

# Neighborhood Watch Guide

## Take steps to prevent crime

- Install a security alarm and motion detectors.
- Lock doors and windows of your home and cars.
- Do not leave valuables in your car or trunk. Do not leave valuables in your home visible to passersby.
- Ask contractors to lock up ladders when not in use.
- Follow the BPD's safety tips for burglar-proofing your home.
- Volunteer to become a street captain if your block doesn't have one.
- Schedule a Neighborhood Watch meeting with your neighbors once a month at a minimum.
- Get to know your neighbors. Look out for your neighbors.
- Call 9-1-1 immediately if you notice suspicious activity.

## How to Report Crimes and Suspicious Activity

- 1.) Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- 2.) Alert your immediate neighbors promptly. Use a phone tree.
- 3.) Contact your street captain promptly.
  - > Contact NWU or Street Coordinator if you don't know who your street captain is or if your block does not have a street captain.

## Resources for Neighborhood Watch Block Captains

*When you are contacted about a crime on your block*

- 1.) Confirm that your neighbor called the police.
- 2.) Confirm police reports by contacting the BPD Community Service Office in your District.
- 3.) Get precise and factual information: Time and location, description of crime or suspicious activity, description of individuals, cars and license plate numbers observed.
- 4.) Promptly send confirmed reports to:
  - Neighbors on your list
  - Other street captains for distribution
  - gmail/yahoo acct

## To Plan and Run a Neighborhood Watch Meeting

- 1.) Contact BPD Neighborhood Watch Unit. Ask that a District CSO police officer attend your meeting.
- 2.) Distribute a meeting notice to your neighbors.
- 3.) At the meeting, collect phone numbers and email addresses of the neighbors on your block.
- 4.) Pass out crime prevention guides. Review police reports and crime reporting steps.
- 5.) Get to know your neighbors!

## How to Call the Police

- 1.) Dial 9-1-1.
- 2.) State your name and location.
- 3.) Describe the suspicious activity of the crime. Observe the direction in which the alleged criminals are traveling, including car model and license plate number.
- 4.) Be precise and factual: Describe what you observed. Do not make speculations.

## When using a cellphone to dial 9-1-1, you have two options:

- 1.) Calling 9-1-1 takes you to the State Police. Ask to be transferred to the Boston Police.
- 2.) Calling 617-343-4911 connects you directly to the Boston Police.

**Location Tracking:** If your cell phone carrier enables Global Positioning System (GPS), calling 9-1-1 from a cell phone may enable the police to track your location. Confirm GPS functionality with your carrier. GPS is not available if you dial 617-343-4911 on your cell phone. GPS is available if you call from a landline phone. Always dial 9-1-1 from a landline phone.

- Police 9-1-1
- BPD Community Service Office/District \_\_\_\_\_
- BPD Neighborhood Watch Unit 617-343-4345
- My Street Captain is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Keeping Your Home Safe from Break-Ins**  
**Prepared by BPD Neighborhood Watch Unit**

**DOORS AND WINDOWS**

Figure out your weak spots. Imagine you are locked out of your house and absolutely have to get back in because you left your stove on. How would you break into your house? That area is probably a weak spot.

**Doors**

Install peepholes. Replace weak doors, re-glue wooden panels, or attach metal plate or half-inch plywood liner to back. Or add decorative grillwork. If there is glass within 40 inches of the door, you can: cover glass with polycarbonate plastic sheet, add decorative grill or grill door, or replace with solid core door. Don't forget basement and porch doors.

**Locks**

Install good deadbolt locks with extra-long screws (2-1/2") on all doors (don't forget basement and porch doors). The bolt should extend at least 1-1/2" into the stricken plate. If glass is within 40 inches of the lock, a double-cylinder deadbolt (keys for both sides) should be installed (but be sure to keep keys readily available so you can exit quickly, if necessary).

Another option is to have the glass reinforced with lexan (poly-carbonate plastic sheet). This treatment makes glass unbreakable to criminals. Replace a weak strike plate with a high-security, heavy-duty one. Don't forget to have good locks installed on back, porch and basement doors.

**Windows**

Accessible double-hung windows can easily be pried open with a screw driver. Storm windows do not add security (crescent latch screws can be popped open). Reinforce any accessible, wooden-double-sash windows by pinning them at the corners where the two sashes overlap. Drill at a slight downward angle all the way through the lower window and halfway through the upper window. Insert long nails (can be easily removed for emergency exit) and for ventilation, drill additional holes no more than 5 inches above the first holes in the upper window frame.

**Sliding Doors and Windows**

Brace with a locking device that attaches to the frame. A wooden pole or broomstick handle in the base channel can be pried out, so install a key-operated locking device. Exterior thin gauge aluminum can be peeled to gain entry, so tighten adjustment screws to prevent lifting door out of channel.

**Casement Windows**

Casement windows can be easily forced or pried if the crank operator is loose. Adjust to reduce excess play. Remove the crank when not at home so that windows can't be pried.

**Obstructed Views**

Any accessible door or window that is shielded from view by shrubs or entryways is a potential weak spot. Trim shrubs around doors and windows. Make sure entry ways of obscured doors are well lit. Use motion detector lights. Always keep outer doors locked. Never buzz people in without knowing who they are. It's much easier to keep an intruder out than to get them out.

**Garage Doors**

On overhead track-operated doors, locks are usually poor quality. Panels that are thin or made of glass can be kicked out or broken. Install case-hardened hasps and padlocks on the outside. Reinforce weak panels and secure tracks with heavier screws. Secure the track with heavy nails and or bolts. Something as simple as keeping screws tight can pay off.

**Porches**

Porch doors and windows are often obscured from view. Keep doors and windows locked and keep well lit if possible.

**Lighting**

Interior and Exterior lights can be a deterrent to a criminal. Consider motion sensing lights, which are economical and add an element of surprise. Also, consider light timers if you are going away.

**Yard and Neighborhood Maintenance**

Keep your yard and neighborhood well maintained. This sends a message of a caring neighborhood to a potential criminal. This time spent outside with neighbors also allows you to get to know the people who reside in your area.

To better protect your neighborhood, be sure to:

- Never keep ladders or things a thief can stand on in your yard.
- Don't display packaging of expensive items in your trash.
- Ensure your house number is clearly visible from the street.
- Make sure street lights, vacant lots and other common areas are well maintained on your street.
- Make sure that the elderly people living on your street get their walks shoveled and their trash taken out in bad weather. It's important to keep their homes well lived and maintained also.

**KEEP A LIST OF YOUR VALUABLES**

Include descriptions and serial numbers of electronic and stereo equipment, cameras, computers, sports equipment, jewelry, silver pieces, home office equipment and power tools. Consider photographing or videotaping these possessions for documentation.