



CLOVIS COMMUNITY WATCH PROGRAM

PLANNING AND CONDUCTING MEETINGS

Inviting Neighbors

You want to get as many neighbors together as you can. How you invite them is important. Think of it this way: what would make someone get off the couch after a long day at work to come to a meeting with a group of strangers? Most people don't even know what Community Watch is. They might think it means committees, meetings, or having to pay money.

- *Make your invite simple and clear. Mention a recent crime as incentive*
- *Deliver the invitation in person if possible. Face-to-face is more effective than leaving a piece of paper on doorstep.*
- *Ask if they could spare "only one hour" to talk with other neighbors about how to fight crime in the neighborhood.*
- *Don't put invitations in postal mail boxes - it's illegal.*
- *Get a couple of neighbors to walk with you to help deliver invitations.*
- *Plan an activity for children near the meeting, perhaps ask a teenager to watch them. Mention this on the invitation to encourage parents to attend.*
- *Offer other incentives: food (make it a potluck), door prizes, or a chance to "win" money of rent or homeowners' dues.*

Meeting Logistics

It is important to select a date and time for your meeting that is convenient for most of the people invited. You will not be able to accommodate every person, but you should try to appeal to the majority. For example: If your meeting consists of mostly working professionals, then you will not want to interfere with their business day. You might schedule the meeting in the evening just after work so that they can attend on their way home. If they make it all the way home, the chances of getting them to leave again are reduced. On the other hand, if you are planning a meeting for a group consisting primarily of work-at-home individuals, another time would probably be better, perhaps a time when their children are still in school. Try to establish a regularly-scheduled meeting day and time. You might meet once a week or once a month, at an interval that best fits the needs and availability of the group.

You should also select a location convenient for the majority of the group. If you are conducting a Watch group meeting you should probably hold the meeting in the neighborhood. However, if you are holding a meeting for a larger neighborhood with more than one captain, a more centralized location would be better. Neighborhood schools and faith-based organizations often provide meeting space for groups such as community watch groups.

Facilitating a Meeting

At the Meeting

- *Be warm and friendly, making a point to say hello to everyone.*
- *Consider holding an informal social time before or after the meeting.*
- *Consider providing name badges. This will help with introductions as well as help the instructor to encourage participation.*
- *You might also want to consider an icebreaker exercise in the first couple of meetings.*
- *Begin and end on time.*
- *Stick to the schedule you set - it helps establish your credibility in being able to control the meeting.*
- *Set ground rules, such as time allowed for speaking and adhering to the agenda.*
- *It may be appropriate to take minutes.*

The Meeting Facilitator Should:

- *Stay focused on the task at hand to ensure the meeting fulfills its purpose.*
- *Encourage polite discussion allowing everyone an opportunity to participate.*
- *Clearly summarize decisions made and issues that require voting.*
- *Direct conversations about disagreements so that they do not spiral out of control.*
- *Allow each person time to speak without dominating the discussion.*
- *Remember to listen for what is not being said.*
- *Try to find and resolve sources of confusion, hidden agendas, and emotions.*
- *As the meeting comes to a close, set the date, time and place for the next meeting. If you meet on a regular basis, use this time to remind your group of the next meeting. If you know the topic and purpose of the next meeting, this would be a good time to generate excitement for that meeting.*

After the Meeting

After the meeting, review how the meeting went and how it could be improved. Effective meetings will not disappoint those in attendance because it will show your group values busy schedules, but encourages people to stay involved. The Community Watch Captain should distribute minutes (or make them available) including details about action items and assignments, persons responsible, and timelines. Each block captain should follow up with people who did not attend to see if they had questions about anything discussed. This will encourage people to stay involved, even if they can't attend meetings.

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA:

Clovis Community Watch Meeting Agenda

The success of a Community Watch group is directly related to the ongoing participation and support from each member of the group.

Meeting Chaired by: Community Watch Captain _____

5:45pm	Welcome and Sign-in
6:00pm	Call to order
6:00-6:10	Introductions
6:10-6:15	Overview of Community Watch Program
6:15-6:25	Discussion of neighborhood issues
6:25-6:40	Crime Prevention Presentation
6:40-6:45	Issues for next meeting
6:45-6:50	Date, place, and time of next meeting
6:50pm	Adjourn/Refreshments

Alternatives to Meetings

With overbooked schedules and new ways to communicate, it may be beneficial to maintain your watch to occasionally hold non-traditional meetings. If you can accomplish the same purpose without meeting in person, consider more time-efficient alternatives such as email, phone, or online chats. If you are simply relaying information to others and feel that the information is not important enough to call a meeting, consider a flyer or some other sort of publication that can be mailed or distributed to group members. Respect each group member's time. If the information provided in person at the meeting is important and valued, then a meeting is appropriate.