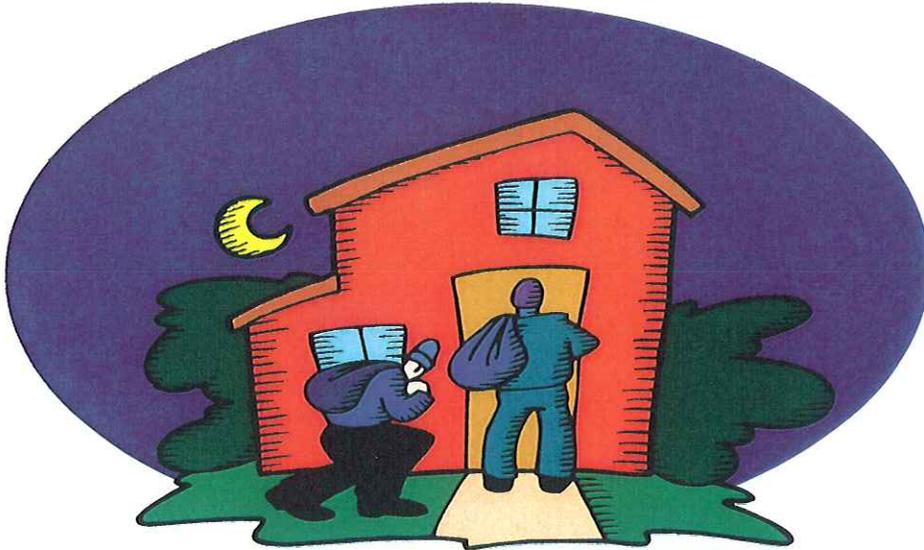


BLOCK WATCH MEETINGS



**Want to start a Block Watch in your
Neighborhood?**

Call Records Manager Linda Crum at the Medina Police Department and request her to help you host a meeting in your home. Linda has several years experience in home security and crime prevention and will be happy to share valuable tips with you and your neighbors.

Call Linda at (425) 233-6422

She is available Tuesdays through Fridays 7:30 am to 5:30 pm.

You may also e-mail her at: lcum@medina-wa.gov

What is Neighborhood Block Watch?

Very simply, Neighborhood Block Watch is a system designed to encourage neighbors to look out for each other and reduce crime by reporting suspicious activity and crime.

Whether it's called Neighborhood Watch, Block Watch or Crime Watch, it helps create the very best crime prevention device invented: neighbors watching your home as well as their own.

Block Watch is the most successful anticrime program in the country. It's the most effective (and least expensive) tool to make sure we have the safe, pleasant environment we all want for our families.

Most police agencies are ready and willing to help neighbors learn how to prevent crime and how to be the "extra eyes and ears" for police, but some agencies don't have the staff to promote Neighborhood Block Watch. Neighbors can find all they need to know about it on the Internet and at the library and they can still invite police to talk at a neighborhood meeting.

This booklet is designed to help neighborhoods get started with or without the help of their local police agency.

One major city started the Block Watch program more than 20 years ago. The police department kept track of crime in the neighborhoods the first year. Where there were Block Watch groups, residential crime dropped 40 percent!

Block Watch works!



How Do You Start a Block Watch Group?

1. Ask neighbors if they are interested in fighting against crime.
2. Contact your local police agency; ask for the crime prevention department.
3. Ask if they help with Neighborhood Block Watch.
4. Set up a meeting with neighbors, even if your police agency isn't involved.
5. Ask your police agency where to find materials to do it on your own.
6. Get invitations from your police agency or make your own.
7. Walk the neighborhood (ask for help) to hand out the invitations face to face.
8. Ask the police for tips on crime prevention techniques and for crime statistics.
9. Name a captain and co-captain(s) in separate homes.
10. Make a map of the neighborhood and give copies to all participants.
11. Make a telephone tree to alert everyone about crimes and other problems.
12. Engrave or mark household items (Operation ID) with driver's license number (pg. 11).
13. Get Operation ID decals and stickers from the police agency or order your own.
14. Get neighbors to do a home inventory on paper, on video and/or using photographs.
15. Develop a neighborhood disaster preparedness plan, get C.E.R.T. training (pg. 32).
16. Participate in National Night Out every August to stay up-to-date and connected.
17. Update information on maps and telephone trees at least once a year.
18. Request a Block Watch sign from the police agency or order one to install yourself.

Other things to do as a Neighborhood Block Watch

—to keep interest going after crime drops or a problem is solved:

- Help neighbors trim bushes and trees for better visibility.
- Organize a community clean up, leaf raking day, or pruning party.
- Help remove graffiti right away.
- Invite the Fire Department to talk about fire prevention and disaster preparedness.
- Get each neighbor to make their house numbers easy to see at night.
- Help each other reinforce door frames, hinges, and locks for windows.
- Have a neighborhood garage sale to encourage the sense of community.
- Start a newsletter for the neighborhood, and include a kids' column.
- Clean up a nearby park or playground.
- Ask the neighborhood children to help with some of the projects.
- Send several people to C.E.R.T. or disaster preparedness training.
- Look into installing a locked mailbox unit for the whole neighborhood.

Invitations

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 Block Watch is. They might think it means committees, meetings, or having to pay money.

- Make your invitation 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 a 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, door prizes, or a chance to "win" money off rent or homeowners' dues.

Your police agency may have invitations to give you. Below is a suggestion to help you design your own invitation.

"You never really know what's happening in your neighborhood unless you talk to your neighbors."

*We recently had (name a crime or two)
in our neighborhood.*

So let's get together to talk.

*Please come to an informal meeting on Wednesday evening,
April 13 at 7:00 PM
at (give address, hosts' names if applicable, name of building, etc.)*

*The (your police agency) will be there to talk to us
about ways to prevent crimes like this, and to answer questions.*

*Please let (organizer's name) know you can be there:
phone _____ or email at (organizer@whatever.com)*

At Your Meeting

- Meet neighbors as they enter and make them a name tag—first names in big letters. (It's easier to start a conversation when you don't have to try to remember names.)
- Have plenty of chairs, make sure they can see the speaker.
- Provide a table for handout materials. If you have a speaker, ask people to get their handouts *after* the talk.
- Find out ahead what the speaker will need (chair, table). Ask what they plan to talk about and if they are bringing handouts. Let them know how many to expect.
- Tell the speaker in advance if there is a subject the group wants to talk about.
- Start the neighborhood map and let neighbors fill in their own information. If possible, draw a big version on a huge sheet of paper to display at the meeting.
- Have neighbors introduce themselves and show where they live on the big map.
- If you want to serve food or drink, plan a "social hour" before or after the meeting for visiting and discussing Block Watch plans.
- Explain to your group (or have the speaker do it) what's involved with Neighborhood Block Watch and what is needed.

Ask for volunteers for captain and co-captain(s). They should live at separate addresses, so if one leaves the other can recruit a replacement. All these people have to do is get the Block Watch started, keep addresses and other information up to date, and add any new neighbors. They get people to plan National Night Out and to help with other activities.

Encourage everyone to add work phone numbers and out of state emergency numbers to the neighborhood map. Give examples of how these could be useful (someone is away on vacation, house catches fire, you can call emergency contact who should always know how to find that person).

Pass the hat to buy a neighborhood engraver (scout out prices before the meeting). Get someone to keep track of it and loan it out to neighbors for 3–5 days each. This encourages people to "get it done," to let other neighbors have a chance to engrave.

Talk about the telephone tree you want to set up. Give this example: a person at the south end of the neighborhood has a car stolen. People at the north end would like to know about a crime like this, but nobody's going to knock on every door to alert neighbors.



Before the meeting, think of what information you need from these neighbors. It might not be easy to get them all together again. Ask everyone present to talk to at least one neighbor who didn't make it to the meeting, and to share handouts and what they learned.

Neighborhood Maps

A neighborhood map is a powerful tool on a simple sheet of paper.

- The map should indicate N, S, E, W.
- Label all streets inside and connecting to the neighborhood.
- Draw squares for homes and list full names, address, phone and email.
- Consider adding children's names and work and out of state emergency numbers.
- If a household won't participate, list only their address on the map.
- Make note of the people who are captain and co-captain(s).
- Give a copy of the map to everyone who participates.

This is how the map works: Imagine that as you drive home you hear a loud noise (a gun?) and you see a man run out of a home in your neighborhood. He speeds away in a car.

You get home, call 9-1-1 and grab your neighborhood map. You are now able to give the exact address of that house, not fumble with "two streets over and 4 or 5 houses down from my address". People can forget their own street when flustered.

A major reason people don't call 9-1-1 is not having enough information. They feel stupid and they talk themselves out of it. "It's none of my business anyway." With the map and its good information, people are more willing to get involved.

When 9-1-1 asks where the car went, you can refer to the map and say "South on Alabama Street then West on 218th". This is incredibly helpful to police.

Make maps simple, start with N at the top, draw lines for streets and squares for houses and fill in the information. If there's not enough room, just fill in the address then list names and numbers on the back. Or simply number the homes starting with "1" then list the address, name and phone numbers on the back.

Divide neighborhoods of 50 or more homes into "areas" because if a Block Watch is too big, it can fall apart with only a few people to manage it. Each area could have a color or a name and its own area captain. This way, no one person has too much to handle. One area captain might serve as chair of all the area captains and be the one who is the contact for the police department.

In big neighborhoods, everyone should get a master map as well as one of their own area.

Neighborhood Maps

Sample Block Watch Map

- Use regular size (8 x 11) paper
- Indicate North, South, East, and West
- List all streets, within and connecting to your neighborhood
- List names, address, home phone (the minimum)
- Indicate homes of captain and co-captain
- List the police contact name and number
- Create your map in any way—by hand, computer, etc.

CAPTAIN—Phone # & Name
CO-CAPTAIN—Phone # & Name
POLICE CONTACT—Phone # & Name

N
W E
S

S 281st Street

Full Names Address Phone	Full Names Address Phone Kids' names Alarm information	Full Names Address Phone
Full Names Address Phone Kids' names Emergency #'s Alarm	ADDRESS Does not wish to Participate in map	Full Names Address Phone CAPTAIN
Full Names Address Phone Kids' names CO-CAPTAIN	Full Names Address Phone	Full Names Address Phone Kids' names
S 283rd Street		
Full Names Address Phone	Full Names Address Phone Kids' names Emergency #'s Alarm	Full Names Address Phone Kids' names
S 285th Street		

Harrison Street

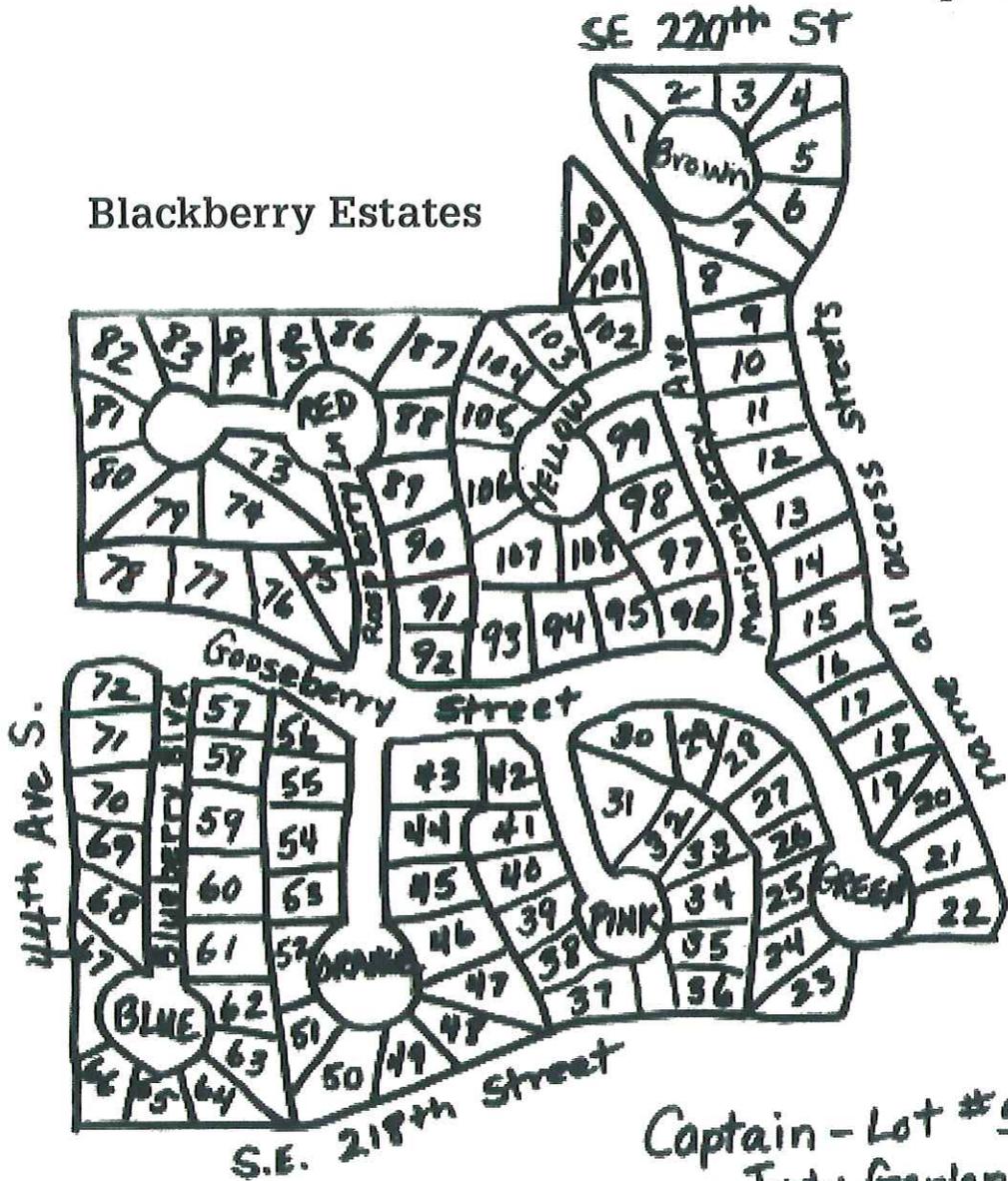
Smith Street

Neighborhood Maps

Sample Block Watch Map for a Larger Area



Blackberry Estates



- Captain - Lot # 55
- Judy Garland
- Co-Captain - Lot # 77
- Mickey Rooney

See back for name, address, and phone to match lot numbers on map.

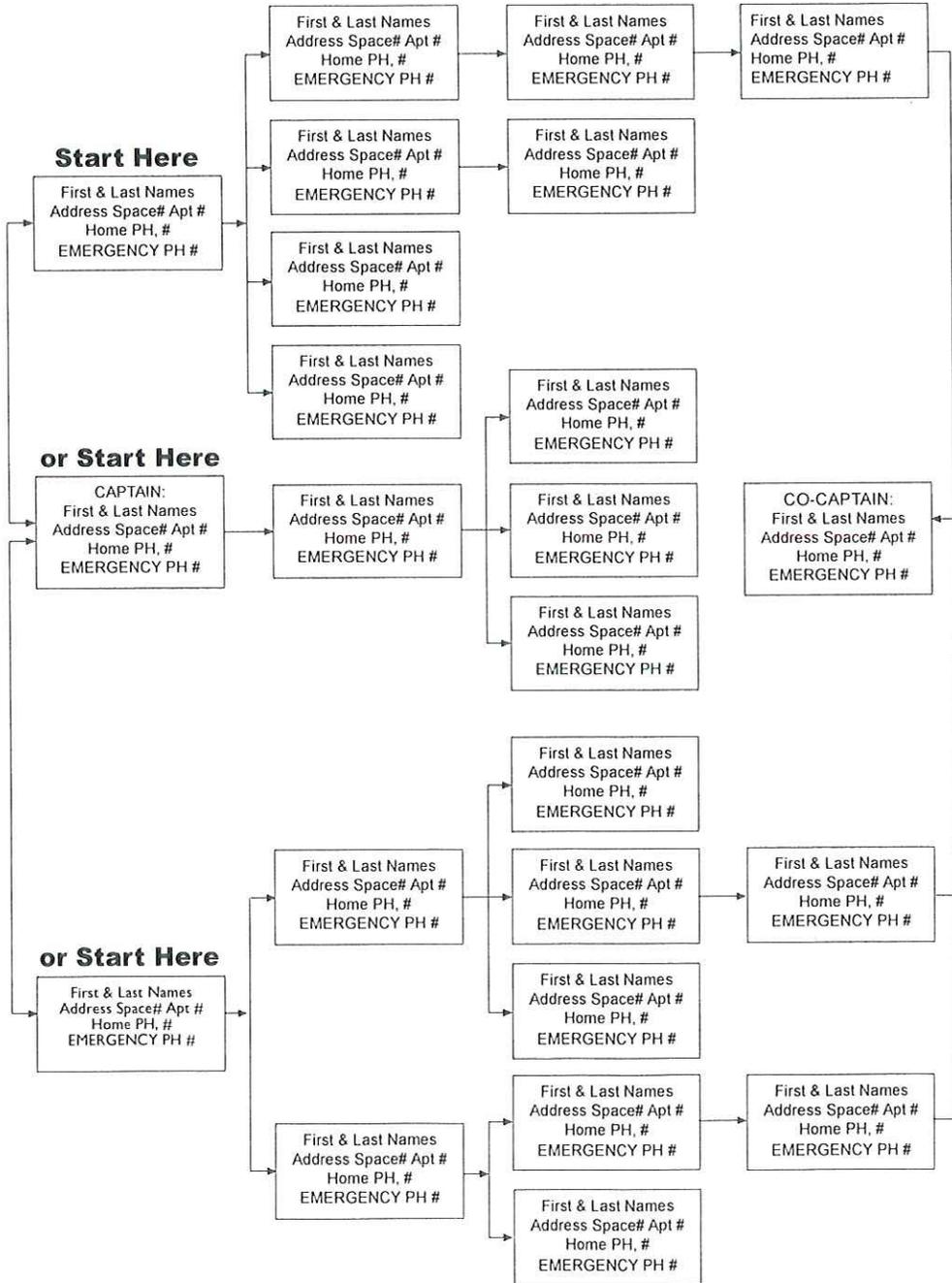
Telephone Trees

You never really know what's happening in your neighborhood unless you talk to your neighbors. People don't have time to talk to neighbors. A telephone tree is a great way to get information to others and build a sense of community in the neighborhood. Below is a sample telephone tree. Use this suggestion to design one that suits your neighborhood.

TELEPHONE TREE

Call 9-1-1 for any suspicious activity and crimes, then call the Block Watch captain to alert the entire neighborhood via this telephone tree system.

This tree is set up so that we can keep each other informed of any crimes or suspicious activity. Call one of the "Start Here" homes if you want to send information through the tree. Always do this after you make a 9-1-1 call. When you get a message to pass on, follow the arrows by your name. If you can't reach someone, leave a message and make their calls so the chain doesn't stop. The captain might call the last home to be sure the message made it through the whole tree.



Operation Identification (Operation ID)

Operation ID is a program where property is marked or engraved with a special number. This is called an owner-applied number (OAN) and it can be used to report stolen items. Operation ID has shown dramatic results in reducing burglaries and theft. Burglars usually avoid marked items because they are hard to re-sell.

- Mark valuables with driver's license number (DL) or state identification number (ID) or—for a business—state tax number (TX).
- To make sure nobody changes the OAN, put the 2 letters of your state at the start and end it with DL, ID, or TX—whichever applies. A Washington state driver's license number used for an OAN could look like this: WA423JA1111DL.
- Never use your social security number. Don't engrave paintings, antiques, or any item you may want to sell.
- Hang Operation ID decals near your doors. This lets burglars know that property inside has been marked and won't be easy to re-sell.
- On the back of the engraved item, tape a small note or sticker that shows this item has been engraved. The engraving itself won't be obvious to a burglar in a hurry but the "eyeball" sticker will. They know what it means.
- Decals and stickers may be available from police agencies or you can purchase them via the Internet (try searching "Operation ID").

Engravers are inexpensive tools that can save you thousands of dollars. Pass the hat to buy a neighborhood engraver to share. If you sell engraved items, etch one line through your number so it's still readable. Initial it and give the buyer a bill of sale describing the item.

Home Inventory

It's nearly impossible to remember the items you have lost if your home is burglarized or catches fire. A home inventory on paper and/or video format will help you report items to the police and to your insurance company. Make sure you include everything, even kitchen items and your junk drawer. List the make, model, and serial number of all guns in the house. Keep your lists and video in a safe deposit box or someplace where they cannot be stolen or destroyed by fire.

Insurance is important for everyone. Replacement value insurance is best because your property is replaced rather than giving you the depreciated value. (If you have an older TV worth \$100, you will get a replacement TV, not the \$100.) Rental insurance is very reasonably priced.



Calling 9-1-1

NOTE: *Some 9-1-1 centers won't accept non-emergency calls; they will give another number to call. Check your area by calling your police agency's non-emergency number. Only serious and legitimate calls should be made to 9-1-1, no matter what.*

Always report suspicious activity and all crimes because police don't know there's a problem unless they are told.

Example: A thief is looking for a car to break into. He sees a patrol car coming so he acts natural, as if he's standing next to his own car. Nothing looks suspicious. A watchful neighbor would know he doesn't belong with that vehicle and should call 9-1-1.

Neighbors should stay aware and alert and call 9-1-1 when anything seems suspicious. If police can catch someone in the act of committing a crime, it saves valuable time and taxpayer dollars, not to mention saving people from being victimized.

Stay calm when you call 9-1-1. Don't yell or hang up, and answer all questions carefully. In most cases, help is on the way even as the call receiver asks more questions.

- To describe vehicles: note number of doors, color, make or shape, bumper stickers, cracked windshield, dents, etc.
- To remember license plates: write it on paper, on your hand or even scratch it in the dirt! License numbers are useful only if they are correct. Never hesitate to say, "I'm not sure". With a vehicle description, even a partial license plate can be valuable.
- To describe people: clothing is important, but look for things that cannot be changed, like skin or eye color, tattoos, scars, moles, height and weight.
- To describe roadway problems: give the road name or number and your direction of travel. Look at milepost signs, exit numbers or landmarks. Do not report injuries at a crash site unless you are sure of them.

Teach children how to respect the 9-1-1 system and how to use it if they are alone. Children learn by "doing" but practice on a toy phone only. Encourage them to be good citizens; help them learn to watch for trouble and how to get help when needed.



Suspicious Activity Examples

It's important to call 9-1-1 if you see suspicious activity. Pay attention to your instincts when something "just doesn't seem right". If the police are not there to see it with you, they *won't* know unless you call.

Don't worry that you are "bothering" the police or 9-1-1. They handle many calls at once and they will take care of urgent calls first. Police would rather respond to calls that turn out to be nothing, rather than to a "cold" crime—where it's all done and the criminal got away. There's always the chance they can catch someone in the act of a crime if you call.

Situation:

What it might mean:

Person going door to door, looking into back yards and windows

Possible "casing" (looking for a house to burglarize), trespass or soliciting violation

Non-resident going into back or side yard

Possible burglary in progress

Continuous vehicle "repairs", especially in non-business area or neighborhood

Possible stolen property being stripped, repainted, or altered

Person waiting in front of a house or business

Possible lookout for a burglary in progress.

Slow moving vehicles, without lights or driving by several times, especially in areas of school grounds or parks

Possible "casing" for burglaries or car thefts, drug sales, prostitution, or a sex offender looking for a victim

Person trying to enter locked vehicle or removing parts or accessories

Possible burglary, theft, or vandalism

Person running, especially if carrying something of value

Possible fleeing scene of a crime

Person asking for help in a parking lot, choosing people who are alone

Possible theft, car theft, or assault

Many cars coming to residence, leaving after only a few minutes

Possible drug sales, fence operation, or sales of stolen goods

People with flashlights looking into cars or windows

Possible burglary, assault, car theft, or theft of items from car

Unusual noises: gun shots, screaming, combat noises, abnormal dog barking

Possible illegal activity or danger. Pay attention to your instincts; call 9-1-1