



From the Block Watch Society of British Columbia

MODUAL 2 - START A BLOCK WATCH

Follow these easy steps to start a Block Watch in a neighbourhood:

1. Select one Block Captain and one Co-Captain

Have the neighbourhood select a Captain and Co-Captain. Each Captain and Co-Captain must submit an application and be deemed a suitable candidate by passing a Criminal Record check. Generally, the Captain is the primary contact.

Let the neighbourhood determine the structure that suits their group, i.e. you can have one Captain and two Co-Captains, or as many Co-Captains as you feel is appropriate for the group. If you are unable to identify a second person to Co-Captain, please contact the Coordinator below.

2. Build Your Group

Have the Block start with the street(s) that the Captain and Co-Captain(s) live on. Work towards getting commitments to participate in Block Watch from at least 10 households on the block you live on or complex you live in. Recruit the homes on your alley side, facing your front door and the ends of the next block. If you cannot meet the 10-household minimum, please contact (250) 550-7847.

For condominiums with more than one complex, it is suggested that you recruit a Captain and/or Co-Captain for each site or even each floor. If you are living in a strata property, notify your council that you are initiating a Block Watch. Keep in mind that a strata list is different than a participant list. Participants should be providing consent that they want to be a part of the program.

To avoid inviting problem premises onto your group, first invite the households who you know and trust. You can then ask those group members to refer you to households they know and trust, and so on.

The start-up kit includes a "Block Watch Group Participant List" to gather the names and contact information of neighbours who want to participate. Explain that their information is used to form a "communication chain" between group members, enabling you to share information about suspicious, criminal and other relevant activity



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so everyone knows what is going on in the area/neighbourhood.

You will also need to identify ways to communicate with members who do not have access to computers or e-mail. Ex. Phone tree or coffee meeting or posting of security safe information i.e. bulletins etc.

3. Mail or Drop-Off Completed Application Package and Copy of Identification

Mail or drop off the application package to the address on the application. Original signatures are required - no faxes or e-mails.

4. Arrange Your First Annual Block Watch Group Meeting/Training Session

The Captain/Co-Captain will be contacted to arrange your first annual Block Watch group meeting/training session. It could be held on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evening, in your neighbourhood. You will provide the Group with Block Watch supplies for each participating household. The Coordinator will conduct the training.

This meeting/training session gives your group an opportunity to get to know one another, learn to identify and report criminal activity, discuss common neighbourhood concerns, set up your communication chain, and meet and ask questions of the Block Watch Coordinator you will be liaising with.

5. Complete the Activation of Your Group

Following your first meeting, you will need to complete and submit your first annual group area map and participant list to the Safe Communities Unit to complete the activation of your Block Watch. Once the map/list is submitted, your group will then be provided with a Block Watch street sign and the activation is complete.

Program Duties

Since awareness and involvement are the keys to a successful program, keeping interest high and continuing the group's crime prevention education must be a primary focus of all participants. Block Captains and Co-Captains must be genuinely interested in preventing crime in their neighbourhood, and must be



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prepared to listen to and communicate with the participants in the program. They must be prepared to constructively promote Block Watch, and be able to pass a security clearance. Their basic responsibilities are to:

- Canvas their block to explain the Block Watch Program and encourage neighbours to participate.
- Maintain an accurate list and map of all participants on their block. You should update this list and map every six months to a year to ensure all information is current. Supply the Crime Prevention Officer or Block Watch Coordinator with all current information.
- Host the initial meeting to implement the program in their neighbourhood. This meeting is hosted by the Block Watch Captain, either at his/her home or another suitable location which he/she is able to arrange.
- Ensure that the yearly neighbourhood meetings are held.
- Set a good example by initiating home security and target hardening measures in his/her own home.
- Identify and work closely with other Block Captains and Co-Captains and encourage them to work with each other as well.
- Act as a liaison and communication link with the Area Coordinator, the Block Watch Coordinator, the police department, and the participants on their block.
- Distribute the Block Watch newsletter to all participants on his block.
- Responsible for distributing "fan out" of important property crime information to block participants.
- Welcome new residents by explaining the Block Watch Program and encouraging their participation.
- Make sure phone/email tree and neighbourhood map are kept up to date.