



**COMMUNITY CRIME PREVENTION
NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK WATCH
HANDBOOK**

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BLOCK WATCH PROGRAM

The Block Watch unites law enforcement, local organizations and individuals in a community-wide effort to reduce residential crime. Currently, the King County Sheriff's Office is unable to dedicate a deputy to coordinate this program. In an effort to continue this valuable program, the King County Sheriff's Office has produced this block watch informational packet so that citizens can continue to work within their neighborhoods and from their own Block Watches, to help reduce crime and the fear of crime.

To have a Block Watch, you do not have to be a victim of a residential burglary, assault, or robbery. Crimes like vandalism, damage to property, excessive noise, and traffic violations can be reduced through the Block Watch Program. In addition, developing disaster plans, neighborhood functions and general safety programs are also part of the Block Watch Program.

Thousands of Block Watch Programs have been established all over the country. Any resident can take part and is a very successful anti-crime effort. It also breaks down the isolation of neighbors as they work together with each other to build a plan on how to deal with issues in their own neighborhoods. When something happens, neighbors will be informed, and when the deputy responds, a contact will be created with the Sheriff's Office.

Block Watch members are NOT vigilantes. They are the extra eyes and ears for reporting crimes and helping their neighbors. Members learn how to make their homes more secure, watch out for each other's homes and neighborhood. They report activities that raise their suspicions to the Sheriff's Office.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A BLOCK WATCH MEETING

Contact your neighbors: About 10 to 15 homes is an optimum size. Remember, those neighbors who are interested but can't attend the meeting because of prior commitments, may still be part of the Block Watch Program as long as someone in the group can pass along the information.

Advise your neighbors of the meeting date: Use the attached letter to distribute information. The meeting host will usually have coffee, doughnuts, etc. for the guests. Meetings generally last 1 to 2 hours and will consist of 3 parts:

- Home Security
- Expectations of the neighborhood
- Requirements for neighborhood signs

If possible, before the meeting, make up a "neighborhood map" of the area encompassing your neighborhood (see example), and complete a phone tree &/or email list. On the map, add names, addresses and telephone numbers of each household. Make enough copies to allow distribution to all of the neighbors who wish to become involved.

BLOCK WATCH CAPTAIN

The role of the Block Watch Captain is frequently misunderstood. The Block Watch Captain is not the person who is responsible for keeping crime off the block. Being alert to crime and trying to prevent it is EVERYONE's responsibility! Nor does the Block Watch Captain have to patrol the area, or be responsible for everyone's house keys, or watch their homes during vacation.

The primary function of the Block Watch Captain is to act as the communication link between the Block Watch members. The responsibilities of the Block Watch Captain include:

- Receiving newsletters and distributing them to the Block Watch members.
- Receiving and distributing to Block Watch members any special materials such as crime alerts, should they ever be needed.
- Contacting new neighbors who move onto the block to see if they are interested in joining the Block Watch, and provide information for them from previous meetings.
- Make sure the Neighborhood Map and Phone Tree are updated with the current names and phone numbers when necessary.
- Encouraging block residents to communicate with each other. It is not solely the responsibility of the Block Watch Captain to "spread the word" about crimes that happen on the block, suspicious activities, or other block problems or needs. He/She does need to encourage residents to call others on the block when something needs to be communicated.
- We suggest the Block Watch groups meet formally at least once a year to renew acquaintances, review Block Watch problems and possible solutions and if needed, to select a new Block Watch Captain.
 - Suggested items for meeting:
 - Agenda
 - Neighborhood crime stats (you can get online at crimereports.com)
 - Brochures or other materials on topics of interest to the residents
 - Goals/Next steps

Serving as a Block Watch Captain isn't time consuming, and you do not have to be home all the time in order to volunteer. Although the Captain is responsible for making sure the above activities are performed for the block, the Captain does not personally have to perform them all. Others on the block can be asked to assist with any or all of them.

The Block Watch Captain's role is essential to creating and maintaining an effective Block Watch. And since an independent study found an active Block Watch could help reduce the likelihood of burglary by up to 60%, the Block Watch Captain performs a vital service to the neighborhood and community.

ORDERING BLOCK WATCH SIGNS

To order signs from KCDOT, email Keith Brown, Traffic Engineer, at the Department of Transportation, keith.brown@kingcounty.gov. Include the following information:

- Your name
- Your address
- Your phone number and any other contact information
- Map of your neighborhood

KCDOT will determine number of signs and placement.

Cost of signs will vary from \$35—\$45 per sign.

SIGN PLACEMENT

KCDOT (King County Department of Transportation) will install signs as follows:

- KCDOT can strap the sign(s) to concrete, wood, street light poles, etc.
- KCDOT will not install B/W sign(s) to the back of stop signs, speed limit signs and warning signs nor above or below these signs .
- KCDOT will not install B/W sign(s) on power poles.
- KCDOT may deny other installations in addition to those above.
- B/W sign(s) will not be installed on private property, such as outside of the right-of-way or on private fences. They must go in the public right-of-way.
- The Captain should attempt to establish a perimeter for the neighborhood. Block Watch signs will be placed at the entrances of neighborhoods. Other locations will need to be discussed with the Traffic Engineer.
- KCDOT will not maintain the B/W sign(s). For example, if they are vandalized, stolen or fade out over time, it is up to the neighborhood to obtain new acceptable signs. Follow this procedure for having the new sign(s) reinstalled.
- KCDOT maintains control of all signs within the county right-of-way. Any unauthorized signs are subject to immediate removal without notice. No attempt will be made to locate the original installer/owner of the illegally installed sign for purposes of returning the sign to him/her/them. These signs will be destroyed.

BLOCK WATCH MEETING

Dear Resident,

Your neighbor, _____, is setting up a Block Watch Program in your neighborhood. You are cordially invited to attend and become part of this effective neighborhood Crime Prevention Program.

MEETING DATE: _____

MEETING TIME: _____

MEETING LOCATION: _____

Please contact your neighbor and let them know if you will attend.

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

REMEMBER, CRIME PREVENTION STARTS WITH YOU!

BLOCK WATCH MEETING ATTENDANCE FORM

Date: _____

| | Name | Address | Ph # | Email |
|-----|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| 1. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 6. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 7. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 8. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 9. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 10. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 11. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 12. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 13. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 14. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 15. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Total houses on block: _____

Block Watch Captain: _____

Alternate Number if Captain is not available: _____

NEIGHBORHOOD MAP (SAMPLE)

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>Jim & Jane Smith</i> <i>206/255-1234</i> <i>House Number</i> | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Street Address

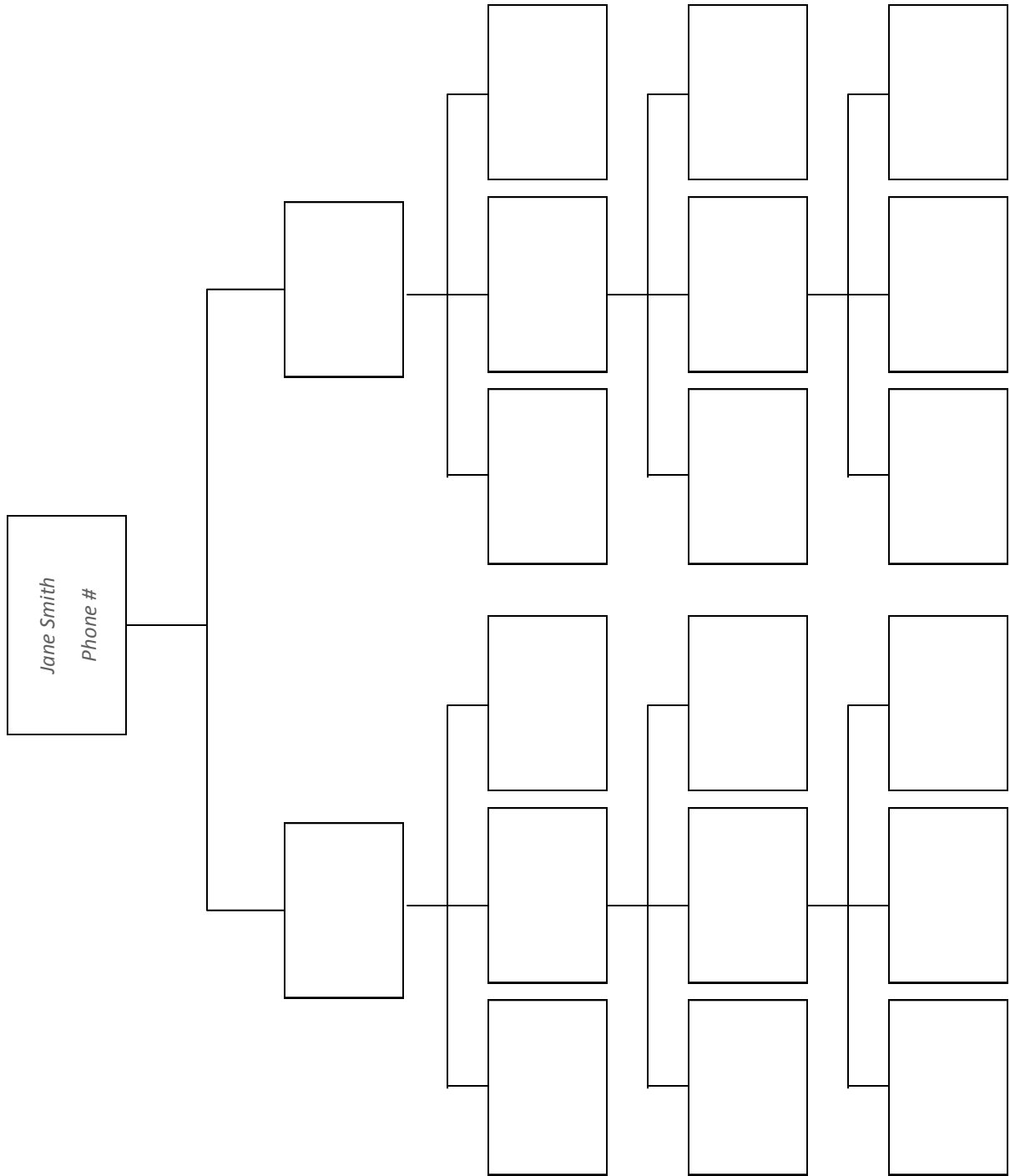
Street Address

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

Instructions

- Have everyone put his or her name, phone number and house address number in the appropriate place on the map.
- Copy the map so that each member of the Block Watch program will have a copy.
- People/homes that did not express an interest in the Block Watch should not be provide with a copy of this document for obvious reasons.

PHONE TREE



If you see anything suspicious

1. Turn on ALL outside lights,
2. Immediately call 911,
3. Call the Block Watch Captain,
4. Call your contact(s) on the phone tree.

It is understood that if you cannot reach your neighborhood contact, you should call that person's contact to continue to relay the message to all residents on the block.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

King County Sheriff's Office

www.kingcounty.gov/safety/sheriff.aspx

Nation Crime Prevention Council

www.ncpc.org

National Association of Town Watch/National Night Out

<http://natw.org>

Neighborhood Crime Reports

www.crimereports.com

Puget Sound Energy Street Lighting Program

www.intolight.com

Other useful numbers

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Abandoned Vehicle Hotline ----- | 206/205.0969 |
| Animal Control Complaints/Enforcement----- | 206/296-PETS |
| Burn Ban Information----- | 1-800-595-4341 |
| DDES Code Enforcement (Land Use Violations) ----- | 206/296-6680 |
| King County Department of Transportation ----- | 1-800-KCRoads |
| Metro King County Council Receptionist----- | 206/296-1000 |
| King County Sheriff Non-Emergency ----- | 206/296-3311 |
| Office of Citizen Complaints/Ombudsman----- | 206/477-1050 |
| Speed Trailer for Neighborhood Use ----- | 206/296-8153 |
| Traffic Complaints ----- | 206/296-3311 |