



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWS

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West Valley Senior Lead Office (818) 374-7630
Sergeant Frank Avila - Sergeant Chris Rowland

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Neighborhood Watch Program

The Neighborhood Watch Program is the cornerstone of the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) crime prevention strategy. It enlists the active participation of area residents, in cooperation with law enforcement, to reduce crime in communities throughout the City.

The Neighborhood Watch Program was pioneered by the LAPD to educate community residents regarding their roles and responsibilities in the prevention of crime, and to encourage them to take active measures to prevent crime. The program calls upon residents to step forward and assist the police in organizing the community into a cohesive unit working toward the goal of building a safer, crime-free neighborhood. Neighborhood Watch groups discuss neighborhood crime problems with the objective of developing solutions to local problems. Los Angeles Police Officers supply crime information to neighborhood watch organizations and instruct these groups in various crime prevention techniques.

Block Captains

The continuity and success of the Neighborhood Watch program hinges on the person referred to as the Block Captain. The "Block Captain" is a community member who acts as a liaison between those who work and/or live in a particular area and the officers assigned to that area. It is through the Block Captain and through neighborhood general meetings that officers pass along crime prevention tips and information to members of the community. This liaison is maintained on an informal basis within the framework of the Neighborhood Watch group.

Senior Lead Officers

Senior Lead Officers (SLO's) are a pivotal element in the LAPD's effort to prevent and deter crime. They provide the vital link that helps unite the Department and the communities it serves by ensuring that community problems are brought to the attention of the Department or other appropriate government agencies. SLO's are also instrumental in mobilizing neighborhoods through creative problem-solving strategies, crime prevention, and quality of life enhancement programs.

Senior Lead Officers are responsible for:

- Monitoring crime trends in their Basic Car areas.
- Working with the Community-Police Advisory Boards (CPAB) and residents to develop goals to be accomplished through the efforts of all officers assigned to the Basic Car.
- Acting as liaisons with Area detectives in order to stay informed of crime trends and special problems within the Basic Car area.

Senior Lead Officers develop directed patrol plans that include strategies for dealing with recurrent Basic Car concerns. Sincere and continuous interaction between the police and the community enhances the quality of life and deters crime within the Basic Car area. They also take the lead in establishing and maintaining this police-community partnership.

ENCINO:

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Contact Officer Trulik for information on the next Encino Neighborhood Watch Meeting.

Basic Car System

The Los Angeles Police Department, working in conjunction with community organizations, businesses, neighborhood residents, and area elected officials, has apportioned the City into nineteen geographic areas. This system allows the LAPD to deliver the highest quality of police service to our constituents while at the same time tailoring law enforcement and public safety efforts to individual community needs. Each of the City's 19 geographic areas is served by a Community Police Station. These stations themselves are further apportioned into small neighborhood units referred to as "Basic Cars". There are roughly eight to ten Basic Car areas per Community Police Station, and each Basic Car area has one patrol car permanently assigned to provide service in that neighborhood. Additional patrol units may be assigned during periods of increasing workload.

How Does It Work?

Three teams of officers are assigned to patrol your neighborhood on a 24-hour basis. Each team works one of the three 8-hour shifts. These officers patrol your neighborhood preventing crime and answering radio calls for service.

Officers assigned to a Basic Car generally do not rotate to other police cars. They remain assigned to your neighborhood car to familiarize themselves with you, your neighbors, and the problems that may arise in your community. Although there are other police cars assigned to the same area, the Basic Car has priority in answering all calls within its boundaries.

LAKE BALBOA:

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Contact Officer Ham or Paredes for information on the next Lake Balboa Neighborhood Watch Meetings.

The ABC's of Neighborhood Watch

You can form a Neighborhood Watch group around any geographical unit: a block, apartment, park, business area, public housing complex, or office. A few concerned residents, businesses, a community organization, or a law enforcement agency can spearhead the effort to organize a Neighborhood Watch. Any community resident can join — young or old, single or married, renter, home or business owner.

Members learn how to make their homes more secure, watch out for each other and the neighborhood, and report activities that raise their suspicions to the police department. Neighborhood Watch groups are not vigilantes. They are extra eyes and ears for reporting crime and helping neighbors. Neighborhood Watch helps build pride and serves as a springboard for efforts that address community concerns such as recreation for youth, child care, and affordable housing.

Getting Organized

When a group decides to form a Neighborhood Watch, it:

- Contacts the police department or local crime prevention organization for help in training members in home security and reporting skills and for information on local crime patterns.
- Selects a coordinator and block captains who are responsible for organizing meetings and relaying information to members.
- Recruits members, keeps up-to-date on new residents and makes special efforts to involve the elderly, working parents, and young people.
- Works with local government and law enforcement to put up Neighborhood Watch signs, usually after at least 50 percent of all households in a neighborhood are enrolled.

RESEDA:

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Next Neighborhood Watch Meetings – Thursday, February 10, 2011 and Thursday, March 10, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.
Ann Kinzle Community Room located in the L.A.P.D. West Valley Station

What Neighborhood Watch Members Look For:

- Someone screaming or shouting for help
- Someone looking into windows and parked cars
- Unusual noises
- Property being taken out of houses where no one is at home or a business is closed
- Cars, vans, or trucks moving slowly without apparent destination, or without lights
- Anyone being forced into a vehicle
- A stranger sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child
- Abandoned cars
- Report these incidents to the police department. Talk about the problem with your neighbors.

How to Report:

- Give your name and address.
- Briefly describe the event - what happened, when, where, and who was involved.
- Describe the suspect: sex and race, age, height, weight, hair color, clothing, distinctive characteristics such as beard, mustache, scars, tattoos or accent.
- Describe the vehicle if one was involved: color, make, model, year, license plate, and special features such as stickers, dents, or decals.

TARZANA:

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Contact Officer Scoggins for information on the next Tarzana Neighborhood Watch Meeting.

Keeping Your Neighborhood Watch Group Active

It's an unfortunate fact that when a neighborhood crime crisis goes away, so does enthusiasm for Neighborhood Watch. Work to keep your Watch group a vital force for community well-being.

- Organize regular meetings that focus on current issues such as drug abuse, "hate" or bias-motivated violence, crime in schools, child care before and after school, recreational activities for young people, and victim services.
- Organize community patrols to walk around streets or apartment complexes and alert police to crime and suspicious activities and identify problems needing attention. People in cars with cellular phones or CB radios can patrol.
- Adopt a park or school playground. Pick up litter, repair broken equipment, paint over graffiti.
- Work with local building code officials to require dead bolt locks, smoke alarms, and other safety devices in new and existing homes and commercial buildings.
- Work with parent groups and schools to start a McGruff House or other block parent program (to help children in emergency situations). A McGruff House is a reliable source of help for children in emergency or frightening situations. For information, call (801) 486-8691.
- Publish a newsletter that gives prevention tips and local crime news, recognizes residents of all ages who have "made a difference," and highlights community events.
- Don't forget social events that give neighbors a chance to know each other - a block party, potluck dinner, volleyball softball game, or picnic.

If you are interested in becoming a Block Captain in your neighborhood, please contact the Senior Lead Officer for your area or call (818) 374-7630.

Remember your neighborhood is only as safe as you make it!

