

# Block Watch Beat

WWW.BLOCKWATCH.COM

SPRING 2019

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Emergency Preparedness
- Lots of Tips for Personal Safety
- Safe Community Grant
- 2019 Block Watch AGM & Symposium

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## Emergency Preparedness Week – May 5 – 11

*Day light Savings Time!*

Set your clocks ahead one hour at 3:00 AM, Sunday March 10, 2019

This is also a good time to change the batteries in your smoke alarms.

### Emergency Preparedness Week May 5 – 11, 2019

Emergency Management BC (EMBC) urges British Columbians to make a commitment to better prepare themselves and their families for possible emergencies. Start by building an emergency kit and developing a household plan that individuals and families can practice throughout the year.

A home emergency kit does not take a long time to create and does not need to be expensive. Just follow the basic list below, and remember to store collected supplies in an easy-to-access location:

- First-aid kit
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Whistle to signal for help
- Cellphone with charger (inverter or solar charger)
- Cash in small bills
- A local map with a family meeting place identified

- A minimum three-day supply of food and water, but aim for a week to two weeks.
- Garbage bags
- Dust mask
- Seasonal clothing and footwear
- Water (minimum of four litres of water per person, per day)

Make a 2019 New Year's resolution to prepare for a disaster before it strikes.

Source: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018PSSG0099-002479>

## Are You Prepared for an Emergency?

by Kimberly Kelley, Victoria PD

Are you prepared to take care of yourself when an emergency or disaster strikes? What about your home? Your family? Or even your neighbours?

Depending on where you live and the type of disaster, it could take far longer than you would anticipate for first responders or resources to get to you.

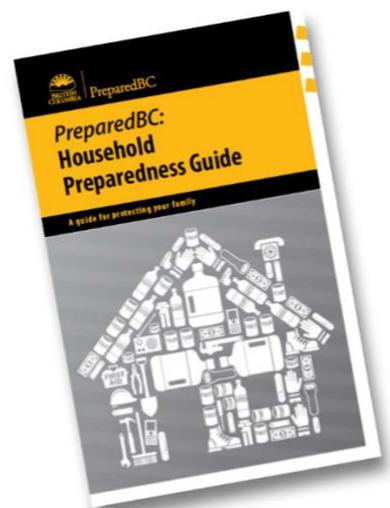
Emergencies are when Block Watch is an even more important resource to your neighbourhood. In addition to watching out for suspicious or criminal activity, as a Block Watch member during a disaster, you also watch out for each other to ensure that everyone is safe, accounted for, and that you all have the necessary provisions and emergency supplies. Ideally, we can be prepared in advance of a disaster or emergency.

Get to know your neighbours better. Find who has additional first aid training, or extra home supplies and tools. Does everyone have an emergency preparedness kit for their household including extra medications, and provisions for pets? Do you have neighbours that may need extra assistance or to be checked in on due to their age or mobility concerns?

Make a plan for your next Block Watch meeting or block party to include emergency preparedness planning or host a neighbourhood-wide emergency preparedness planning workshop with your local municipal authorities.

Most municipalities in the province offer emergency preparedness workshops and there is an abundance of useful websites that

will help you prepare for any type of emergency. Start by checking your local municipal websites and the Prepared BC website for valuable home and neighbourhood preparedness tips. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/preparedbc>





## Preventing Mail Theft = Avoid Risk of Identify Fraud

by Eling Lau, Burnaby RCMP Block Watch

### Make it a habit

- Pick up your mail daily
- Always check the physical condition of your mailbox for any signs of pry marks or gaps between the door and the frame. If you notice any damage, contact Canada Post's general line at 1-800-267-1177 and it will initiate Canada Post security response. Additionally, advise your local police non-emergency and your building manager as appropriate.

### Electronic or paper?

- Choose electronic mail over paper copies whenever possible, especially for mail containing sensitive personal information.

### Moving or going on vacation?

- File a change of address with Canada Post as soon as possible if you move.
- Contact Canada Post to hold your mail or have a trusted family member/friend retrieve your mail for you if you go on

vacation. Don't leave it sitting in your mailbox.

### Building Security

- Follow the "No Key No Entry" building policy, everyone should have their own fob key. Don't let anyone you don't know into your building.

## Distracted

## Drivers

by Christina Kirby

### Tips for safe cellphone use

- No call, text or email is so important it's worth risking your life or the lives of others. Let calls go to voicemail and ignore your text messages while driving.
- Turn it off and put it out of sight or turn on airplane mode to avoid the temptation to check your phone.
- Assign a "designated texter". Ask your passengers to make or receive calls and texts for you.
- Pull over to make or receive a call when it's safe to do so. For longer journeys, look for signs at highway rest areas, some of which now provide Wi-Fi.

#EyesFwdBC



## Pedestrian Safety

by Cst. Romi Mattu, Vancouver PD

*Trying to catch the bus and jaywalking...?*

*Late for work with no time to wait....?*

*Sending off 'one more text' while walking and not paying attention...?*

THESE ACTIONS COULD COST YOU YOUR LIFE

On average, 2,300 pedestrians are injured in crashes every year in B.C. The top 3 contributing risk factors are: driver distraction, weather and driver failure to YIELD right-of-way. Pedestrians need to do their part to keep safe. Make these safety tips a habit and help save lives, including your own:

- Make eye contact with approaching drivers and cyclists. Never assume the driver has seen you
- Obey the traffic signals - only enter the intersection if the pedestrian signal is being displayed
- Look left and right before stepping off the curb

- Be careful at intersections and watch for drivers turning left or right through the crosswalk. Drivers may be focused on oncoming traffic and not see you.

- Don't jaywalk
- PAY ATTENTION. Remove your headphones and take a break from your phone while crossing the road.
- Be as reflective as possible to make it easier for drivers to see you in wet weather, at dusk and at night.

Remember, no matter how busy you are, or how late you are...EVERYONE needs to take the time to be aware of what's happening around them because no one has time for an ACCIDENT.

Share this with someone you care about!

## To Call or Not to Call 9-1-1

by Regan Borisenko, Vernon

“With the continued thefts from vehicles and B&E’s I’m re-visiting what to do when confronted with the decision of ‘to call or not to call’ the Police. Please report suspicious activities and don’t assume someone else has called the police.”

### Reporting a crime:

Should you arrive home and discover a burglary in progress (the suspect is still there or you observed him departing) or windows or doors tampered with... DO NOT ENTER OR CALL OUT! Use your cell or go to a neighbour and call 9-1-1.

### Reporting a suspicious person or vehicle:

Don’t hesitate to call immediately. It is of little use to the police if you call 5 minutes or so after a person has left your area. Inform the operator that you are a member of a Block Watch. Be able to tell them what they were doing that you felt was suspicious. It is most important to at least make a note of vehicle licenses and a description, even if you don’t call. Also, they will need a fairly accurate description, including clothing. Use the form in your Block Watch Participants Manual. Be able to state where the suspect(s) were last seen and if any

vehicles appear to be involved. It may seem that it takes police some time to respond but that is only because they do patrols of the area as they are approaching the scene.

### Reporting suspicious activities:

What is a Suspicious Activity? How do I know something is Suspicious? What should I do? Usually we can trust our instincts - if something doesn’t feel right or look right - It probably isn’t. What to do? Call the police; DO NOT intervene or attempt to act in the capacity of a police officer, as the culprits may be dangerous. Record as much detail as possible regarding the suspicious person and any vehicle involved and provide this information when calling the police. The following list may give you some guidance recognizing suspicious activity:

- Unfamiliar persons loitering in your neighbourhood.
- Slow moving vehicles that circle the block or unfamiliar parked vehicles especially if someone remains in them.

- Unusual noises, screams, glass breaking, barking dogs, etc.
- Persons going from door to door (especially back doors).
- Persons looking into or trying doors of parked cars.

### ONE LAST REMINDER

As a member of Block Watch, call the Police, NOT your Block Watch Captain or Coordinator. Be sure to tell your Captain later though, so that they can let the Group know and contact the Community Policing Office to keep the lines of communication open. If your Block Captain advises our office of your complaints to police, we check for a pattern of frequency or location and that could be the basis for information updates.

**REMEMBER.... PROMPTLY REPORT...."ANY".... SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY, SUSPICIOUS PERSONS, SUSPICIOUS VEHICLES TO THE POLICE!!**

## Spotlight on a Coordinator

by Gabriel Pelletier, Surrey



**Lindsay Wiebe** is a Surrey RCMP Community Programs Coordinator. In an average day, we might see Lindsay finding locations for her Speed Watch team, scheduling a Block Watch launch party, summarizing neighbourhood concerns for her district Sergeant and conducting a home security check on a home that was vandalized.

A City of Surrey Municipal Employee, Lindsay started in the Radio Room as an RCMP Call Taker and Dispatcher, where she spent 5 years. In October 2017, she took the deep knowledge she has of police reporting and brought it to help the public in a more sustained manner by joining RCMP Community Programs. Now, she splits her time between deploying RCMP Volunteers at one of Surrey’s two volunteer hubs, and coordinating the Block Watch program in the Guildford / Fleetwood area.

In addition to Lindsay’s commitment to crime reduction and community enhancement, she is a psychology major and has an uncanny knack for remembering names.

# Importance of Property House Numbers

by Roy Morgan, Regional District Central Okanagan

Here is a reminder to all our members regarding posting property house numbers.

Please display prominent property numbers on your home.

These can be displayed on your home or posted on your driveway, clearly visible.

Having correct house numbers posted is extremely important and are vitally important to Emergency personnel.

Emergency vehicles depend on these number for reference during a response especially in rural communities.

A delay and a wasting of precious minutes looking for an address number could be the difference between life and death.

Please place your house number in a way that they are most visible to approaching vehicles from both directions.

The color of the numbers should have a light and dark contrast with the background. The background being usually the color of your house.

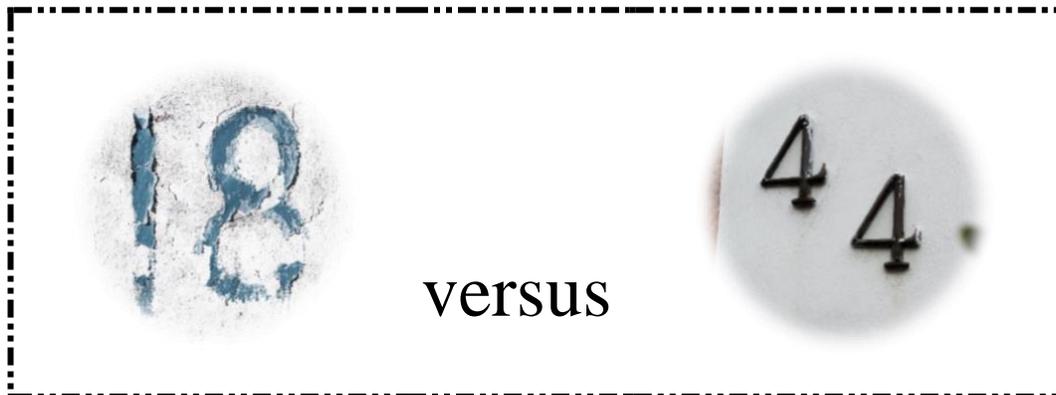
This will make the numbers stand out so they can be viewed from the street.

Use large numbers at least 4 inches (10 cm) high and mount them high enough so they can't be covered by snow or brush

Cut back any overhanging branches or foliage that may obscure the numbers.

Lighted numbers are even better for easy visibility at night.

Please also take advice from your local municipality or district regarding this topic as they may have a Street Address Bylaw in place.



# Safe Communities Grant

by Gabriel Pelletier, Surrey

Part of the mandate of BC Block Watch Society of BC is to promote crime prevention along with positive community relationships.

Towards this end, we provide annual grants to certified Block Watch groups all across BC using Provincial funding. This year we plan to offer these grants earlier than ever in an effort to help you plan ahead for your celebration.

Check our website in the "Grants" section during the first week of April for details about the deadline and amount available.

The award is easy to qualify for: fill the application form found on the website ([www.blockwatch.com](http://www.blockwatch.com)) in April, including your "crime prevention component". If your group is awarded the grant, we require a small report after your event has happened that describes or illustrates your event in

words, posters and/or photographs.

Once the report has been received, your grant cheque will be mailed out to you. This is an important piece that helps us be accountable and transparent with the public money we receive.

Best of luck to all as we look forward to spring!

## Message from the Block Watch Society President

The Block Watch Society Board of Directors is working diligently to make sure all its members receive value for their membership. In doing this we not only have obligations to you, but as well as to Ministry that provide funding for our Society.

This is a Society that is a whole of its members and in saying that I want all of you to know what we are doing and where we are going for the balance of this year.

Romi Mattu, our Vancouver Director, is working on creating PSA videos promoting the Block Watch Program as well as remote training for Coordinators to ensure we are all delivering the same message throughout the Province. She is also working with Leah Marley on our 2019 training Symposium/AGM.

Gabriel Pelletier, our Surrey Director, is constantly working on website updates and our Twitter and Facebook pages. He is also responsible for our 2019 Block Watch Grant Program.

Dawn Dickinson, our Burnaby Director, is updating our Operational manuals and working on our Society Branding.

Kimberly Kelly, our Victoria Director, is making sure our Membership is up to date and growing through technological advancements in our application process.

Roy Morgan, our Central Okanagan Director, is re-writing our Block Watch Participant manual. Let us know if you have any ideas that need to be added!

Regan Borisenko, our Vernon Director, is working to re-establish links with likeminded Corporate Partners to enhance the value of individuals being part of a Block Watch Crime Prevention Group in BC. This along with making sure we don't spend more than we have.

Our newest Director Christine Kirby from ICBC will be working on tie-ins between all things relating to people, vehicles, crashes, causes and prevention.

Another relatively new aspect brought to you by the Block Watch Society will be our partnership with Disaster Emergency Preparedness. We are working on making sure our participants are educated on all aspects of not being a victim by being prepared.

If you have the time and believe you can make a difference, we would love to have to contact our office and let them know you would be willing to stand for a 2 year Directors position for the 2019/2020 year.

[Regan J Borisenko](#)  
President – Block Watch Society of British Columbia

## The Block Watch Website

by Gabriel Pelletier, Surrey

One of the tools that Block Watch uses to support its memberships is the Block Watch Website. The BC Block Watch website exists to link Block Watch Coordinators with resources that help sustain their programs, and information for the general public that shows the importance of Block Watch and crime prevention in general.

If you are part of the Block Watch family, help us with our website today. What would you like to see? Do you have a correction to make about your city's Block Watch contact information? Are you unable to access the

"members only" section? Drop us a line so we can better serve you. Although we are not a team of website developers, we will take your suggestions to heart.

While we are looking to redesign the website in the near future, we continue to add new resources and updates. The latest members only update is the capability to download the Block Watch educational videos we unveiled at our symposium last October.

They have been available for streaming

since November, but now they can be downloaded by Block Watch Coordinators in your city to make it easier to show it in community presentations or repost on various online platforms.

Please let us know how you are making use of the videos, so that we can pass on our appreciation to everyone who helped us make them. Please contact us at [blockwatch@blockwatch.com](mailto:blockwatch@blockwatch.com) with your thoughts and suggestions.

## 2019 Block Watch Symposium and AGM



We are extremely pleased to announce the date and location of the 2019 Block Watch Society of BC AGM and Symposium.

The event is set for Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 at the Granville Island Hotel, Vancouver BC.

We hope you will join us in attending the Annual General Meeting, receive relevant crime prevention training, hear a key note speaker, network with your Block Watch colleagues and have a little fun.

We are also planning an optional social event on the evening prior to the symposium, Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

Look for more information about this event throughout the following months.

