

Block Captain Duties

The key person in any Neighborhood Watch group is the Block Captain. This person is an integral component to keeping the block actively involved in crime prevention efforts as well as the important process of information exchange between neighbors. Many Neighborhood Watch groups flourish, but some dwindle while others disappear totally. How successful they are depends on the Block Captain and the support he or she receives from neighbors.

The following is a list of recommended activities for you as a Block Captain. It is not meant to be all-inclusive, because many Block Captains are creative in their approach. Periodically monitor the membership of your group. Contact new residents to get them involved and to obtain their support and participation. Update your membership list as needed. Contact the HCSO Crime Prevention office if you have changes to the roster. If you stop serving as a Block Captain and/or if someone takes over, contact our office.

1. Develop a neighborhood communication system to distribute vital information to neighbors pertaining to criminal activity and other concerns that develop in the area. This can be a periodic newsletter, telephone tree, and/or a one-page notice that can be quickly distributed.
2. You are encouraged to arrange for your group to meet socially at least twice per year to exchange information and renew relationships as well as to get acquainted with new neighbors. People who communicate regularly will care more about each other and be more willing to keep an eye out for suspicious behavior. The annual National Night Out (NNO) celebration is one example that will bring your neighbors together.
3. A follow up Neighborhood Watch program should be conducted every few years or sooner if specific problems are occurring in your neighborhood. This should also be the case if you have several new neighbors. Call the Crime Prevention office to arrange for a presentation.
4. Encourage neighbors to advise you concerning criminal activity. It is the victim's responsibility to contact the police. However, you can keep a record of break-ins, vandalism, graffiti, and/or any activity that becomes a concern for you and your neighbors. Provide this type of information to neighbors at your next block meeting.
5. Your position as a Block Captain does not give you any law enforcement authority. You are simply the person who facilitates the unity of the group, distributes information, and coordinates activities. The job you are doing is important and appreciated by the Harnett County Sheriff's Office, but it carries no authority.
6. Remember: Our recommendation to all citizens who see a crime in progress or notice suspicious activity is to observe and report from a place of safety. We strongly suggest that you not confront an offender unless you are in immediate danger. This applies to you and your neighbors. We do not want anyone to get hurt or injured trying to apprehend an offender or interfering with an incident other than to report the activity to the police. If you or your neighbors witness a crime in progress or observe suspicious behavior, call 911 (emergency) or 910 893-9111(non-emergency).

Adapted from APD Crime Prevention 924-3600