

Shadow Creek Ranch

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH TRAINING
MANUAL

Rev. 2/24/16

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The Neighborhood Watch Program Introduction

"Neighborhood Watch" is the best known community crime prevention project. However, there is a wide array of activities that comprise crime prevention programming. Projects such as Neighborhood Watch Program provide the opportunity for neighborhoods to design programs to meet their own particular needs.

Every community crime prevention program needs the commitment and involvement of residents. People just like you have cleared drug dealing out of their neighborhoods, made parks safer for children and sidewalks secure for play, curbed assaults, reduced muggings, rapes and murders, wiped out graffiti and vandalism, and started programs for teens. This involvement is directly related to our ability to educate and provide information. The clearer the information is, the easier it will be to gain the support and commitment of the citizens.

This training information is designed to assist you to become more resistant to crime. While no one can guarantee against a crime being committed, the *goals* and *philosophy* of the *Neighborhood Watch* program are:

- (1) Awareness - increase the awareness level of citizens with respect to crime through education
- (2) Motivation – citizens becoming involved
- (3) Organization – organizing residents and neighborhoods on a street by street basis
- (4) Mobilization – residents actively taking back their neighborhoods. This training guide should enhance each neighborhood's ability to accomplish those goals, thereby making and keeping their neighborhoods safe places to live, work and play.

Crime prevention and resistance is different from the philosophy of crime control. Instead of the traditional approach, which emphasizes the reaction to crime and apprehension of the criminal, crime resistance emphasizes modifying the attitude and behavior of the citizen, as well as the modification of the environment to eliminate the opportunity for crime. This provides a unique opportunity for both police and citizens to become involved in order to actively control crime in our communities.

Neighborhood Watch is citizens joining with police to take responsibility in ensuring the safety of their homes and neighborhoods, and improving the quality of life.

It is the objective of the Neighborhood Watch program to provide citizens with information that will allow them to better protect their families, homes, properties, and communities.

Effective operation of the Neighborhood Watch program is dependent upon the active participation of a majority of citizens. Citizen's participation is one of the most effective tools against crime because the job of stopping burglary, robbery or sexual assault is impossible for police to accomplish alone.

There are three key aspects of Neighborhood Watch:

- 1) Neighbors getting to know each other, and working together in a program of mutual assistance.
- 2) Citizens being trained to recognize and report suspicious and/or criminal activity.
- 3) Crime prevention techniques, such as Home Security Audits and Community Clean-up.

Awareness & Observation

Observation Skills

Most people go through the day without even noticing everyday events. However, beginning to recognize what is normal around you is the first step in recognizing what is not normal. Although law enforcement officers are trained observers, sometimes they find it difficult to explain to citizens what to report and when to report it. While patrolling the streets, officers get used to looking for activities or events that seem out of place or are not part of the regular or ordinary routine. Officers may not be able to articulate specifically what is unusual, but they are keenly aware that something is awry. Officers sometimes refer to this phenomenon as a "sixth sense" or "street smarts," and they instinctively know when something is not right and they should investigate. Community members should know they have the ability to recognize unusual events as well. It is a matter of practicing observation skills to make them stronger.

In order to understand how to properly observe people, vehicles and incidents that may affect us, we should begin by learning what types of things to observe. You should pay attention to things like:

- Physical setting – Specific location, time of day, day of week.
- People – What do they look like? (height, weight, ethnicity, gender, etc.) How many are there?
- Specific items – What is important?
- Routines – Did you notice any recurring patterns or routines? How often did they occur? Who was involved?

One of the keys to a successful Neighborhood Watch program is recognizing the importance of using good observation skills to keep your neighborhood safe. Practice looking at pictures of people to know how to describe them. Clothing is important, but look for things that cannot be changed, like skin or eye color, tattoos, scars, moles, height and weight, shoes. Properly observing vehicles is similar to observing individuals. You always begin with the basics, such as the make and model of the vehicle. Identify the vehicle as a Ford, Chevrolet, Dodge, Honda, Mercedes, Volvo, etc. Then identify both the type of vehicle (such as SUV, pickup truck, etc.), as well as the specific model if possible (such as Corolla, Accord, Expedition, etc.) To remember license plates: write it on paper, on your hand, or even scratch it in the dirt! License numbers are useful only if they are correct. Never hesitate to say, "I'm not sure." With a vehicle description, even a partial license plate can be valuable.

What is Suspicious Activity?

All too often citizens are confused about what they should report and why, so it is important to train citizens through a variety of reporting activities. After reviewing this section, participants will be able to advise citizens specifically on the appropriate who, what, when, where, and how of reporting. Often citizens ask officers "Why should I get involved?" or "How am I going to benefit by reporting suspicious activity?" Although the answers may seem obvious, it must be clearly communicated to the public that they are an essential component in protecting our communities. Sometimes our citizens receive mixed signals regarding what to report and when to report it. Other times they simply do not know what is expected of them. It is important to learn specific definitions and details to provide Watch volunteers with clear and concise information. Begin with defining "suspicious activity." Officers should know the definition of suspicious activity and be able to properly communicate this definition to Watch members and other concerned citizens. Suspicious activity can refer to any incident, event, individual or activity that seems unusual or out of place. Some common examples of suspicious activities include:

- Someone peering into cars.
- A high volume of traffic going to and coming from a home on a daily basis.
- Someone loitering around schools, parks, or secluded areas.
- Strange odors coming from a house, building, or vehicle.
- Open or broken doors and windows at a closed business or unoccupied residence.
- Someone tampering with electrical, gas, or sewer systems without an identifiable company vehicle or uniform.
- Persons arriving or leaving from homes or businesses at unusual hours.
- Multiple persons who appear to be working in unison and exhibiting suspicious behaviors.
- Signs of forced entry or tampering with security or safety systems
- Someone running from a car or home.
- Someone screaming. If you can't determine what the screams are for, call the police and report it.
- Someone going door-to-door in the neighborhood or looking into windows.
- A person who seems to have no purpose wandering in the neighborhood.
- Any unusual or suspicious noise that you can't explain, such as breaking glass or pounding.
- Vehicles moving slowly, without lights, or with no apparent destination.
- Business transactions conducted from vehicles. This could involve the sale of drugs or stolen goods.
- Offers to sell merchandise at ridiculously low prices. It's probably stolen.
- Property carried by persons on foot at an unusual hour or place, especially if the person is running.
- Property being removed from closed businesses or residences known to be unoccupied.
- A stranger entering a neighbor's home or apartment that appears to be unoccupied.
- A child resisting the advances of an adult.

Check your neighborhood for things that might contribute to crime, like poor street lighting, abandoned cars, vacant lots littered with debris, boarded up buildings, and high shrubbery and bushes.

The effectiveness of the police and sheriffs' offices efforts is enhanced by active participation on the part of citizens. By calling to report suspicious persons or activity, you not only aid the police, you make your community a safer place to live. Some people fail to call because they are not aware of activities that might be suspicious. Others may notice suspicious activity and hesitate to call for fear of being labeled a "nosy neighbor." Still others take it for granted that someone else has already called. The police need to have accurate information as quickly as possible about a suspicious activity or crime in progress. When observing a suspicious person, vehicle or activity, or crime in progress, immediately call the police to report the activity and also alert your neighbors to the crime. You should never attempt to apprehend a suspect. This is the law enforcement officer's job.

Neighborhood Watch Guidelines

1. Memorize the police emergency number (9-1-1), non-emergency number (281-997-4100) and keep a pen and paper handy.
2. Have your street mapped out with your neighbors' street addresses listed and the direction (N-S-E-W) from your residence indicated.
3. Stay alert and aware of activities in your neighborhood. Pay attention to particulars that separate your report from something that is very general (i.e. license numbers, colors, height and weight of person, age, scars, and type of clothing make your information valuable).
4. Know your neighbors and their cars. Neighborhood Watch works best when everyone is concerned, aware and cooperative.

Knowing What and How to Report

There are four general categories to consider when determining what to report: 1) suspicious activities, 2) people and vehicles; 3) illegal activities; and 4) unusual events or incidents, dangerous situations.

By reporting these types of activities and situations, citizens can make their communities safer and more secure, reduce violence, minimize victimization, reduce crime, and improve the overall quality of life. Community members must also be instructed on how to report suspicious activity. To report suspicious activities, crimes in progress, or possible terrorist activities, simply:

- Dial 9-1-1 if an emergency or call the police department or sheriff's office non-emergency numbers.
- Tell the call taker what happened and the exact location.
- Provide a detailed description of individuals or vehicles.
- Remain on the phone and stay calm.
- Be prepared to answer follow-up questions.



When to Call 911 and When Not!

Calling 911 is an important communications tool for emergencies. However, some citizens call 911 in non-emergency situations. This can cause the dispatch operator to miss a call of a person needing help. It is important that not only your groups but all citizens understand when to call and when not to call 911.

When To Call

- Medical emergency (examples: chest pain, extreme shortness of breath, uncontrolled bleeding).
- Motor vehicle accident.
- Fire.
- When a life is in danger.

When Not to Call

- The power is off.
- Asking for directions to the hospital.
- Asking for telephone numbers of others.
- Requesting to speak with a particular officer.

- Inquiring as to the time and day.
- Inquiring about community activities and locations.

For more information about when it is appropriate to call, please contact the non-emergency number of your local law enforcement and ask for an officer to discuss the topic with you.

REMEMBER:

Community members only serve as the extra “eyes and ears” of law enforcement. They should report their observations of suspicious activities to law enforcement; however, citizens should never try to take action on those observations. Trained law enforcement should be the only ones ever to take action based on observations of suspicious activities.

Procedures for Reporting to Police

When reporting a crime, please remain calm and give police this information slowly over the phone:

1. Identify yourself by name, address and telephone number.
2. Identify the type of incident (burglary, assault, suspicious persons or vehicles, etc.).
3. Describe if a crime is "in progress" or "has occurred". Be sure to note time of occurrence.
4. Describe location. Be as specific as possible! Try to have an address for the police when you report. If an address is not available, have the street name, names of intersecting streets, and a specific description of the house or area in which you have observed a problem.
5. Give as complete a description as possible of a vehicle that may have been used by the culprit(s) in the commission of the crime you are reporting, including cars, motorcycles, bicycles, etc.
6. Give as complete a description as possible of the culprit(s) involved, including any associates also observed, and information regarding any weapons that might also be involved.
7. Give the direction of travel (north, south, east or west).
8. Finally, try to remain on the telephone and assist the dispatcher as much as possible until you are no longer needed. The more information you give the police the better.

Crimes in Progress

A crime in progress can best be explained as a crime that you feel:

1. Strong suspicion that something is about to take place. Be able to justify your suspicions. Ask yourself:
 - * Is the event or occurrence unusual?
 - * Is there potential for harm or injury?
2. Is in the process of taking place. Describe what is actually happening, is a weapon involved.
3. Has taken place within a short period of time, whether against persons or property, where you feel there is a possibility of quick apprehension with police response, or to prevent further acts of violence.

Radio Dispatch Priority List Examples

9-1-1: 24 hour emergency telephone number anywhere in the City of Pearland:

* Any emergency requiring a response from the Police, Fire or Emergency Ambulance (EMS).

9-1-1 operators are equipped with a caller display that can tell where a landline call originated from. This can be very helpful when a caller is unsure of where they are calling from, or if the caller is having trouble communicating with the operator. (Example: caller has trouble speaking English; young child calls).

Because of the nature of a cellular call, the operator does not get a display from the call's origin, so be sure to identify the city and location you are calling from for verification

When a call is placed to 9-1-1, the operator generally answers – "9-1-1, what is your emergency?" The caller then should state that they want police, fire, or ambulance. The operator then may tell them to stay on the line while they are connected to the proper agency. (Many people think that they have been disconnected or put on hold, when they are in the process of being transferred. It is important that the caller not hang up, as this can delay emergency response).

If a call is placed for emergency response, the call will be prioritized by degree of emergency. A general rule to be aware of is that crimes against persons are higher priority than crimes against property. It is also important to know if the crime is in progress, suspect is in the area, or the potential for harm still exists. The information that the caller relays to the operator is crucial to determine what type of priority is given to the assignment.

The caller may be upset or frantic, and may think the operator is asking unnecessary questions, but it is important that these questions be answered as accurately as possible.

The primary point to remember when reporting a crime is that things that are happening "now" have priority over those that already happened. Reports which receive emergency dispatch are those involving injury, potential injury, vulnerable victims, crimes in progress and those with weapons involved.

Reports that get delayed response include those which have no immediate or potential danger, property damage, and those in which the suspect is known, but not on scene. False reporting is a chargeable offense.

Emergency Priority Response

Priority 1 Crimes Against Persons

- * Dead body suspect on scene or in area
- * Domestic Violence suspect on scene
- * Felonious Assault suspect on scene
- * Hate/Ethnic intimidation
- * Police/Fire/EMS/Auxiliary in trouble
- * Hostage situation
- * Kidnapping/abduction
- * Attempt to lure a child
- * Robbery in progress
- * Sex offense in progress or suspect on scene
- * Suicide in progress
- * Person threatening with weapon
- * Missing child

Priority 2 Crimes Against Persons

- * Assault suspect on scene
- * Dead body suspected violence
- * Domestic Violence suspect not on scene
- * Endangered elderly/child
- * Felonious assault
- * Fight in progress
- * Missing person handicapped
- * Robbery report only
- * Sex offense report only
- * Person screaming
- * Stalking suspect on scene
- * Suicide threats
- * Persons carrying weapon

Priority 3 Calls

- * Civil dispute/neighbor trouble
- * Sex offense/indecent exposure by an adult
- * Non-violent family trouble
- * Disturbance
- * Drug activity
- * Check on the well being of a person
- * Assist with a working fire

Priority 1 Traffic Related and Accidents

- * Accident involving trains/water/air
- * Fatal accident

Priority 1 Public Safety Calls

- * Shots fired
- * Catch all for a need for Priority 1 response

Priority 1 Theft/Property Crime

- * Fire arson suspect on scene
- * Residence entered suspect on scene
- * Bank robbery in progress

Priority 2 Traffic Related and Accident

- * Damage accident that is a hazard
- * Intox driver
- * Non-fatal that is a hazard
- * Non-fatal pedestrian struck
- * Traffic hazard on freeway

Priority 2 Public Safety

- * Vicious animal
- * Abandon refrigerator
- * House alarm
- * Live wires down
- * Bomb threat
- * Violent mental person
- * Large crowd
- * Silent 911 call
- * Gun found
- * Found explosives/materials

Priority 2 Theft or Property Crimes

- * Panic or hold up alarm
- * Bank alarm
- * GTMV in progress
- * Citizen holding suspect
- * Property crime suspect on scene
- * Prowler

Priority 2 General Call

- * Dead body natural
- * Trouble unknown
- * Assist Children and Family Services

Priority 4 & 5 are assigned to calls needing a police report or receiving information only.

Suspect Physical Description Reporting Checklist

Hairstyle

Long
Medium
Short
Balding
Straight
Wavy
Afro
Braided

Facial Hair

Full Beard
Goatee
Mustache
Unshaven
Sideburns
Color

Eyes

Color
Crossed
Bulging
Squint
Blinking
Afflicted

Facial Oddities

Protruding Ears
Flat Nose
Hook Nose
Harelip
Protruding Chin
Receding Chin

Build

Heavy
Medium
Light

Handedness

Right
Left

Teeth

Missing
Protruding
Very White
Decayed
Stained
Caps
Broken
Gold
Dentures

Complexion

Light
Medium
Dark
Pock Marks
Freckles
Pimples
Scars

Speech

Profane/abusive
Soft/Polite
Apologetic
Accent
Stutter
Deep/Raspy
Effeminate/High
Lisp

Missing Body Parts

Ears
Eye
Arm
Fingers
Hand
Leg
Foot

Sex

Male
Female
Indeterminate

Race

White
Black
Asian
Hispanic
Native American

Tattoo

Face
Arm
Hand
Fingers
Body
Names
Initials
Word phrases
Picture
Design

Scars/Moles/Birthmark

Face
Forehead
Cheek
Nose
Arm
Hand

General Appearance

Neatly Dressed
Dirty/Ragged
Western
Mod/Unusual
Unusual Jewelry

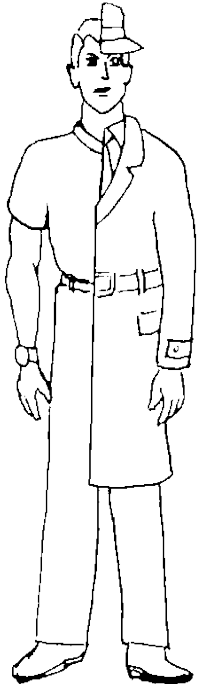
Person Wore

Ski Mask
Stocking Mask
Band-aid
Wig
Gloves
Make-up
Cap/Hat
Sun Glasses
Prescription Glasses

Suspect Description

Sex	Race	Age	Height	Weight	Type of Weapon
-----	------	-----	--------	--------	----------------

Hair/Facial Hair	
Glasses(type)	Jewelry
Tattoos	
Complexion	
Scars/Marks	



Hat (color, type)
Tie
Coat
Shirt
Pants/Shoes

Facial Appearance

FACIAL APPEARANCE



ONLY those specific facial details you DEFINITELY remember.

What did the suspect say? Did the suspect have an accent?

WEAPON:

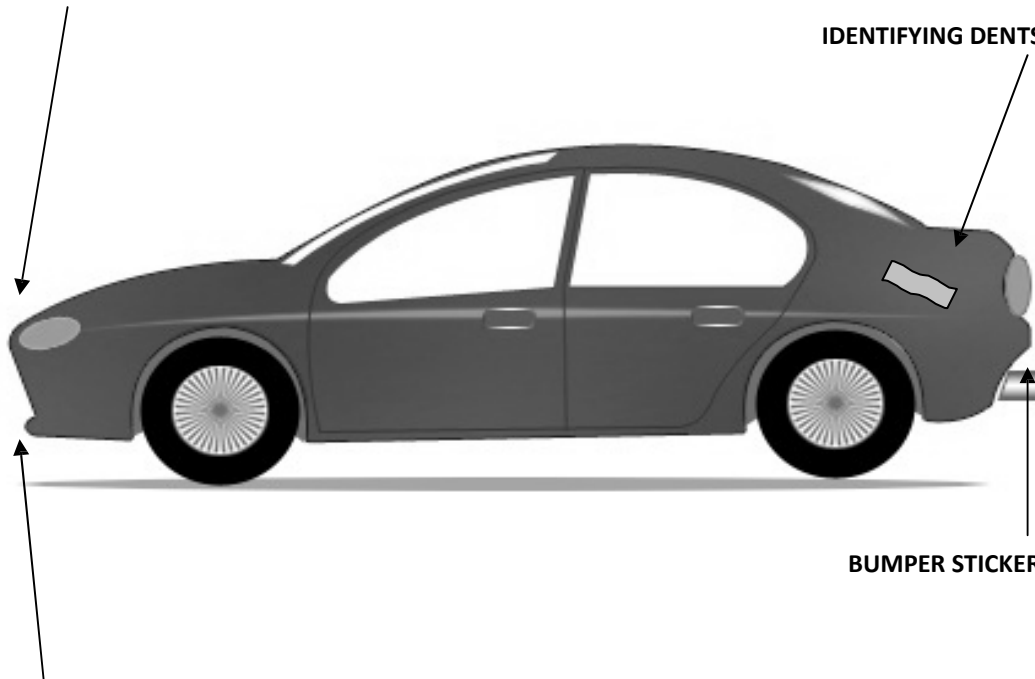
VEHICLE	Color:	Make:	Model:
Body Style:	Damage/Rust:	Bumper Sticker:	Wheel Covers:
License Number:	Direction of travel:		

Vehicle Description

Make:	Color:
Year:	Body Style: (2/4 Door, Convertible, etc.)

IDENTIFYING ACCESSORIES

Special hood ornaments, hub caps, etc.



IDENTIFYING DENTS OR SCRATCHES

BUMPER STICKERS OR DECALS.

**LICENSE NUMBER
STATE OR BACKGROUND & COLOR
HARD PLATE OR TEMP TAG**

Vehicle Description Reporting Checklist

When reporting the description of a suspicious vehicle in your neighborhood to the police, try to supply the following information:

1. License plate number – entire number
2. Color (black over white, etc.)
3. Size, make and model
4. Special Characteristics
 - * Dents or damage to car
 - * Broken windows
 - * Stickers or decals on bumpers or windows
 - * Loud muffler
 - * Decorative paint
 - * Extra antenna(s) or mirrors
 - * Special rims, tires, etc.
5. Number and description of occupants
6. Direction of travel: north, south, east or west and street names, etc.

Suspicious Activities

Protect yourself and others by keeping an eye out for the following suspicious activities:

SITUATIONS INVOLVING VEHICLES: POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE

1. Slow moving vehicles, especially without lights, following an aimless or repetitive course.
 - * *Possible casing for a place to rob or burglarize, drug pusher, sex offender, vandalism*
2. Parked vehicle occupied by one or more persons... especially significant if at an unusual hour.
 - * *Look out for burglary in progress. This is true even if occupants appear to be lovers*
3. A vehicle parked in a neighbor's drive being loaded with valuables, even if the vehicle looks legitimate...such as moving van or repair truck.
 - * *Burglary or other theft in progress*
4. Abandoned vehicle, old or new, with or without plates.
 - * *Stolen auto, or one used in a crime and abandoned*
5. Persons being forced into a vehicle.
 - * *Kidnapping, rape, robbery*

Important Phone Numbers

Police Numbers	
Emergency - Police - Fire - Ambulance	911
Pearland Police Department Non Emergency (Dispatch)	281-997-4000
Brazoria County Sheriff Non-Emergency	281-331-9000
Ft. Bend County Sheriff Non-Emergency	281-341-4704
Emergency Aid	
Poison Control	800-764-7661
Brazoria County Health Department	979-849-1600
Utilities & Services	
Water (City of Pearland)	281-652-1900
Electricity (Reliant)	713-207-7777
Gas (Centerpoint)	713-659-2111
Trash Removal (City of Pearland)	281-652-1603
Street Lights (Centerpoint online or City of Pearland Public Works via phone)	281-652-1900
Potholes, Drainage Issues, Low Water Pressure	281-652-1900
Traffic Signals, Street/Stop Signs, Pavement Striping Issues (City of Pearland Traffic Ops)	281-997-5990
Animal Control/Services (City of Pearland)	281-652-1970
Fire (Marshal, Code Enforcement, Public Education, Emergency Management)	281-997-4641
Division of Environmental Health	
Air Quality Complaints (TCEQ)	512-239-1000
Homeowners Association	
FirstService Residential, Inc.	713-332-4675

Council Member Contact Information

Council Member	Position	Email Address	Phone Number
Tom Reid	Mayor	treid@pearlandtx.gov	281-652-1654
Tony Carbone	Mayor Pro Tem	tcarbone@pearlandtx.gov	281-652-1662
Derrick Reed	Councilmember – Position 2	dreed@pearlandtx.gov	281-652-1662
Gary Moore	Councilmember – Position 3	gmoore@pearlandtx.gov	281-652-1662
Keith Ordeneaux	Councilmember – Position 4	kordeneaux@pearlandtx.gov	281-652-1662
Greg Hill	Councilmember – Position 5	ghill@pearlandtx.gov	281-652-1662
TBD	Councilmember – Position 6		281-652-1662