

## Neighborhood Watch

## Looking out for your neighbors a great crime prevention method

The police tell us that community safety is up to all I of us, not just the men and women in uniform. That's the idea behind Neighborhood Watch, a proven program for reducing break-ins and other neighborhood crime.

· The strategy is simple: Residents simply look out for each other and for any suspicious activities. Your police department will assess your community needs and help you set up the program. The neighbors decide which one of them will be the contact for the police. But all you really have to do is be alert to what's going on in your neighborhood.

neighborhood, ask if you can be of help or ask what they're looking for. If burglars are casing the area, the questions might be enough to scare them off.

If you spot anything unusual or potentially threatening, notify your neighbors and the police. It's still up to the police to confront suspicious individuals and make any necessary arrests.

When you set up a Neighborhood Watch program a notice is posted in your neighborhood and the houses get stickers to put up. This can also make intruders think twice about targeting your neighborhood, and it creates an atmosphere of community spirit.

For the Neighborhood Watch

program in some big cities, there's a computer system called PC Cops. This system lets a computer contact your Neighborhood Watch representative on the phone with updates and information on local crime. It's very useful if there's a prowler or attacker at work in your area. It's a fairly new concept, so check with your local police department.

For general crime prevention advice, take advantage of your police department. They'll send a crime prevention officer to your area, apartment building or place of business to make a crime risk assessment and suggest ways to If you see a stranger in the improve security. All it takes is a phone call, and it doesn't cost anything.

> If you really want to be neighborly, here's an idea for maintaining security when your house is empty.

Burglars often ring the bell to see is anyone's home. If you're away for long periods, talk to your next-door neighbor about installing an inexpensive remote doorbell transmitter, so the bell will ring in the next house. This way, if a burglar rings the bell of a vacant house, the neighbor can look out the window or door and see who's there. No burglar wants to be seen.

It's a bit of an unusual idea, but, hey, what are neighbors for?

— Insurance Bureau of Canada

