

CONCORD TOWNWATCH

677 Smithbridge Road, Glen Mills, PA 19342



Concord Townwatch Mission Statement

To help establish, support, and educate both residential community-based and business-based town watch programs within Concord Township.

Concord Townwatch Vision Statement

We strive to proactively assist with the protection of Concord Township residents, properties, businesses, and its visitors so that Concord Township may remain an attractive community in which to live, work, and thrive. By helping to establish, support, and educate the satellite town watch programs, we aim to deliver organized safety and security solutions to effectively bolster crime prevention growth and development in Concord Township.

PASSIVE TOWNWATCH PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“The most important reason Neighborhood Watch programs work is because citizens began working with law enforcement instead of relying on them to combat crime in their community.” (Block Captain’s Handbook, pg. 10)

When crime appears to be high and running roughshod over a community an active, aggressive town watch program may be necessary to help reduce this crime. If a community has a low crime rate the urgency of an active watch may be unnecessary. Fortunately, Concord Township falls into the category of low crime.

But the keyword in that sentence is **LOW**, not free. Recently, reported incidents of property theft from residences and parked vehicles as well as damage from vandalism has been increasing in the Township. To ensure that we stay a community of low crime rates and safe neighborhoods, Concord Townwatch has put together this summary and package of information for interested volunteers to take back to their friends and neighbors as a baseline for the creation of their own passive town watch program.

Simply put, a neighborhood or town watch is a group of people living in the same area who wish to make their neighborhood safer by working together and with law enforcement to reduce crime and improve their quality of life.

The passive town watch concept, outlined here, encompasses basic crime prevention ideas and suggestions without the bells and whistles of a more traditional patrol-oriented town watch, which often utilizes vehicle and/or foot patrols, radios, etc.

With a passive town watch, communication using modern technology, including e-mail, twitter, or Facebook, to distribute accurate information to the neighborhood in a timely manner is a key component.

The passive town watch simply involves neighbors paying attention to their surroundings, including their own homes and their neighbor's homes and families. Although there is no all-encompassing definition of suspicious activity, if it does not "feel" or seem right to you then make a call to your block captain or program director, or, if warranted, to the police.

Such activity may include, any situations that appear out of the ordinary in your neighborhood, such as unfamiliar vehicles that may be parked over extended periods of time, strangers walking or congregating in the area, lights that should or should not be operating, open doors, etc. Particular attention should also be paid to loud sounds or noise, especially at night, which may indicate the occurrence of property damage or physical confrontation. (See also, Training Volunteers.)



It is important that members who choose to be block captains and coordinators read all of the literature we have provided in its entirety and investigate, via other sources, what town watch programs and ideas are available to update and improve upon their own creation.

This summary will reference those ideas and suggestions that have been utilized by other communities in establishing passive town watch programs which are described more comprehensively in the package you have just received. Following are some of the steps which communities may consider taking as they begin to organize such a town watch program:

- **Plan a meeting to invite neighbors to participate in the town watch effort.** (Block Captain's Handbook, pgs. 33-47, 49-63, and 108-111. Neighborhood Watch Manual, Chaps. 2 & 4. Also, form A.) You need to attract volunteers in order to adequately address the issues in your neighborhood. Successfully planning and organizing that meeting is imperative. If you are not familiar with how to do so, there are some great ideas in these sections.
- **Seek Block Captains** - (Block Captain's Handbook, pg. 19. Also, the section on Communication, pg. 51, is important for both Block Captains and Coordinators below. Neighborhood Watch Manual, Chap. 3.)

This person is the main communication link to the group of people on that particular block. He/she is also the liaison to the district/program coordinator in your neighborhood.

- **Select a Program or District Coordinator** - (Block Captain's Handbook, pg.23-25 and 33-46. Neighborhood Watch Manual, Chap.3) – though the Handbook breaks up the two positions, depending on the size of your community, one is probably sufficient. This position manages all aspects of the neighborhood town watch program. He/she is also the liaison between Concord Townwatch and your organization.



- The coordinator should provide Concord Townwatch with any rules, forms, and strategies they develop and use so that we can pass the information on to other community groups as they come on-line and begin to develop their own programs. This will also assist us as we compare and contrast what efforts and ideas appear to be working and which ones may be less than successful.

The coordinator should also access the following two web sites: Pa. State Police Megan's Law web page which provides a comprehensive listing of the names of sexual offenders and sexually violent predators by county, city, and zip code. If utilized properly, it is an important tool in any effective town watch effort. The site is www.pameganslaw.state.pa.us . Another tool is Concord Township's own web page. Coordinators and block captains should register their e-mail addresses so they can receive public safety notifications, e-alerts of breaking incidents, and sign up notifications by going to www.townshipofconcord.com .

- **Organizing your Town Watch** - (Block Captain's Handbook, pgs. 51 to 63 and 65-74, Neighborhood Watch Manual, Chaps. 3 & 4. Forms B thru H.) These sections highlight the logistics of organizing individual blocks; gathering necessary information about each member, e.g. Block Profile Sheets; establishing e-mail address books and phone trees; creating neighborhood maps; important phone numbers, etc. It is very important that each volunteer and block captain know their neighborhood and their neighbors for a passive town watch program to work effectively.

That often includes knowing the members of each neighbors family; the number and sex of the children; recognizing the vehicles they own and the house they live in; if they have a home alarm system; if there are medical problems that may come into play; and contact numbers to name just a few. This requires trust and familiarity which in the end is what builds strong and crime free communities.



- **Training volunteers** - (Block Captain's Handbook, pgs. 69-79. Neighborhood Watch Manual, Chap. 6. Forms I thru L, Form #1.) Probably no aspect of a successful town watch is more important than knowing what suspicious activity is and how to effectively report it to the block captain and to law enforcement. Simply put, suspicious activity is anything that appears out of the ordinary or something that should not be taking place.

As mentioned above, getting to know your neighbors, their habits, and who and what makes up your neighborhood will make it easier to recognize suspicious activity. Just as important, is knowing how to use and when not to use the emergency 911 system. (Remember, for non-emergency calls to the State Police use 484-840-1000.) You must know what information is vital to emergency dispatchers and responding emergency units and thus what you need to provide to them when their presence is needed. Remember, more likely than not, you will be reporting medical emergencies or vehicular accidents, or hoping another neighbor reports it if you are ever in need.

So, gathering all the: "Who, What, Where, When, and How's" are most important. As you can see, training block captains and other volunteers to recognize and report suspicious activity or emergencies is a necessity which should be accomplished once the foundation for your town watch has been established.

- **Motivating town watch members** - (Block Captain's Handbook, pgs. 81-85. Neighborhood Watch Manual, Chap. 5; *25 Ways to Catch and Keep Volunteers* handout) has always been and probably will always be the most difficult aspect of maintaining your town watch program. Recognizing, rewarding, and maintaining volunteers takes a lot of effort and cooperation.



There is no single idea that will motivate everyone. In fact, you will probably need many ideas. It's been said that self-preservation is man's most basic motivator, and a town watch is simply trying to preserve what we have and love; but many people will not see it that way. The ideas we have included only scratch the surface, so feel free to explore your own motivators. But whatever motivators you select, ensure you include them from the earliest development of your town watch.

- Additionally, the passive watch program can also be expanded in other ways. It can include: emergency preparedness (floods, hurricanes); homeland security; personal property protection; home security; family disaster planning; personnel property identification records; and emergency supply kits. Your town watch program can direct the efforts of its volunteers in assisting your neighbors, especially the elderly and infirm, in some of the aforementioned areas, thus serving your community in other ways. (See Block Captain's Handbook, pgs. 71-74, Neighborhood Watch Manual, Chaps. 8 & 9, and Form #2)

The passive town watch concept is nothing new. It's just a fancy name given to what successful neighborhoods, hamlets, boroughs, towns, and cities have been doing for eons. Looking after one another. Showing concern for your neighbor. It is simply an effort with a bit more structure dedicated to the idea that we should maintain control over the environment we have chosen to live within.

We hope these ideas and suggestions assist you as you begin to undertake the creation of your own watch programs. Should you need any assistance, please do not hesitate contacting any of the officers or directors of Concord Townwatch.

Do remember one thing. If you see something, say something. Anywhere! Anytime!



IMPORTANT NOTICE: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The information contained in this manual and its attachments is intended to be a practical and informative guide on starting-up and operating a community-based town watch program. This information is *not* a substitute for your own solid judgment and reasonable discretion in complying with both the law and the dictates of good common sense. Further, this information is provided with the understanding that the authors are not responsible for rendering legal or other professional advice, and that there is no warranty or guarantee, either express or implied, regarding the completeness, accuracy, or currency of this information, or its suitability for any particular purpose.

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