

# Neighborhood Watch Starter Kit



## Getting Started: The First 30 Days

### Week 1: Planning & Research

#### Assess Your Neighborhood

- Crime statistics - Check SAPD data for your area
- Recent incidents - Talk to neighbors about concerns
- Physical layout - Map entry/exit points, problem areas
- Demographics - Understand who lives in your area
- Existing resources - HOA, community groups, etc.

#### Gauge Interest

- Door-to-door introductions - Meet 10-15 neighbors
- Informal survey - "Would you be interested in neighborhood watch?"
- Identify champions - Find 3-5 committed neighbors
- Note concerns - What specific issues worry people?
- Contact info - Collect phone numbers and emails

#### Contact SAPD

San Antonio Police Department Community Services:

- Phone: (210) 207-7273
- Ask for: Community Policing Officer for your district
- Request: Neighborhood watch coordinator visit

What SAPD Provides:

- Crime statistics for your specific area
- Guidance on effective watch programs
- Training materials and presentations
- Direct contact for reporting suspicious activity
- Coordination with patrol officers

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### **Week 2: Organization**

#### **Schedule First Meeting**

Meeting Basics:

- Location: Community center, school, or volunteer's home
- Time: Evening or weekend when most can attend
- Duration: 1-2 hours maximum
- SAPD Officer: Request officer attendance for credibility

#### **Spread the Word**

Communication Methods:

- Door hangers - Include meeting details
- Nextdoor posts - Reach broader neighborhood
- Email distribution - For those who provided emails
- Yard signs - "Neighborhood Meeting" with details
- Word of mouth - Personal invitations work best

#### **Sample Door Hanger:**

##### NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MEETING

WHEN: [Date] at [Time]

WHERE: [Address]

WHY: Make our neighborhood safer together

SAPD Officer will be present

Questions? Call [Your Name] at [Phone]

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### Week 3: First Meeting

#### Meeting Agenda (90 minutes)

##### Welcome & Introductions (15 minutes)

- Host welcomes everyone
- Round-robin introductions
- State meeting purpose clearly

##### SAPD Presentation (30 minutes)

- Crime statistics for your area
- How neighborhood watch works
- Legal do's and don'ts
- Reporting procedures
- Q&A with officer

##### Organize Structure (30 minutes)

- Select group leader/coordinator
- Choose meeting schedule (monthly recommended)
- Define patrol areas/zones
- Establish communication methods
- Set basic operating rules

##### Action Planning (15 minutes)

- Immediate priorities
- Sign-up for volunteer roles
- Next meeting date
- Contact information exchange

#### Key Roles to Fill

- Coordinator: Organizes meetings, communicates with SAPD
- Secretary: Takes notes, maintains contact lists
- Zone Leaders: Responsible for specific streets/areas
- Communications: Manages phone tree, social media
- Signs Coordinator: Orders and maintains neighborhood watch signs

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### Week 4: Implementation

#### Set Up Communication Systems

##### Phone Tree:

- Create calling chain for emergencies
- Test monthly to ensure it works
- Update when people move/join

##### Group Text/Chat:

- WhatsApp, GroupMe, or similar
- Share suspicious activity immediately
- Keep conversations focused on safety

##### Email List:

- Monthly newsletters
- Meeting reminders
- Safety tips and updates

##### Nextdoor Integration:

- Create neighborhood watch group
- Share safety information
- Coordinate with nearby areas

#### Order Signs and Materials

##### Neighborhood Watch Signs:

- Entry points - "Neighborhood Watch Active"
- Throughout area - Smaller yard signs
- Quality matters - Weather-resistant, professional looking

##### Where to Order:

- SAPD may provide some signs
- Local sign shops (support SA businesses)
- Online safety supply companies
- Home Depot/Lowe's basic versions

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## Monthly Operations

### Regular Meetings

#### **Monthly Meeting Structure (60 minutes):**

Crime Report (10 minutes)

- SAPD update on area incidents
- Neighbor incident reports
- Discuss patterns or concerns

Patrol Reports (15 minutes)

- Zone leader updates
- Observations and concerns
- Equipment needs or issues

New Business (20 minutes)

- New member introductions
- Policy updates or changes
- Community event planning

Education/Training (15 minutes)

- Safety topic of the month
- Guest speakers (insurance, security)
- Seasonal safety tips

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## Monthly Operations Patrol Guidelines

### What TO Do:

- Observe and report - Eyes and ears only
- Stay in pairs - Never patrol alone
- Use well-lit routes - Stick to main streets
- Carry communication - Cell phone or radio
- Wear identification - Neighborhood watch gear
- Report to SAPD - Suspicious activity  
immediately

### What NOT to Do:

- Never confront suspects - Observe from safe distance
- Don't carry weapons - Legally risky and dangerous
- Avoid private property - Stay on public sidewalks/streets
- Don't make traffic stops - Not law enforcement
- Don't investigate - Let police handle everything

### What to Report:

- Suspicious persons - Detailed descriptions
- Unusual vehicles - License plates, make/model
- Property crimes - Burglary, vandalism, theft
- Drug activity - Unusual foot traffic patterns
- Emergency situations - Medical, fire, accident