

Block Watch Guide

Neighbors knowing, caring and looking out for each other



This information is provided courtesy of the Longview Police Department



Longview Police Department

1351 Hudson Street

Longview, WA 98632

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Emergency: 9-1-1, Dispatch: 360.577.3098

Satellite Office

216 30th Avenue, Suite C

Longview, WA 98632

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Module 1—Getting Started

Block Watch Module 1

Getting Started

This Block Watch module contains basic information necessary for you to start and maintain your own Block Watch program. As you progress in Block Watch, additional modules are available that will guide you through your meeting process.

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Community safety is a shared responsibility.

Welcome to Block Watch!

Neighbors knowing, caring and looking out for each other

Dear Prospective Block Watch Participant:

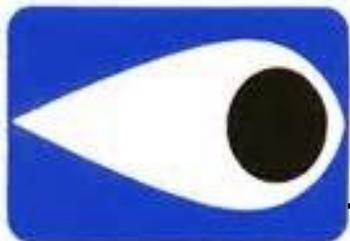
By obtaining this "getting started" packet on Block Watch, you have taken the first step towards organizing your neighborhood against crime. The Block Watch program is simply you and your neighbors working together with your local police to reduce criminal opportunity on your street. All it takes is your cooperation, participation, and motivation to make the program work.

The attached packet is a step-by-step guide to aid you in setting up a Block Watch in your neighborhood. Please read it through carefully and contact the Longview Police representative if you have any questions or need further assistance. Your representative at this time is Community Services Cpl. Danielle Jenkins. Feel free to contact her at the Longview Police Highland Satellite Office at 442-5850 any Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We look forward to hearing from you and working together in the future. WELCOME ABOARD!

Sincerely,

Chief Jim Duscha
Longview Police Department



A watchful neighbor is your best burglar alarm.



What is Block Watch?

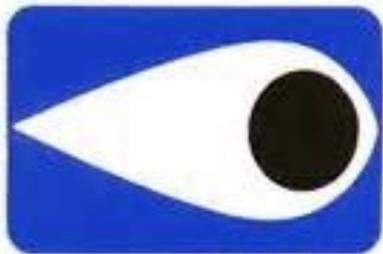
Frequently Asked Questions

BLOCK WATCH is a program designed to increase security on neighborhood blocks by involving as many individuals and families as possible in a united crime prevention effort.

What do participants learn in Block Watch?

Participants in BLOCK WATCH learn to:

- ◆ Be familiar with neighborhoods and activities on the block.
- ◆ Recognize and report suspicious activity.
- ◆ Increase home security.
- ◆ Engrave property correctly.
- ◆ Communicate with neighbors on a regular basis using block maps, phone trees, etc.



What is the mission of Block Watch?

"We believe that Longview residents have the right to livable and secure neighborhoods in order to pursue their lives free of fear and crime.

"We believe it is the responsibility of citizens to build and maintain livable, cohesive neighborhoods. We encourage people to support and help each other in crime prevention efforts.

"We believe citizen involvement is an integral part of maintaining an effective and vital police service. We believe in encouraging partnerships between citizens, police and other governmental agencies to make the most of resources to improve the livability and safety of neighborhoods.

"We believe that committed citizens and police, working cooperatively toward these goals, create a united and secure community. This reduces vulnerability to crime."

Longview Police
Department

What are the goals of Block Watch?

Goal 1 - We will reduce the level of fear of crime in our neighborhoods.

Goal 2 - We, as citizens, will accept the responsibility to increase neighborhood livability and reduce crime in our neighborhoods.

Goal 3 - We will assist in increasing community awareness and home security to reduce the opportunity for crime to occur at your home.

Why do police departments encourage residents to form Block Watch groups?

There are many more citizens than there are law enforcement officers. Because law enforcement officers can't be everywhere at once, we rely on citizens to notify us of criminal activities and suspicious behavior. This helps law enforcement in apprehending criminals. Also, criminals may think twice about targeting a particular area if they know that citizens are watching out for suspicious activity.

The best crime prevention device ever invented is a good neighbor.

-continued-

- continued -

Joint organized efforts are more effective than individual efforts.

Citizens become an extension of a law enforcement agency's eyes and ears.

Through citizen involvement, the community is provided with a large supply of local neighbors to watch their neighborhood for suspicious activities or crimes

What are some helpful activities to improve my neighborhood?

- ◆ Help neighbors secure their homes.
- ◆ Help a senior citizen trim shrubbery, mow the lawn or install lighting.
- ◆ Haul lawn clippings to the dump or arrange for a drop box on the block. Give lawn clippings to a neighbor who has a compost pile.

- ◆ Arrange the details for a block party or offer your home for a follow-up meeting.
- ◆ Write and distribute neighborhood newsletters or offer to copy BLOCK WATCH information.
- ◆ Use engravers for marking property.
- ◆ Mow the neighbors' lawn while they are on vacation. Let them do the same when you're gone.
- ◆ Put up BLOCK WATCH signs at the beginning and end of your street *if you have an active BLOCK WATCH.*
- ◆ Trade favors or chores such as mowing a neighbor's lawn if he'll repair your fence. Watch the neighbor's children if she'll take care of your pets when you're out of town. Be creative. What can you do to benefit a neighbor and how can a neighbor help you?

Where can we gather to talk about Block Watch?

- ◆ Neighbors can take turns hosting the meetings at their homes.
- ◆ Get together at an area church.
- ◆ Reserve a room at the Longview Public Library.
- ◆ Have a barbecue or picnic at a neighborhood park.

Is it risky or dangerous to be involved with Block Watch?

Block Watch is a cooperative effort to work *with* your neighbors, not against them.

Block Watch is **NOT**:

- ◆ Taking the law into your own hands or taking the place of police.
- ◆ Enforcing the law or apprehending criminals.
- ◆ Being violent or being a vigilante.
- ◆ Acting as "the boss" of your block.

More Information

For more information about Block Watch, please contact the LPD Highland Satellite Office at 216 30th Avenue, Suite C, behind the St. Helens Shopping Center.

Questions can be directed to the Community Services Liaison at 442.5850 or at: Satellite.Office@ci.longview.wa.us



Getting started with Block Watch

Steps to organizing your first meeting

Begin by contacting the Longview Police Department Satellite Office to find out how services and materials are provided in your area. Below are some standard steps to ensure strong attendance and participation during your organizing of a Block Watch in your neighborhood.

1. Decide what area you are going to organize. Try to include, at a minimum, neighbors who have a fairly direct view of each other's houses or apartments. For a standard city block, this might include both side of the street, corner houses that look down the block, and back yard neighbors when applicable.
2. Contact the neighbors in your area to inform them you are organizing a Block Watch. Try to make personal contact with everyone on your block. You will need this information for your block map. Be sure to make contact with every house on the block so that everyone is included. Use your information to fill out your block map and identify participating and non-participating neighbors.
3. Contact the Satellite Office to schedule a time and date for your initial meeting—Core Meeting 1. Then choose a meeting space that comfortably accommodates the neighbors that you have contacted.
4. Use written invitations or make up flyers to notify neighbors. The Department can sometimes help you with the flyers. Distribute the invitations well in advance of the meeting. If you are planning on having a speaker, ask them in advance to attend.
5. Seek help from the neighbors you contact. They may volunteer to help you with refreshments, folding chairs, escorting seniors to make the meeting or assist you with the organization of the meeting by becoming a co-captain. This will begin to help you build a network of participating neighbors.
6. On the day of the meeting, confirm time and place with your invited speakers. Have several Block members help you remind the neighbors of the meeting.
7. At the first meeting, the Community Services Liaison will be present to facilitate the meeting and inform participating members how the core program works and address any other concerns at that time.
8. At the meeting, have a sign-in sheet, use name tags, and have Block Watch packets with you.



Block Watch Program

1. Concept
 - a. Active participation is key
 - b. Call the police whenever the need for police service is felt.
 - i. Identify yourself to dispatcher.
 - ii. Police take care not to identify caller to contacted party.
 - iii. Use 911 for emergencies and crimes in progress, or 442-5800 for non-emergencies.

2. Knowing Your Neighbors
 - a. Know your neighbors' house numbers so the information can be conveyed to responding police units.
 - b. Chart your neighborhood homes, including homes behind you.
 - c. Know what vehicles your neighbor drives - including grown children.
 - d. House numbers need to be displayed so that they are obvious from the street.
 - i. House numbers should be in contrast with the color of the surface they are posted on.

3. Block Watch Signs
 - a. With Block Watch participants, Longview Police will provide Block Watch signs to be posted at neighborhood entrances advising people that the program is in force.
 - b. The Block Watch program must remain active for the signs to be posted.
 - c. Groups need periodic meetings to maintain interest.
 - d. Police representatives will be available for some meetings.
 - e. Signs come with specifications and must be put up by the group.
 - i. Specs available from the Community Services Liaison.

Creating a sample agenda

Choose your format

SAMPLE AGENDA 1

Short Block Watch Meeting

*Date Time Location/
Block Watch Captain*

1. Introductions
2. Getting Organized
 - a. Packets on Crime Prevention
 - b. Purpose of Block Watch
 - c. Leadership
3. Building a Community Plan
 - a. Identify Problems
 - b. Understand Problems
 - c. Identify Action Plan
4. About Block Watch
 - A. Distribute Packets
 - B. Organize Information
5. Next Steps
 - A. Assign tasks
 - B. Schedule Next Meeting -
Meeting 2 - Home Security
6. Other

SAMPLE AGENDA 2

In-Depth Block Watch Meeting

Date Time Location/Block Watch Captain

1. Getting Organized
 - a. Background on Crime Prevention
 - b. Increase in crime, burglaries and drug houses
 - c. People working together communication information
 - d. Increase neighborhood awareness
 - e. Restore the meaning of the word "neighbor"
2. Purpose of Block Watch
 - a. Increase security on neighborhood blocks
 - b. Take a proactive approach to crime
 - c. Community + Values + Law Enforcement = Successful
Block Watch
3. Leadership
 - a. Identify Captains and/or Co-Captains
 - b. Assign tasks to interested neighbors
4. Building a community plan
 - a. Identify Problems
 - b. Understand Problems
 - c. Turn group ideas into manageable and approachable
means to remedy problems
 - d. Identify Action tactics
 - e. What to do about problems
 - f. Discuss reasonable time frame
5. Block Watch
 - a. Distribute packets
 - b. Explain information
 - c. Block profiles
 - d. Telephone tree
6. Next Steps
 - a. Assign tasks
 - b. Delegate responsibilities
 - c. Set time and place for next meeting
 - d. Thanks and Good Luck!

Block Watch

Ground Rules

1. Remember, we are all here for the same purpose: we want to clean up and improve our block and neighborhood.
2. Be respectful. Do not talk when someone else is talking. Please raise your hand if you have something to say.
3. Do not monopolize. Give other people a chance to talk.
4. Please focus on the problem. Do not make personal attacks. Look for solutions, not someone to blame.
5. Let's work together rather than against each other. We can accomplish more this way!



Task Checklist

Who does what?

The most important first step is to identify one or two people willing to be the Block Watch Captains or Co-Captains. The Block Captain makes sure that the basic Block Watch tasks are assigned and completed. The Block Captain acts as the liaison between the Block members, community and crime prevention staff. They also make sure that the Block maintains an active program.

<i>Task</i>		<i>By Who</i>	<i>By when</i>	<i>Date Completed</i>
Getting Organized	Block Maps			
	Invitations			
	First Meeting			
	Contact Rep.			
After Meeting	Block Profiles			
	Contact Rep.			
Property Marking & Recording	Pick up & return engraver			
	Circulate Engraver			
	Follow up on engraver			
Signs	Pick up signs			
	Post signs			
Meetings	Next host house			
	Set agenda			
	Invitation/Flyers			
	Guests/Speakers			
Homes	Security Checks			
	Operation ID			
Community	Area-wide meeting?			

Sample block maps

Mapping out your street

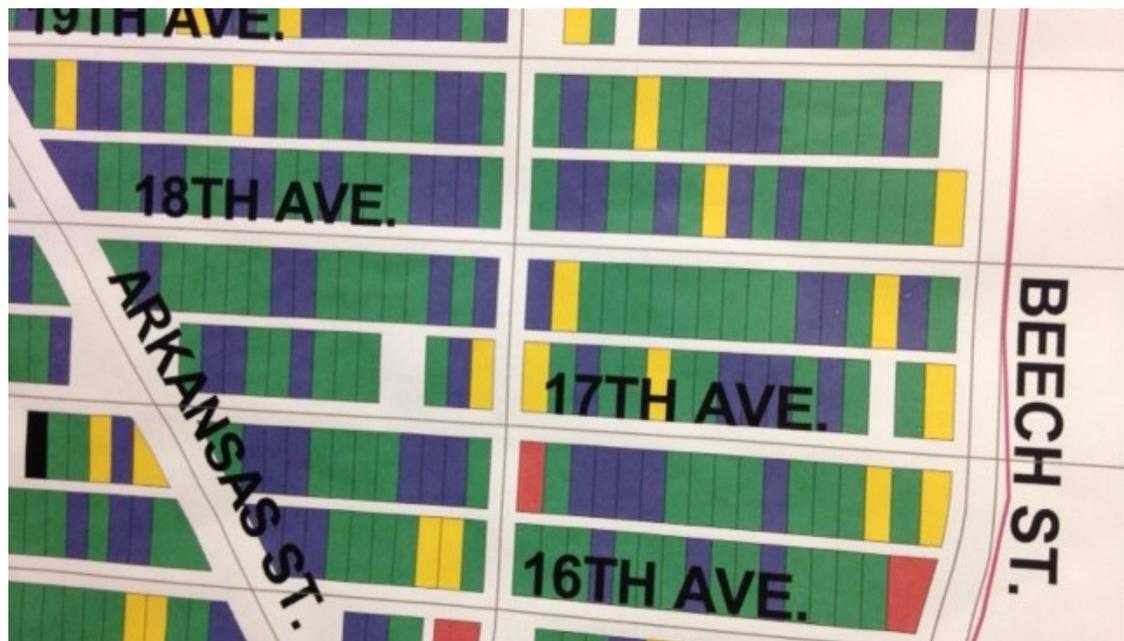
It's helpful to have a map of your block to encourage neighbors to get to know each other. Block maps are also useful for emergency situations. Be sure to include the following on your Block maps:

- ◆ House Color
- ◆ House Number (make sure the house number is visible for emergency services)
- ◆ Name of Resident(s)
- ◆ Telephone Number
- ◆ Street Names and Numbers
- ◆ Directional Compass
- ◆ Whether the dwelling is owned or rented
- ◆ Be sure to identify non-participating members and vacant houses or apartments on the map.

You may also want to use symbols or color coding to indicate neighbors' work schedules, which homes have alarms, or other pertinent information. Don't put an explanation of your codes on your map.

Consider your Block map part of your security; keep it in a safe place where strangers will not see it.

Sample:



Block Watch Signs

Posting Regulations

1. Bottom of the sign must be at least seven feet from the ground.
2. There must be at least one foot from the edge of the sign to the face of the curb.
3. Signs must not be posted in the public right-of-way.
4. Signs may be posted in the planting strip (the grassy area between the sidewalk and street)
5. The Longview Police Department provides the sign, but residents must provide the post. A ten-foot tall 4x4 treated wood post is recommended, and the cost is approximately \$12.
6. The City of Longview installs the sign. Call 442-5850 to make arrangements to have the signs installed.
7. Residents are responsible for maintaining the signs.



After the Orientation meeting

The Block Captain should:

- ◆ Keep the Block Watch records organized.
- ◆ Discuss the next steps for the group with the co-captains and the crime prevention representatives.
- ◆ Make arrangements to contact those neighbors who were unable to attend the meeting and include them in the phone tree.
- ◆ Maintain contact with co-captains and crime prevention representatives for future help in organizing activities and maintaining an active, effective Block Watch!

New neighbors

New neighbors should be informed of the Block Watch and asked to participate. If they agree, include them in the phone tree and invite them to the next meeting. This is a great way to get acquainted and welcome them to the neighborhood.

Remember

One of the reasons to get together is to get to know the people who live in your neighborhood. Meetings do not have to be serious; they should be relaxed and fun. Plan a cook-out, a potluck, or an afternoon childrens event. Each of these serve to build a community. Let folks get comfortable with each other and increase the awareness and participation in Block Watch activities.

Create a telephone tree

Staying connected

What is it?

A telephone tree is a tool that provides a means of rapid communication on a block. Every household is assigned a position on the list and someone to contact. Short messages and information regarding suspicious activity that is happening or has happened can be relayed quickly to everyone on the block.

How do you set it up?

- ◆ Identify all of the Block Watch members that are interested in participating on the phone tree.
- ◆ Set up your phone tree by putting the names and phone numbers of each household on the form.
- ◆ If a neighbor does not wish to give out their numbers, identify someone to contact those people and get their names on the list.
- ◆ The Block Captain should be at the top of the list. As new households are brought into the Block Watch, add their names and numbers to the bottom of the phone tree.
- ◆ Each house should receive a copy of the phone tree and it should be kept safe but accessible. For convenience, you may want to copy the phone tree onto the back side of your block map.

How do you use it?

- ◆ When someone on the block has information to share, they should activate the phone tree by calling the Block Captain.
- ◆ Each household calls the next name just below them on the tree. If no one is home, continue the network by calling the next household on the list. Efforts should be made to continue to call the household that was not home.
- ◆ Make sure that neighbors without telephones receive information by making a personal visit to their homes.
- ◆ The last house to be contacted should indicate that they received the message by informing the Block Captain.
- ◆ When a message comes to you, copy it down word for word to insure that you have the correct information to pass on.

When do you use it?

- ◆ After calling 9-1-1, alert your neighbors to a criminal act in progress or what just occurred.
- ◆ Alert your neighbors to suspicious activity or persons at the time of occurrence.
- ◆ Relay information from the Longview Police Department about recent burglaries, sex offenders, etc. in your area.

Telephone Tree

Keeping everyone in the loop

Block Captain _____
Phone # _____
Email _____
Co-Captain _____
Phone # _____
Area/Section _____

*Mail your completed phone tree list to the
Longview Police Department's Satellite Office:*

Highlands Police Satellite Office
c/o Community Services
216 30th Avenue
Longview, WA 98632
360.442.5850



Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____
Email _____

Name _____
Address _____

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Block Watch Profile Questionnaire

Neighborhood Information

Please complete and return this profile to the Longview Police Satellite Office, 216 30th Ave, Suite C, Longview, WA 98632. Call 442-5850 with questions or email satellite.office@ci.longview.wa.us

Names and ages of household, including children			
Name	Age	Special medical conditions?	
Contact numbers and house information			
House number	House color	Contact Email	
Home phone	Work phone	Cell Phone	Emergency Phone
Do your neighbors need to respond to an alarm? Yes No		Do your neighbors need to respond to an alarm? Yes No	
Who should be called if an alarm goes off?			
Work Schedules			
Name		Day(s) of week	Hours
Vehicles			
Make/Model		Color	License
1.			
2.			
3.			
Pets			
Do you have outdoor pets? Yes No		Does your dog(s) bark when someone's comes on your property? Yes No	
Dog(s) name/breed	Dog(s) name/breed	Dog(s) name/breed	
Helpful Skills			
Do you have any skills that would be useful for the neighborhood such as CPR, First Aid, carpentry, electrical, etc?			
What do you think are the biggest crime problems in your area?			
Signatures			
Signature of neighbor submitting this profile	Print Name	Date Submitted	
What is your neighborhood area?	Who is your Block Watch Captain?		

Maintaining your Block Watch

Keeping your Block Watch going

Stable neighborhoods result from people caring and sharing. Such neighborhoods experience fewer crime problems. When Block Watch networks organize around crime concerns, enthusiasm is usually high and participation good. A few months later, the excitement dies down and communication often sags. The following list of suggested projects to help keep your Block Watch alive was compiled from active Block Watch participants. Add your own ideas to the list based on the composition and interests of your neighborhood. Choose ones appropriate for your age group and have fun!

Block Watch Newsletter

- ◆ This is a great way to share information about your block. It keeps people up to date on crime trends, who is new to the block and future events.
- ◆ If you need help getting this set up, the Corporal can assist you.

Block Watch Garage Sales

- ◆ Buy an ad for the entire block and have a huge big block-wide sale on the same day. You can look at each other's cast-offs.
- ◆ People would rather come where they can park in one spot and walk around.
- ◆ Look at Terry-Taylor

Block Clean-Up

- ◆ Rent a dumpster for the weekend, or better yet - see if Waste Control would donate one for your neighborhood clean-up.
- ◆ Neighbors can help and share equipment with each other or rent equipment that is needed and share it with other families.
- ◆ Go to a nursery and buy items in bulk or large quantities. Many stores will give discounts to Block Watch groups and large orders.
- ◆ End the day with a BBQ or celebration.

Field Trip to 9-1-1 or the Jail

- ◆ *Call the Jail at 577-3094 and ask to talk to somebody about getting a jail tour. You get a very interesting look at what goes on behind the scenes.*

- ◆ Call Cowlitz Emergency Communications Center at 577-3098 to arrange a field trip to the facility. You and your neighbors will find it fascinating and educational. It will give you a feel for what happens when you make a call there.

Kid's Parade

- ◆ If your block has a lot of kids, show them off with a kids parade. Close off your block for the event. Contact your Community Services Liaison for information on how to do that.
- ◆ Ask the Liaison if you can borrow the McGruff costume for the day to have at the event. McGruff can help out at the parade and be a part of it.
- ◆ Ask the newspaper to come and take pictures and interview some of the kids and families.

Shopping Trips—Carpooling

- ◆ Carpool to do some downtown shopping. Go to the local farmer's markets, or Portland's Saturday Market. Find out who has Costco cards and gather to go to Costco in Portland, Vancouver, or at the beach in Warrenton. Pick up some seafood while you are there to cook up after the trip!
- ◆ Find out who works where - you may be able to carpool to work.
- ◆ Get together and carpool to local grocery stores such as Cash 'n' Carry. It's much more fun to shop with others than alone!

Celebrate Events Together

- ◆ Close your street off for holidays -

Have good old-fashioned street parties. Contact your Corporal for more information on street closures.

- ◆ Move your patio furniture out front and BBQ in the driveway. Let the kids have the run of the street. Move the cars to outside streets.
- ◆ Buy fireworks together and save money. Safely let them off and help each other clean up the next day.
- ◆ Wear name tags and where you live. Get to know your neighbors and where they live.

Take Care of Seniors and Shut-ins

- ◆ Make sure that we know where our seniors and shut-ins are so that we can check on them from time to time and make sure they are alright.
- ◆ Take them grocery shopping, or get their shopping list and pick up their groceries for them when you go shopping.
- ◆ Make sure their lawns get mowed and little chores get taken care of.
- ◆ Establish a phone tree or some type of system to see that they are being taken care of.

Block Parties

- ◆ Have a Block Party for no reason! Organize a BBQ or picnic at the park. Organize contests like three legged races or wheelbarrow races. Have an egg toss or water fight! Organize a softball game for the block. Organize a golf tournament, day at the river with those who have boats. Get the kids involved. Have your neighborhood be an extension of your family!