



Guide to a Safer Home

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Concerned About Crime in Your HOA?



If so, you are not alone...

- ✓ Crime happens everywhere.
- ✓ Creates fear.
- ✓ Discourages people from enjoying their environment.
- ✓ Thieves like areas where people are around less.

You can make a difference...

- ✓ Do not accept crime in your neighborhood.

IF YOU DON'T CONTROL YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, CRIMINALS MAY.

Here is what you can do:

- ✓ Get involved in your neighborhood.
- ✓ Know your neighbors.
- ✓ Know your association.
- ✓ Know your police.
- ✓ Start or work with Neighborhood Watch.
- ✓ Work on the 10 ways to make your home safer (see Page 4).
- ✓ Be aware of the other ways to make your home and community safer.

These fairly simple actions will make your home and homeowners association less attractive to criminals and therefore safer.

IMPORTANT SAFETY TIP:

- Dial **911** immediately if you see something suspicious.
- AMG encourages community volunteers and members who observe suspicious circumstances to report such activities to law enforcement, without direct intervention.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD?

Know your neighbors. While good fences may make for good neighbors, neighbors who know each other can look out for one another.

Know your association. Not only is it good to know how it works, but it is also good to know the leaders and managers. If they know a little bit about you, they can do more to look out for you in various ways.

Know your police. It is very helpful to have a “friendly” relationship with law enforcement. This is why many restaurants offer free coffee or meals to police officers. Many police departments will make a free inspection of your home to help you improve security. Call them today.

If your association has a clubhouse, consider giving the police a key so they can use the restroom. Appoint a day (or several) where you have donuts and coffee for them and have a table where they can complete their paperwork. The mere presence of a police vehicle in the neighborhood is a deterrent to crime and makes your community safe.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY WATCH?

Community Watch is a Crime Prevention program in which citizens work with each other and with law enforcement agencies to reduce crime and victimization in their communities.

Community Watch involves:

1. Citizens protecting themselves and their property by using common sense crime prevention practices.
2. Neighbors getting to know each other, watching out for each other and acting on or reporting suspicious activities.
3. Citizens working with groups, community leaders, and more importantly, law enforcement agencies to make entire communities safe and free from crime.



Citizen Alert, Neighborhood Watch, Block Watch, or Community Watch: the names may differ, but the idea is the same - neighbors looking out for one another.

WHY START A COMMUNITY WATCH?

Because law enforcement officers cannot be on every street corner, citizen involvement is necessary to combat crime. On the average, there are approximately two law enforcement officers for every 1,000 citizens.

You and your neighbors are the ones who really know what is going on in your community. By cooperating with each other and with the police, citizens can help fight crime in the most effective way – preventing the victimization of themselves, their families and friends. You are the key element in fighting crime – **Get Involved!**

COMMUNITY WATCH WORKS

The goal of Community Watch is to make criminals aware that their moves are being watched and will be reported to the police.

Across the Carolinas, citizens work together to secure their homes, mark their valuables, identify drug dealers, develop child safety programs, and improve the environment in which they live.

TO START A COMMUNITY WATCH

1. Contact your local Police or Sheriff’s Department about setting up a Community Watch program. They can assist with information, materials and technical advice. Ask for the Crime Prevention officer.
2. Schedule a meeting with your neighbors in a church, home, community building, volunteer fire department or other location.
3. Invite the Crime Prevention Officer or other law enforcement officer to speak at your original meeting to help get your Community Watch program started.
4. Contact every resident in your community and invite them to the meeting. Do this by making door-to-door visits, phone calls, or mailing flyers.
5. Hold your meeting.

Remember: Criminals gravitate to places where they feel comfortable. They avoid neighborhoods where they are likely to get caught. When they are neither wanted nor welcomed, they go someplace else. Start a Community Watch program today!

10 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER

More difficult helps you. Here are some suggestions:

1. **Make Your Home Look Occupied**
Leave some lights and a radio on when you are away – whether it is for an hour or two or several days or weeks. Timers can easily turn on and off lights.
2. **Lock Your Doors**
A deadbolt lock is a good deterrent to burglars.
3. **Do Not Hide a Key Outside**
Burglars know all the secret hiding places.
4. **Drill and Pin Your Windows**
Window locks can be jimmied; pins cannot.
5. **Brace Sliding Glass Doors**
If the door is braced, the only way a burglar can get through it is to break it.*
6. **Install Good Exterior Lighting**
Motion sensor lights and other good lights do not let a burglar hide in the dark.*
7. **Keep Bushes and Shrubs Trimmed**
If bushes are too high, someone hiding near your windows and doors cannot be seen.*
8. **Stop Mail and Paper Deliveries**
If you go on vacation, stop deliveries or have one of your neighbors collect your mail and papers.



9. **Get a Dog**
Even a small dog may be a deterrent to a burglar.*

10. **Install and Alarm System**
Houses with alarms are often avoided by burglars.

*Approval may be required from your association.

OTHER WAYS TO BE EVEN SAFER...

Operation I.D. – This program involves engraving your valuable personal property with your driver’s license number, thus making it easier to identify if it is stolen. Your local crime prevention officer may be able to supply you with an engraver.

Community Clean-up – Sponsor a community clean up effort with your group. You are already working on cleaning up the crime in your community – make it a beautiful place to live at the same time.

Victim Assistance – Should one of your neighbors be victimized, you can know how to help that person. Contact the local victim’s advocate office, the Division of Victim and Justice Services, or the Department of Social Services for more information.

Community Watch Signs – You may wish to purchase signs that identify your community as a place where citizens look after each other. Your community crime resource representative will be able to assist you.

National Night Out – Every year, the National Town Watch Association invites communities to participate in National Night Out Against Crime. Contact your local law enforcement agency or the Crime Prevention Unit or the Governor’s Crime Commission for more information.

Awareness Programs – There may be some specific crime problems in your neighborhood that your Community Watch group wants to target. Educate your members on such topics as:

- Drug Abuse Prevention
 - Child Abuse Prevention
 - Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
- ...and many others. Do not limit yourselves

OTHER SAFETY TIPS:

- Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors monthly.
- Check hot water temperature for water that is too hot.
- Look for and rectify trip hazards.

Guidance for a Safer Home is part of a series of HOA Guidance booklets prepared by Association Management Group (AMG) for clients of the firm and friends. It is intended to provide general information.

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This guide, published by Association Management Group is designed to help discourage crime. For more information, consult your local police department. Association Management Group has taken care in the preparation of this booklet, but the information should not be solely relied on to make safety and security decisions. Please consult a qualified expert or professional for advice about your particular situation.

Guide to a Safer Home is provided by Association Management Group as a community service and resource to its member communities. Other titles in the series include: A Guide to Parliamentary Procedure, Guidance for Financial Management, A Guide to Collecting HOA Fees, Guide to NC Covenant Enforcement & Adjudicatory Hearings, Minute Taking Made Easy, and Selecting an Association Management Company. For a copy, please contact your account representative or visit www.AMGWorld.com.