

-What Is Community Watch?

Community Watch is a crime prevention program that enlists the active participation of residents in cooperation with law enforcement to reduce crime, solve problems, and improve the quality of life in your area. Community Watch also goes beyond crime prevention to address a wide array of other livability issues and is aimed to educate and communicate with the public. In it you will get to know and work with your neighbors, and learn how to:

- * Recognize and 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 SPD personnel to solve them.

-How Community Watch Works

Community Watch operates to educate participants in the principles of deterrence, delay, and detection. The program is designed for residents to work with Springfield Police instead of relying on law enforcement to do it for them. Vigilante actions are in no way condoned by the Community Watch Program. No one is asked to take personal risks or be a hero. Community Watch across the nation has shown to effectively decrease crime and increase personal security which creates a greater sense of community involvement.

-Community Watch program is:

1. Residents in the community working with the police department to reduce crime and to improve the quality of life.
2. Residents in the community taking on a leadership role and accepting responsibility for their community
3. Residents coming together to discuss their concerns which lead to developing a plan of action that addresses those concerns.
4. A cooperative effort to create a sense of community and put the neighbor back into the neighborhood

-Community Watch program is NOT:

1. A vigilante force working outside the normal procedures of law enforcement.
2. A program designed for participants to take personal risks to prevent crime.
3. A 100% guarantee that crime will not occur in your neighborhood.

-Making Community Watch Effective

Community Watch will be as effective as you and your neighbors choose to make it. If you apply some effort into maintaining one, your Community Watch can be an effective deterrent to criminal activity in your area. Law enforcement alone cannot effectively reduce crime without the participation of the community. When we are all educated, we are better skilled to evaluate and deter criminal activity.

-Eligibility for Membership

Any person who is a resident of Springfield Township, over the age of eighteen years, of good moral character, and having been determined to be satisfactory by the Springfield Police Department based upon a criminal background check, shall be eligible for membership. All are required to attend training sessions and meetings as well as complete a ride a long orientation with a Springfield Police Officer. We are grateful for any amount of time that each member is able to commit.

-The role of volunteers (patrollers)

Volunteers are not intended to replace law enforcement officials but to play a complimentary role. Once volunteers agree to the roles detailed to them, they are expected to be prompt and reliable. All scheduling is agreed upon and may be adjusted with proper communication. All volunteers are required to work only within their assigned duties. Volunteers are expected to respect the confidentiality of names, histories, records and the privacy of all who they work with as well as other volunteers. All volunteers are expected to treat the position and assignments in a professional and businesslike manner that would be shown to an employer. All are required to adhere to strict guidelines that will be enforced when

necessary to protect the core values of the program. Once trained, members supplied with two way-handheld radios patrol the Township from their vehicles reporting suspicious or unusual activity directly to Springfield Police. Before each patrol Community Watch, patrollers are briefed by a police officer on recent crime activity to assist in their patrol.

-What Community Watch Members Look For

- Someone screaming or shouting for help
- Someone looking into windows and parked cars
- Unusual noises
- Property being taken out of houses where no one is at home or a business is closed
- Cars, vans, or trucks moving slowly without apparent destination, or without lights
- Anyone being forced into a vehicle
- A stranger sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child
- Abandoned cars.
- Street lights and street signs damaged, overgrown shrubbery blocking pedestrian and vehicular travel, and unsafe roadway hazards.
- Persons gathering in parks, properties and streets after dark and or closing hours.

Members will learn how to make their homes more secure, watch out for each other and the neighborhood, and report activities that raise their suspicions to the police department. Watch groups are not vigilantes. They are extra eyes and ears for reporting crime and helping neighbors. Community Watch helps build pride and serves as a springboard for efforts that address community concerns.