



*Happy  
New Year!*

## Neighborhood Watch

By HCSO Deputy Ben Tillis

### What Is Neighborhood Watch?

Neighborhood Watch is simply a program of neighbors watching other neighbors' property. It is thousands of eyes and ears whose owners have organized together in groups to report suspicious activities or crimes to the Sheriff.

Citizen participation is one of the most effective tools against crime because the job of stopping burglary, robbery or sexual assault is impossible for the Sheriff to accomplish alone. Crime watchers are networks of neighbors trained by Crime Prevention deputies in home and self-protection, suspect identification and how to serve effectively as additional eyes and ears for law enforcement agencies in their communities.

Neighborhood Watch groups provide a way for neighbors to help one another by keeping an eye on each other's homes and property. A telephone chain is set up to enable neighbors to keep one another informed of any criminal activity and to receive information from the Sheriff concerning descriptions of suspected criminals and other pertinent information. When a member of a network sees a suspicious person or vehicle, he or she should call the Sheriff's Office immediately.

### How Does Neighborhood Watch Help?

Sheriff's deputies cannot be everywhere all of the time. Besides, even if they happen to be passing by, they cannot recognize that a car, a truck, or people do not belong in an area. However, those who live in a community will know if there are strangers in the area. Neighborhood Watch Programs are of great help to our Sheriff's Office. There have been many instances where good neighbors, by reporting unusual activities, have been instrumental in the apprehension of criminals.

### How Does Neighborhood Watch Work?

Neighborhood Watch works through mutual aid, neighbors watching out for neighbors. Neighbors know who you are, what type of car you own, and may be the first to notice a burglar at your window or door, or a strange car in your driveway.

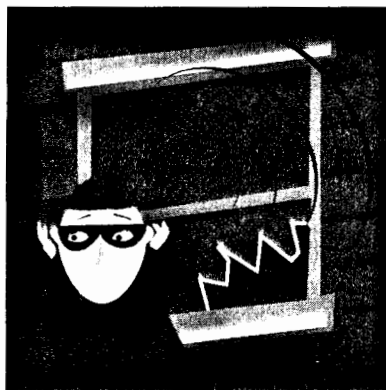
### If You See Something Suspicious...

Write down the description of the suspicious person(s). Get the make model, color and license number of strange vehicles. Call the Sheriff's Office and other members of your Neighborhood Watch group immediately.

**You should never attempt to apprehend a suspect. This is the Law Enforcement Officer's Job.**

### Are you still skeptical?

Well then walk from window to window where you live. You will notice that your vision can cover a considerable area. If you listed or otherwise knew the street address and directions from your residence of all that you could see, it can become easy to understand how much of your neighborhood you alone could protect!



### Suspicious Incidents

You may become aware of something that is out of ordinary that you may feel is leading up to some type of criminal activity. This is your chance to prevent crime in your neighborhood. Remember, what is suspicious to you may not be to someone else. Don't hesitate to

call law enforcement; better safe than sorry.

The Neighborhood Watch program is a national, voluntary, self-help crime prevention effort centered around the community and local law enforcement working together for the safety and protection of a neighborhood. A two-hour program includes instruction on organizing a Neighborhood Watch group and telephone communication chain, how to report suspicious incidents to law enforcement, and residential security.

**For more information concerning the Neighborhood Watch Program, contact the Sheriff's Crime Awareness Team at (813) 247-8115.**