

Bloomington Neighborhood Watch Program

***Sponsored by Bloomington Police Department
Community Policing Program***



***Bloomington Police Department
220 E 3rd Street
Bloomington, IN 47401
Non-Emergency Number: 812-339-4477
For Emergencies Dial 911***

This program is designed to assist community members of Bloomington in enhancing neighborhood security. This program helps to heighten power of observation and encourages mutual assistance among neighbors.

The days of the older neighborhood, when everyone knew everyone on the block, or in the addition have changed. Today, especially within the Bloomington community, neighborhoods tend to be highly transient and growing. People seek more privacy during their home time and this causes a feeling of unfamiliarity with neighbors. This unfamiliarity often enhances the opportunity for any criminal element and increases community vulnerability to criminal activity.

Neighborhood watches help to reduce crime through a variety of techniques:

- * They increase neighborhood awareness of crimes in the neighborhood through a continuing information program.
- * They train residents in the area of better property security.
- * They develop a neighborhood action program where neighbors help watch each other's property and well being.
- * They help neighbors learn what constitutes suspicious activity and how to report any such activity to the police department.
- * They encourage ALL people in the neighborhood to participate and cooperate with the police department to reduce community crime.

Reporting Suspicious Activity

Suspicious activity, for our purposes, will be defined as any activity that is deemed by an individual as unusual. The effectiveness of the police department crime prevention efforts is enhanced by active participation in contacting the police department immediately upon noticing any such behavior. Individuals should not be concerned with fears of being a 'nosy neighbor', a belief someone else may have called, fear that they are 'bothering' the police department, or perceived embarrassment of suspicions being proven non suspicious. It is important to remember we work as a team and if the police department is not informed of possible criminal activity, we cannot respond.

What a Criminal Looks Like

Criminals come in all shapes, sizes, and ages. They are not limited to certain hours, or dressing in a certain manner. They are much like we teach our children to think of dangerous strangers, the people we don't know. They may have watched to see when the neighborhood is less active and fewer people are home. They often commit crimes quickly, and leave the area swiftly.

How to Report Information to the Police Dispatcher

- * When you call to report an incident or suspicious activity make sure you stay on the line until the dispatcher ends the conversation.
- * Begin by identifying the situation and location of the event.
- * Provide your name, a contact number, and your location in case the dispatcher needs to call you for further information or to meet with an officer.
- * Provide your telephone number and address in case the officer needs to follow up by speaking to you.
- * Give a description of all individuals involved to include: gender, age, race, height (taller or shorter than you), weight (thin, medium, or heavy build), clothing description, scars, marks, tattoos, jewelry, and any other distinguishing characteristics.
- * Give a description of any mode of transportation (vehicle or other) involved. This description should include make, model, color and license plate if possible.
- * If the individuals are leaving the area, give a direction of travel and location last seen.

What to Observe for:

- * Any individuals traveling door to door in the neighborhood: Any salesperson traveling door to door in Bloomington should have a permit from the City of Bloomington authorizing these sales. Many salespeople are legitimate. If they are attempting to open doors or begin looking in windows however, you should contact the police department immediately. Sales representatives should be in possession of some type of company identification, which can be requested before they make entry into your home. If the salesperson says anything that seems odd or out of place or acts in a suspicious manner notify the police department.
- * Juveniles/people casually walking through your neighborhood: Can be considered as suspicious if this is not a normal activity in your neighborhood or if they are looking into other homes, automobiles, or backyards.
- * Unfamiliar vehicles or individuals: In or around the neighborhood. Often times a burglar will park a short distance away and walk to the crime scene, move slowly, without their headlights on (if dark) through a neighborhood, and/or appear to be traveling aimlessly or repetitively throughout the area. Also watch for any vehicles occupied or other that appear to be conducting transactions between them.
- * Anyone: Carrying property (especially unwrapped), exhibiting signs of intoxication, or mental illness.

Where to Start:

- * Attached is a checklist for Starting a Neighborhood Watch Program
- * Attached is our Crime Prevention information from the Bloomington Police Department website.
- * Our department can assist in helping to organize and form a program in your community upon request.

Checklist for Citizen Patrols

(Adapted from National Crime Prevention Council's Checklist)

(Based in a Neighborhood Watch group)

The main purposes of Citizen Patrols are:

- * To report incidents and problems to police
- * To provide a visible presence that dissuades criminal activity

The characteristics of Citizen Patrols include:

- * Undergo training by law enforcement and have their support
- * No policing powers
- * ***Never*** carry any weapons of any type
- * Are nonconfrontational and courteous and helpful to residents
- * Coordinate with law enforcement
- * Work in teams
- * Wear identifying clothing such as t-shirts, caps, vests, or jackets
- * Always carry a pad, a pencil, and a flashlight (if it is dark)
- * Keep logs and file reports

Extra Duties Citizen Patrols can undertake:

- * Identifying neighborhood nuisance concerns
- * Identifying graffiti sites
- * Checking on homebound residents
- * Identifying and reporting abandoned vehicles

