schools, teenage alcohol and other drug abuse, or domestic violence. Adopt a park or school playground and paint over graffiti. Sponsor a block party, holiday dinner, or volleyball or softball game that will provide neighbors a chance to get to know each other.

- **Other aspects of community safety.** For instance, start a block parent program to help children in emergency situations.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A WATCH MEMBER?

- Be alert!
- Know your neighbors and watch out for each other.
- Report suspicious activities and crimes to the police or sheriffs' department.
- Learn how you can make yourself and your community safer.

WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES SHOULD I BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR AS A WATCH MEMBER?

- Someone screaming or shouting for help.
- Someone looking in windows of houses and parked cars.
- Property being taken out of houses where no one is at home or from closed businesses.
- Cars, vans, or trucks moving slowly with no apparent destination or without lights.
- Anyone being forced into a vehicle.
- A stranger sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child.

Report these incidents to the police or sheriffs' department. Talk about concerns and problems with your neighbors.

HOW SHOULD I REPORT THESE INCIDENTS?

- Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.
- Give your name and address.
- Explain what happened.
- Briefly describe the suspect: sex and race, age, height, weight, hair color, clothing, distinctive characteristics such as a beard, mustache, scars, or accent.
- Describe the vehicle if one was involved: color, make, model, year, license plate, and special features such as stickers.

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TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME®

Take a Stand Against Crime

Join a Neighborhood Watch

A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PRIMER

Neighborhood Watch, Block Watch, Town Watch, Building Watch, Crime Watch—whatever the name, it's one of the most effective and least costly ways to prevent crime and reduce fear. Neighborhood Watch fights the isolation that crime both creates and feeds upon. It forges bonds among area residents, helps reduce burglaries and robberies, and improves relations between police and the communities they serve.

WHY NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

- It works. Throughout the country, dramatic decreases in burglary and related offenses are reported by law enforcement professionals in communities with active Watch programs.
- Today's transient society produces communities that are less personal. Many families have two working parents and children involved in many activities that keep them away from home. An empty house in a neighborhood where none of the neighbors know the owner is a prime target for burglary.
- Neighborhood Watch also helps build pride and serves as a springboard for efforts that address other community concerns such as recreation for youth, child care, and affordable housing.

HOW DOES A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH START?

A motivated individual, a few concerned residents, a community organization, or a law enforcement agency can spearhead the efforts to establish a Watch. Together they can

- organize a small planning committee of neighbors to discuss needs, the level of interest, and possible community problems.
- contact the local police or sheriff's department, or local crime prevention organization, for help in training members in home security and reporting skills and for information on local crime patterns.
- hold an initial meeting to gauge neighbors' interest; establish the purpose of the program; and begin to identify issues that need to be addressed.
- select a coordinator.
- ask for block captain volunteers who are responsible for relaying information to members.
- recruit members, keeping up-to-date information on new residents and making special efforts to involve the elderly, working parents, and young people.
- work with local government or law enforcement to put up Neighborhood Watch signs, usually after at least 50 percent of all households are enrolled.

WHO CAN BE INVOLVED?

Any community resident can join—young and old, single and married, renter and homeowner. Even the busiest of people can belong to a Neighborhood Watch—they too can keep an eye out for neighbors as they come and go.

I LIVE IN AN APARTMENT BUILDING. CAN I START A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

Yes. Watch Groups can be formed around any geographical unit: a block, apartment building, townhouse complex, park, business area, public housing complex, office building, or marina.

WHAT DOES A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH DO?

A Neighborhood Watch is neighbors helping neighbors. They are extra eyes and ears for reporting crime and helping neighbors. Members meet their neighbors, learn how to make their homes more secure, watch out for each other and the neighborhood, and report activity that raises their suspicions to the police or sheriff's office.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR COMPONENTS OF A WATCH PROGRAM?

- **Community meetings.** These should be set up on a regular basis such as bi-monthly, monthly, or six times a year.
- **Citizens' or community patrol.** A citizens' patrol is made up of volunteers who walk or drive through the community and alert police to crime and questionable activities. Not all Neighborhood Watches need a citizens' patrol.
- **Communications.** These can be as simple as a weekly flier posted on community announcement boards to a newsletter that updates neighbors on the progress of the program to a neighborhood electronic bulletin board.
- **Special events.** These are crucial to keep the program going and growing. Host talks or seminars that focus on current issues such as hate or bias-motivated violence, crime in