

**KENT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

**NEIGHBORHOOD**

**WATCH**

**HANDBOOK**



*Compliments of:*

KENT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
SHERIFF MICHELLE LAJOYE-YOUNG



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KENT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
Michelle LaJoye-Young - Sheriff

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701 Ball Avenue, N.E. • Grand Rapids • Michigan • 49503



## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Greetings,

As Sheriff of Kent County and a fellow citizen, I want to thank you for getting with your neighbors at this Neighborhood Watch meeting.

For some of you, this meeting is the beginning of your efforts in community action and for others of you, an extension of your neighboring efforts.

In today's society, we find that ongoing cooperation is needed between our Sheriff's Office and the people it serves. We need you to observe, remember, report and record suspicious activity taking place in your neighborhood. Tonight we will give you the information to help us help you. We in turn will do our very best to provide you with police service of the most professional caliber.

Once again, congratulations to you and your neighbors for gathering together to assist us in crime fighting.

Sincerely,

Michelle LaJoye-Young, Sheriff  
Kent County Sheriff's Office

## WHAT IS THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

The Neighborhood Watch is a group of concerned people working together to drive crime from their neighborhood. The people in this program get to know their neighbors and work with them in spotting and reporting crime to the Sheriff's Office. The neighborhood and the Sheriff's Office should work together towards the elimination of crime.

The security of a neighborhood and its citizens depends upon the people themselves. The Sheriff's Office cannot function effectively unless it has the support and cooperation of the people it serves. The Neighborhood Watch program establishes a communication system between the Sheriff's Office and the neighborhood. This system is for concerned citizens to report emergencies and other problems to the Kent County Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office and other law enforcement agencies need your help.

The Crime Prevention Bureau of the Kent County Sheriff's Office will assist you in organizing a Neighborhood Watch program in your area. The telephone number to call is (616) 632-6220. A trained professional will work with you in setting up the program.

In order to establish a Neighborhood Watch, it is important to involve as many people as possible. Once the program is started, a goal of at least 50 percent of the block should be set. The more involvement, the more effective the program. The area covered by the Neighborhood Watch should start with one city block then involve the other blocks around it.

During the organizational period, a temporary block leader should be chosen. Once the program is organized, a block leader and assistant should be elected. The block leader is responsible for scheduling regular meetings and to keep members informed. (The block leader has no more legal authority than any other citizen.)

Each member of the program is responsible for the blocks security by reporting crimes and suspicious persons to the Sheriff's Office. The Crime Prevention office will give talks to the program members on what should be reported and how to report it.

## **WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WATCH MEMBER?**

It is important to know your neighbors, be able to recognize them, and where they live. This will enable you to know if someone is prowling around or if it is just a neighbor. Look beyond your own home. Look around and see what's happening in your neighborhood; is someone prowling around a house, is there a strange car in the driveway, are the lights on when they are normally not? Once the observations are made, the Sheriff's Office needs to be notified. These are the numbers to call:

9-1-1 is the Emergency Sheriff's Number. An emergency is defined as an immediate threat to life or property. This is the only time that 9-1-1 should be used.

(616) 336-3113 is the Non-Emergency number.

## **WHAT IS A SUSPICIOUS PERSON?**

A suspicious person is one that is doing something out of the ordinary that would lead you to believe that a crime is about to be committed. Some examples of this are: a person walking down the street looking into cars, going house to house looking through the windows, or walking up into yards. If these situations are observed you should call 9-1-1.

When you call, provide the following information: Your name, address, where the person is, what they are doing, and a description of the individual. If the person is still in the area, ask to stay on the line until an officer arrives. By following these guidelines, the chances of apprehending the person is greatly increased.

Not all people acting suspicious are criminals, but by reporting suspicious activity, the citizen can effectively reduce the opportunity for a crime to be committed. This puts the criminal on notice that the neighborhood is watching, and it provides the Sheriff's Office with a list of suspects if a crime is committed.

Many people feel funny about calling the police. Some of the reasons that are given include: I might be bothering the police, my problem is not important or I called twice already, and they will think I am a nut. None of these are true. Your calls are important and without them, the Sheriff's Office cannot deal with crime in your area.

## **WHAT IS A MISDEMEANOR CRIME AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT**

The Sheriff's Office investigation of crime or disorderly complaints made by citizens often reveals that a misdemeanor violation of a State or Township Law may have occurred. Misdemeanors are crimes such as vandalism, malicious destruction of property, simple larceny and disturbances. However, in some cases an immediate arrest cannot be made because the offense did not occur in the investigating officer's presence. If you need additional information on your police report, please call the Kent County Sheriff's Office Records Division at (616) 632-6200 or the Kent County Detective Bureau at (616) 632-6125.

In the cases that involve neighborhood disturbances, such as loud radios or noisy parties, it would be prudent to first contact the party involved and ask them to stop making the disturbance. If you are not comfortable doing this, call our dispatch to have a Deputy respond to this complaint (616) 336-3113. In these cases, having names of neighbors who would be witnesses is helpful.

## **REPORTING A CRIME OR EMERGENCY**

When reporting a crime or emergency to your police or sheriff department, the following information is needed:

1. Your name and address.
2. The type of crime or emergency.
3. The exact location of the situation.
4. The description of the vehicle and or suspect involved.
5. The direction of flight.
6. The time of occurrence.
7. Any weapon used. If so, what type.

Kent County Sheriff Emergency number: .....911

Non-Emergency number: ..... (616) 336-3113

Sheriff Information number: (Mon-Fri 8:00-5:00).....(616) 632-6100

These seven requested items are very important, however, do not wait until you can answer all of them. Call as soon as you observe said crime or emergency, then attempt to obtain the answers to numbers four (4) thru seven (7).

## **EXAMPLE OF REPORTING A CRIME**

"This is Mrs. Jones at 2133 Observation Court, S.W. Someone is breaking into a parked car in front of my house. The car is a blue 2012 Ford four-door."

"The suspect breaking in is a white male, 20-23 years old, 5'10" to 6' tall, medium build, 165 to 175 lbs., brown short hair, wearing a black hooded sweatshirt, blue jeans and white tennis shoes with blue stripes. He just ran north on Observation Court carrying a purse taken from a car."

## **HOW TO MAKE AN EMERGENCY CALL TO 9-1-1**

1. Stay calm. Don't get excited. Dial 9-1-1 right away. Don't wait for someone else to call.
2. Tell the person who answers the phone exactly what is wrong, like this: "...there was just a car accident in front of my house."
3. Tell them the exact address where the emergency is, including your apartment number if you live in an apartment.
4. Tell them the phone number you are calling from.
5. Tell them your name.
6. DO NOT HANG UP...until the person on the telephone tells you to.
7. Dispatchers may need to ask you more questions to help the fire, police, or ambulance find you. They also will tell you what to do until help arrives.

## **FOUR WORDS TO HELP US - HELP YOU!**

**OBSERVE.**

**REMEMBER.**

**REPORT.**

**RECORD.**

## **DESCRIBING A VEHICLE**

When describing a vehicle, attempt to supply as much information as possible that would allow the officers to distinguish this vehicle from many others.

### **Start description from the top down:**

1. LICENSE NUMBERS–most important.
2. Color(s) - two-tone, three-tone, etc.
3. Body Style - 2-door, 4-door, pick up, etc.
4. Make - Chevrolet, Ford, Honda, GMC.
5. Year - (if not known) new or old.
6. Any outstanding features - damage, rust, clean, dirty, bumper stickers, etc.

## **DESCRIBING A PERSON**

When describing a person, you are attempting to distinguish this person from all others.

### **Start description from the top down:**

1. Race–white, black, spanish, etc.
2. Sex–male, female
3. Age–18 to 20 yrs., 30–40, etc.
4. Clothing–type, color, hat, coat, shirt, pants, shoes, etc.
5. Height–5’8” to 5’10”, etc.
6. Weight–140 to 150 lbs., etc.
7. Hair–color, style, length, beard, mustache, side–burns, etc.
8. Build–fat, thin, large, petite, etc.
9. Other–scars, tattoos, moles, etc.

## **FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS**

KENT COUNTY FIRE & EMERGENCY - 9-1-1

KENT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - (616) 336-3113

KENT COUNTY SHERIFF INFORMATION - (616) 632-6100

## **HELP PREVENT CRIME.**

**OBSERVE.**

**REMEMBER.**

**REPORT.**

**RECORD.**