever crime is being reported.

2. It builds a crime-preventing community

Community gatherings, like bbq's, meetings and opportunities for the residents to participate in community projects. Knowing your neighbor in your neighborhood, you are able to recognize when things are out of the ordinary.

If the police don't see the crime, then the neighborhood might. Neighbors can recognize vehicles lingering in the area and people being out at unusual times. Common examples include a resident knowing their neighbor is out of the house on vacation, but noticing activity in the home while they are not there. This is an incident that could be reported as suspicious activity to the police and potentially prevent a crime. You would know that because you know your neighbors. You kind of know each other's schedules or routines.

3. Social media can help familiarity with the community

While the Neighborhood Watch is a good way to prevent crime in a community, it's not the only way to build a strong neighborhood.

People can also join online groups through social media and get to know people on a virtual basis. There's just so many tools out there these days with [Nextdoor.com](https://www.nextdoor.com) app, with Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. There's no reason not to know what's going on in your neighborhood and it's always good to be an advocate for your neighborhood and try to get information out to everyone as well. If you see something, say something.

4. A formal Neighborhood Watch can let criminals know they're at higher risk of being caught

A neighborhood watch has neighbors looking out for each other and noticing the inconsistencies in their neighborhood.

Criminals know when they're entering the neighborhood that these people are going to look out for each other. They're going to report you. They're not just going to just ignore that you are in the neighborhood.

5. Neighborhood Watch is not asking people to put themselves at risk

Opportunity, desire, and ability are the key elements for a crime to occur. A Neighborhood Watch only has control over opportunity. This means they can address situations, like poor lighting or an open garage door, that could lead a burglar to target a residence.

Neighborhood Watch is not a vigilante force working outside the police department, a program for participants to take personal risks to deter crime, or a guarantee that crime will not happen in the neighborhood. The police are not asking anyone to put themselves at risk with the program. They expect us to call them and let them determine what's going on and the right avenue for addressing whatever the situation is.

6. There's help for beginning Neighborhood Watch organizers

Community Resource Officers are available to help community members, each with their own quadrant in the city. These officers are available to give tips on how to keep property from being stolen or providing practical tips to make sure there are no places on a property for criminals to hide. They can also help with Neighborhood Watch meetings, reporting on unusual incidents, nonemergency dispatch numbers, and how to get the community involved.

7. Starting a Neighborhood Watch Program

Talk with neighbors to gauge the interest of a Neighborhood Watch and then contact the local police department to get more information.

Report suspicious activity to the police and get to know your neighbors. Contact your Community Resource Officer to answer questions