

Old Las Palmas Neighborhood Organization

Crime Protection Tips for Neighborhood Security

A watch group is an important tool families can use to protect their neighborhood against burglars and other criminal intruders. A watch group is simply a number of neighbors joining together to keep an eye open for suspicious persons and activities. Ideally, families should form watch groups by becoming acquainted with their neighbors across the street, on both sides and to the rear. They should learn each other's living patterns—things such as when family members are usually home, which members go to which schools and when a family will be leaving to go on a trip or on a vacation. Then neighbors can work together to protect their homes through vigilance. For example, those persons who are home during the day know that something may be wrong if they see people around a home when family members are usually absent. Or if one family will be gone on business or for a weekend, they can ask one of the others to pick up their newspapers and their mail and to give their house a lived-in appearance. By cooperation in the area of security, neighbors have a no-cost device to help protect their homes and property from criminals. At the first sign of anything out of the ordinary, the police should be called.

Some common situations that could mean trouble include:

- A stranger entering your neighbor's house when it is unoccupied.
- Anyone removing car accessories, license plates or gasoline.
- Anyone peering into parked cars.
- Apparent business transactions conducted from a vehicle.
- Anyone loitering around schools, parks, secluded areas or on the street.
- Any vehicle moving slowly and without lights or one following an apparently aimless course.
- Vehicles containing one or more persons parked at unusual hours.
- Vehicles being loaded with valuables in front of an unoccupied house.
- The sound of breaking glass or loud explosive noise.
- Persons being forced into vehicles.
- Someone going door-to-door who tests the doors to see if they are locked or who goes around to the side or to the back of the house.
- Someone waiting in front of a house when it is unoccupied.
- Open doors or broken windows at an unoccupied house.
- Continuous repair operations at a non-business location.
- A delivery man with a wrong address.