

HOW TO REDUCE CRIME IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

While we don't like to talk about it - or even think about it - crime is on the increase in America, and throughout the world. The number of burglars, muggers, auto thieves, robbers, purse snatchers, etc., is growing at an alarming rate. Now you, as a resident, working with neighbors can help reduce the crime rate.

How? By organizing and/or joining a neighborhood program in which you and your neighbors get together to learn how to protect yourselves, your family, your home and your property. Working together, you can get the criminals off your block and out of your area.

There's safety in numbers and power through working with a group. You'll get to know your neighbors better, and working with them you can reduce crime, develop a more united community, provide an avenue of communications between police and citizens, establish on-going crime prevention techniques in your neighborhood, and renew citizen interest in community activity.

"Citizens Safety Projects" are set up to help you do this. It is a joint effort between private citizens and local police. Such programs have been started all over the country. Maybe one already exists in your community.

These organizations don't require frequent meetings (once a month or so). They don't ask anyone to take personal risks to prevent crime. They leave the responsibility for catching criminals where it belongs - with the police. This is NOT a "vigilante" group:

These groups gather citizens together to learn crime prevention from local authorities. You cooperate with your neighbors to report suspicious activities in the neighborhood, to keep an eye on homes when the resident is away, and to keep everyone in the area mindful of the standard precautions for property and self that should always be taken. Criminals avoid neighborhoods where such groups exist.

Through cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, some of the things you will learn - and all free - are:

1. What to do in an emergency.
2. How to best identify a suspicious person.
3. How to identify a vehicle being used in a suspected criminal activity.

4. Signs to watch out for before entering a house or apartment that may be in the process of being burglarized.
5. What to do in case of injury.
6. What to do about suspicious people loitering on your street.
7. How to identify stolen merchandise.
8. How to recognize auto theft in progress.
9. How to protect your house or apartment.
10. How to recognize a burglary in progress.
11. How to protect yourself and family - and much more.

It's easy to get your group started. All you have to do is contact your neighbors and arrange a date, place and time for the first meeting. Hold the meetings at your home or that of a neighbor. Try to plan a time that is convenient to most of your neighbors - preferably in the evening.

Then call your local police department. They will be happy to give your group informal lectures, free literature - and in many instances, window stickers and I.D. cards. Remember, police officers can't be everywhere. Your cooperation with them is for the benefit of you, your family, your neighbors and your neighborhood.