



nextdoor

Virtual Neighborhood Watch Start Up Guide

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NW Virtual Start Up Guide

Instead of regular in person meetings and the use of phone trees for communication, Virtual Neighborhood Watch uses various electronic applications to foster neighbor to neighbor communications, including e-mail, text messaging, and social media applications such as Facebook.

The Roseville Police Department also acknowledges the social media application Nextdoor for use with virtual Neighborhood Watch. Nextdoor, a private social network company, created a partnership with National Neighborhood Watch to promote and encourage Virtual Neighborhood Watch groups. Nextdoor is a free app that can be downloaded onto your computer and/or smartphone.

It is important to understand the Roseville Police Department is not directly affiliated with Nextdoor. Nextdoor is a private social network, and RPD has no control of any information shared on the site nor can receive any direct posts/requests from users or administrators of the site.

DO NOT USE NEXTDOOR TO REPORT A CRIME IN PROGRESS – USE 9-1-1

Nextdoor's Virtual Neighborhood Watch Guide can be viewed/downloaded [here](#).

(<https://nnw.org/sites/default/files/Nextdoor%20Virtual%20Neighborhood%20Watch%20Guide.pdf>)

Nextdoor's main website: <https://nextdoor.com>

Phase One: Getting Started

- Define the neighborhood area you want to start with. Start small; you can always add homes later.
- Reach out to your neighbors to let them know about Virtual Neighborhood Watch and you are interested starting a watch group. If they don't understand what Neighborhood Watch is, use the information included at the end of this guide (*Reasons/Benefits for Neighborhood Watch*)
- Point out that a Watch group is an association of neighbors who look out for each other's families and property, alert the police to any suspicious activities or crime in progress, and work together to make their community a safer and better place to live.
- Invite them to the virtual group, either Facebook, Nextdoor, or other digital means. Get their email/cell phone contact information.

Phase Two: Assigning Roles and Registering your Virtual Neighborhood Watch

- Ask for Block Captain volunteers who are responsible for relaying information to members, keeping up-to-date information on residents, and making special efforts to involve the elderly, working parents, and young people. Block captains also can serve as liaisons between the neighborhood and the police and communicate information and crime incidents to all residents.
- Establish a regular means of communicating with Watch members—e.g., newsletter, e-mail list, text message, social media private group, etc.
- Prepare a neighborhood map showing names, addresses, and phone numbers of participating households and distribute to members. Block captains keep this map up to date, contacting newcomers to the neighborhood and rechecking occasionally with ongoing participants. (There is a downloadable/printable home map on the Roseville Police Neighborhood Watch webpage)
- Register your new group with the Roseville Police Department (there is a registration form available on the Police Department website)
- With guidance from the Roseville Police, the Watch group trains its members in home security techniques, observation skills, and crime reporting. Residents also learn about the types of crime that affect the area.
- If you wish to post Neighborhood Watch signs, the classic “Boris the Burglar” signs can be ordered from National Neighborhood Watch Institute (www.nnwi.org). Members of RCONA (Roseville Coalition of Neighborhood Associations) can get a discount if they order signs through RCONA. The City of Roseville will install the signs for your Watch group.
- Organizers and block captains must emphasize that Watch groups are not vigilantes and do not assume the role of the police. They only ask neighbors to be alert, observant, and caring—and to report suspicious activity or crimes immediately to the police.

Tips for Success

- Communicate regularly via the chosen electronic means to help residents get to know each other and to collectively decide upon program strategies and activities.
- When someone new moves into the neighborhood, reach out to them and invite them to your Virtual Neighborhood Watch group.
- Involve everyone -- young and old, single and married, renter and homeowner.
- Maintain communication with the Roseville Police Department and request information from them as needed.
- Get the information out quickly. Share all kinds of news -- quash rumors.

- Gather the facts about crime in your neighborhood. Check police reports, do victimization surveys, and learn residents' perceptions about crime. Often residents' opinions are not supported by facts, and accurate information can reduce fear of crime.
- Physical conditions like abandoned cars or overgrown vacant lots contribute to crime. Sponsor cleanups, encourage residents to beautify the area, and ask them to turn on outdoor lights at night.
- It's essential to celebrate the success of the effort and recognize volunteers' contributions through such events as awards, annual dinners, and parties. To help meet community needs, Neighborhood Watches can sponsor meetings that address broader issues such as drug abuse, gangs, self-protection tactics, isolation of the elderly, crime in the schools, and rape prevention. The Roseville Police can provide speakers on these specific topics for the meetings.
- Don't forget events like National Night Out or a potluck dinner that gives neighbors a chance to get together.

Neighborhood Watch Organization

There is no single right way to organize a Neighborhood Watch group. Traditionally, a Watch group will include a law enforcement officer or liaison (usually the neighborhood officer), an area coordinator who lives in the community, block captains spread throughout the community, and watch members. If your group is starting small, you may only have a Captain and members; but that could change as your Watch group grows.

The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator's job is crucial to the success of your program. This job is typically filled by a retiree or other individual who has extra time at home. This person's responsibilities include:

- Expanding the program and maintaining a current list of participants and neighborhood residents, including names, addresses, home and work telephone numbers, email addresses, and vehicle descriptions.
- Acting as a liaison between Watch members, officers, civic groups, and block captains
- Arranging neighborhood crime prevention training programs
- Obtaining and distributing crime prevention materials (e.g. fliers and signs)

Block Captains are recommended for every 10-15 houses. Their responsibilities include:

- Acting as liaison between block residents and the coordinator
- Obtaining address and contact information for all group members and establishing a communication link

- Visiting and inviting new residents to join; notifying them of meetings
- Staying in touch with all group members to discuss possibly crime problems, needs for assistance, and suggestions for program improvement.
- Scheduling Watch meetings (in person or virtually) as often as the group thinks necessary

Watch Members are the heart of Neighborhood Watch.

- Be alert to suspicious activity in the neighborhood and report it to the police immediately
- Get to know your neighbors; learn to identify anyone who does not belong in the neighborhood
- Follow safety and security guidelines in and around your home including window and door locks, lighting, and landscape maintenance.
- Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings (in person or virtual)
- Communicate with your neighbors about safety and security concerns

Neighborhood Watch Meeting Topic Ideas

Suggestions for topics that can be discussed in Neighborhood Watch meetings – whether you choose to have an “in person” meeting or virtually using tools such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. The police department can provide speakers for a majority of them, or get you in touch with someone who can make a presentation for the others.

Personal Safety	Social Services Unit
Child/Stranger Safety	Traffic
Home Security	UAS (Drones)
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)	Human Trafficking
First Aid/CPR	Police Dispatch/Calling 9-1-1
Animal Control	Crime Scene Investigation
Dogs-What to do if attacked	Detectives/Investigations
Scams	Arson Investigations
Internet Crimes/Cyber Security	Hazardous Materials
ID Theft	Train Safety
Parent to Parent	City Council Representative
Landlord/Tenant Issues	Placer County District Attorney
Cultural Awareness/Diversity Training	Defensive Driving
Restorative Justice	Neighborhood Watch ‘patrol’
Peer Courts	Terrorism Awareness
School Resource Officers	Teen Vehicle Safety
Community Policing	Juvenile Crime Prevention
Emergency Preparedness	Conflict Resolution
Search & Rescue	Local Fire Station Tour
Active Shooter	Domestic Violence
Crime Prevention	Red Cross
Senior Safety	Sexual Assault Services
K9 Officers	Mediation Services
Patrol Officer functions	Parole & Probation
Transient/Homeless issues	Sex Offenders
SWAT	Gang Awareness
	Drug/Narcotic Awareness

Benefits and Reasons for Neighborhood Watch

Benefits

Communities actively utilizing Neighborhood Watch have experienced:

- Reduction in crime
- Better quality of life
- Greater sense of security, responsibility, and personal control
- Building of community pride and unity
- Preparing for helping others and ourselves in our community
- Providing law enforcement agencies with volunteer support year-round
- Becoming the extra "eyes and ears" of law enforcement personnel to enhance public safety
- Better relationships with law enforcement



Reasons for Neighborhood Watch

Basic Crime Prevention

Practice crime safety measures that eliminate opportunities for criminals. Encourage others to join in crime prevention efforts. Aid others when they become victims of crime. Work for a better and safer neighborhood through protecting and honoring the rights of others.

Disaster Preparedness

Learn skills to prepare for man-made and natural disasters. Local, state, and the federal government do a lot to prepare for disasters but citizens have to be ready to care for each other. Encourage citizen involvement in preparation and planning.

Build A Stronger Community

Get to know your neighbors. In our fast-paced world we don't spend enough time learning about our neighbors. Watch groups give community members a reason to get together and talk about making their community a better place. Neighborhood Watch activities are a fun way for community members to get to know each other while making a difference.



Other tools available for your Neighborhood Watch group

The following documents/forms/handouts are available on the Police Department website as printable documents or can be provided to you for your meeting:

- Guide for witnessing and reporting a crime to the police
- Neighborhood Watch Registration form (fillable PDF)
- No Soliciting printable door sign
- Neighborhood Watch informational trifold flier
- Virtual Neighborhood Watch Start Up Guide
- Personal Safety flier
- RCONA Information
- Home Security Checklist
- Special Event / Speaker Request
- Keep Watch Surveillance Camera Registry
- Crime Prevention Tips

Call Community Services at 916-774-5050 to request any of the above items.

My Neighborhood Officer Lookup

The police department website also has a “Find My Neighborhood Officer” interactive map on our website that will tell you which RCONA Neighborhood Association your address is located in and which police beat your address is in. It also has a link to email your neighborhood officer about neighborhood issues.