

Contact the Hanover Park Police Department at 630-823-5635 or send an email to hpnw@hpil.org to obtain information about organizing your own Neighborhood Watch.



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HANOVER PARK POLICE

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**STARTING A
NEIGHBORHOOD
WATCH**



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**Hanover Park
Police Department**

Michael Menough, Chief of Police



Hanover Park^{USA}
America's Global Village

Starting your Neighborhood Watch Group

What Is Neighborhood Watch?

Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program that enlists the participation of residents in cooperation with law enforcement to reduce crime, solve problems, and improve the quality of life in your area. In it you will get to know and work with your neighbors, and learn how to:

- Report crimes and suspicious activities,
- Protect yourself, your family, and your property,
- Protect your neighbor's family and property, and
- Identify crime and disorder problems in your area and work with police department personnel to solve them.

How to Start and Maintain a Neighborhood Watch Program

The following steps explain how to get a Neighborhood Watch program started and maintained in your area:

- Talk to your neighbors. See if there's interest in forming a Neighborhood Watch group in your area. If there is contact the police department for help.
- Contact the Hanover Park Police Department Neighborhood Watch Coordinator at 630-823-5635 or send an email to hpnw@hpil.org. One of the department's program coordinators will suggest how you should proceed and discuss ways to plan your first meeting.
- Talk to your neighbors again. Tell them about the benefits of a program and the problems to be addressed. Ask about convenient times and places for the first meeting. Be sure to mention that Neighborhood Watch does not require frequent meetings or personal risks, and that a police officer will be invited to the first meeting to answer questions.

Planning the first meeting

Select a date, time, and place for the first meeting.

- Contact the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator in advance to invite a police officer to your first meeting. Meetings are usually held at a home, school, church, or community center.
- Send out meeting announcements a few weeks ahead of the date. You can distribute fliers, make phone calls, or send emails.
- Send out reminders a few days before the meeting.

Prepare an agenda and sign-in sheet for the first meeting.

- Ask the police officer to talk about the crime and disorder problems in your area, how to get email alerts on the Internet, and how the partnership with the HPPD will work.
- Consider providing refreshments, e.g., cookies and coffee.
- The agenda should allow time for questions, answers, and other topics.

First meeting

The first meeting is critical in the forming of a group. All attendees should introduce themselves and sign a sheet with their names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses so they can be contacted about future meetings and activities. They should be assured that their personal information will not be given to anyone without their permission. The police officer will talk about the topics listed above and answer questions. Then the group should define the area to be covered and select a Block Captain or Co-Captains.

The initial duties of the Block Captain or Co-Captains are listed below:

- Plan, announce and run meetings
- Serve as liaison with the HPPD
- Compile a membership list

Continuing duties of the Block Captain or Co-Captains

After the group is formed their duties will depend on their organizational skills and interests, and the nature and objectives of the group. The following are some possibilities:

- Recruit new members
- Maintain a membership list and area map with home addresses
- Keep members informed about area crime and disorder
- Try to see group members frequently
- Establish and maintain a phone tree with home and work numbers that group members can use to contact residents in an emergency
- Act as a spokesperson for the group
- Serve as liaison with the HPPD
- Plan, announce, and facilitate meetings
- Organize crime prevention activities, e.g., watching homes when residents are away.

Subsequent Meetings and Activities

Meetings of the whole group should be held at least once a year. They can be held more often if there is information to be distributed and discussed, a problem to address, or a special event to be planned and held. The key to keeping a Neighborhood Watch group active is maintaining interest over time and communicating with members. Meetings can also be scheduled to address a serious incident in the area, or two or more less-serious incidents of the same type.

Special events are another good way to keep the group active. The following are some possibilities: Block Parties, Garage sales, Holiday Events, and Newsletters.

- Socials, e.g., block parties or potluck dinners
- Cleaning streets, vacant lots, etc.