



# Cambridgeshire Neighbourhood Watch



Creating a safer  
**Cambridgeshire**



## Co-ordinator's Handbook



## Foreword

This document has been created to assist you and to act as a reference guide for you in your role as a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator in Cambridgeshire. It has been jointly produced by representatives from Cambridgeshire Police and Cambridgeshire Neighbourhood Watch.

By working in partnership - in this and many other ways - we become stronger and better able to deliver the vision of creating a safer Cambridgeshire.

We wish you well in your role, and thank you for your commitment to Neighbourhood Watch.



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**Registered Charity No 1093458**



### Note from the Editors

The information contained in this manual has been prepared in good faith. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this document, it should be noted that many of the issues covered are subject of current reviews at a national and local level.

Should you have any amendments, corrections or additions to be included in this Handbook please forward them to Susan Moore at [catworthnhw@btconnect.com](mailto:catworthnhw@btconnect.com).

This Handbook will be reviewed annually during July. If changes are necessary it will be republished and reissued with a new issue number.

If you wish to check whether the Handbook you hold is current please look on the cambsnhw website - which can be found at [www.cambsnhw.org.uk](http://www.cambsnhw.org.uk). A master copy will be held there.

If new information becomes available between issues it will be independently distributed and incorporated into the Handbook at the next revision.



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## Welcome to Neighbourhood Watch

You have joined a growing number of people who want to help to make their communities safer. We have produced this Handbook to help you and we hope it will be a ready reference for you. Please don't be daunted by how thick it is. It was produced for you to dip into and take what you need when you need it.

### Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch aims to develop a close liaison between householders in a neighbourhood and the local Police.

Its aims are to help people to protect themselves and their property, to reduce the fear of crime by means of improved home security, greater vigilance, rapid and detailed reporting of crime and suspicious incidents to the Police and by fostering a community spirit in the neighbourhood.

### Neighbourhood and Home Watch exists to<sup>1</sup>:

- to **prevent crime** by improving security, increasing vigilance, creating and maintaining a caring community and reducing opportunities for crime by increasing crime prevention awareness;
- to **assist the police in detecting crime** by promoting effective communication and prompt reporting of suspicious and criminal activity;
- to **reduce undue fear of crime** by providing accurate information about risks and by promoting a sense of security and community spirit, particularly among the more vulnerable members of the community; and

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from [www.mynhw.co.uk](http://www.mynhw.co.uk) - Training Module 1



- to **improve police/community liaison** by providing effective communication channels, and by members informing the Police of incidents when they occur.

## **The Co-ordinator**

Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators are usually volunteer members ideally with a computer and internet access. You have an important role to play in setting up and administering a watch scheme whether you are acting as the co-ordinator for a street, a village or a larger area.

There is no standard format for a watch scheme and how the scheme develops will depend upon the decisions taken by you and your members. Liaising regularly with your members and the Police will keep you in touch with activities and incidents in your area.

The following are suggested as duties a co-ordinator might want to undertake:

- Get to know your local Neighbourhood Policing Team. They will be your main contact.
- Encourage vigilance amongst scheme members and actively encourage early reporting of incidents to the Police.
- Receive crime information from the Police and distribute these messages to scheme members.
- Encourage members to be aware of and to put into practice crime prevention measures, fire prevention and warning measures, home security, property marking, and security devices.
- Appoint a deputy co-ordinator [if possible] to assist in the administration of the scheme.
- Maintain a check on vulnerable households and provide advice to members about dealing with unexpected callers at the door.



- Circulate newsletters and other relevant information provided by the Police and other agencies concerned with crime prevention to scheme members.
- Welcome new members to the neighbourhood and invite them to become members of the scheme.
- If appropriate, hold meetings of members at regular intervals to discuss issues of common concern.
- Maintain an up to date list of members.
- Erect NHW signs and ensure they are regularly checked
- Encourage scheme members to attend area meetings and conferences.
- Where established attend cluster group meetings.
- Make a list of local council services with names, telephone numbers to contact should assistance be required from a council department for example to report an abandoned car.

Don't feel that you have to undertake all the duties listed above. What you do should be appropriate for your scheme and fit with the NHW objectives.

## **Scheme Members**

Scheme members should:

- Be observant and vigilant.
- Report unusual /suspicious situations to their co-ordinator/Police.
- Assist the co-ordinator if support is needed (disseminating information, distributing leaflets and newsletters).
- Check home security and where necessary upgrade locks on doors and windows.
- Assist in maintaining the neighbourhood environment free from rubbish, graffiti, abandoned vehicles and the like.

It is important for the co-ordinator to impress on members that the Police can only react to a crime of which they have been made



aware. Incidents of crime frequently go unreported and communities become aggrieved if nothing is done to resolve the problem. The Police can only respond to a problem if they are made aware that a problem exists. If you see something which you think warrants a call to the Police, make that call. See *Appendix 1* for an Incident Reporting Form

Membership of Neighbourhood Watch is free. However, should you wish to raise funds for use by your scheme, you should:

- Appoint a treasurer to take most of the responsibility for money management.
- Open an account for your scheme at a bank or building society. Arrange for cheques to require two signatures, yours and the treasurer's.
- Keep an up to date record of all monies received and spent. A separate note book should be kept for this purpose by the treasurer.
- Give a receipt to anyone giving money to the scheme. Buy a receipt book from a stationer.
- Ask for and keep receipts for any goods or services purchased for the scheme. If you spend money for which you cannot get a receipt, such as telephone calls, make a note of the date, time and number called.
- If you are planning an event, draw up a budget for what you intend to spend and stick to it as far as possible.
- Do not keep cash in the house. Bank it at the first opportunity.
- Even with small schemes you should present a set of accounts to members at least once a year.



## **Neighbourhood Watch Street Signs**

Signs are not obligatory. However, if Neighbourhood Watch is to be a deterrent then it must be visible - the criminal should know where the boundaries of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme are, otherwise he/she cannot decide to avoid the area.

The best way of marking the scheme is by using Neighbourhood Watch signs, which carry the distinctive "logo" in black and yellow.

### **Signs Erected on Private Land**

These can be of the Foamex type and can be readily sourced through the internet. The placing of these signs should be agreed with the land owner.

### **Signs Attached to Street Furniture**

The erection of Neighbourhood Watch street signs requires authority from the local Planning Authority and Highways Authority (Town and Country Planning Act 2007, Schedule 3, Part One, Subsection 10) and this authority must be given before any signs can be erected. The necessary paperwork to apply to erect signs is contained at *Appendix 1* for you to download and print.

It's advisable to contact your Neighbourhood Policing Team before submitting the paperwork to the Highways Authority and the Planning Authority, as the Act requires police confirmation that your scheme is properly registered.

Fixing the street signs is the responsibility of the scheme members and this should be done in accordance with the requirements of the Act.



Signs are purchased by the County Neighbourhood Watch Executive Group (CNHWEG) on behalf of members. They are often distributed to members by the Police. If you wish to purchase signs then please contact your local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

If a scheme ceases to function the signs should be removed within 14 days.

Co-ordinators should make frequent checks of signs to ensure that the fittings are secure and the sign is not damaged and is in good condition. Damage caused by signs is generally covered by the NHW Public Liability Insurance.

## **Data Protection**

The Data Protection Act provides a safeguard as to the manner in which information concerning personal details is retained and used by organisations.

Registration forms, which are given to you at your launch meeting, must be completed by all Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators. This ensures they are registered under the act to receive information relating to Neighbourhood Watch and crime prevention and for their details to be held on a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator database, currently held by the Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

As a Co-ordinator you may also wish to keep personal details of the members involved in your watch scheme on your computer. To do this it is necessary to:-

- Advise members why it is necessary to retain their personal details.
- Obtain the written consent of each member of the scheme.
- Only collect information that is necessary for the management of the group.



- Personal data should be accurate and kept up to date, new members added and details of those who have resigned or moved away removed.
- If you have any doubt at all you may wish to consult the Office of the Information Commissioner on 01625 545740.

The Data Protection Act is there to ensure that we all know what information is being held about us. It also protects our right to have access to that data.

The Police may disclose details of crime patterns and information concerning incidents that have taken place in identified locations. To assist in the prevention or detection of crime the Police may also give descriptions of suspects and in unusual cases vehicle registration numbers - although the latter isn't standard practice. The Police will not give out personal details likely to identify a property or an individual.

## **Insurance**

Every scheme must have a unique reference number, which will have been given to you when your scheme was first registered. This should be quoted to the insurance company. If you are in any doubt about your registration number contact your Neighbourhood Policing Team.

All registered schemes are covered by the Home Office Public Liability Insurance. The Policy cover is renewed annually on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Ansvar are the insurance providers. Administration of the insurance is the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) working in conjunction with CaSE – Charities & Social Enterprise Insurance Management (CaSE). Any enquiries can be directed as follows:  
To NCVO at Helpdesk 0800 2798 798

Claims can be directed to CaSE at 0845 2252288 or direct to Ansvar at 01323 737541.



The Policyholder is the Cambridgeshire Neighbourhood Watch Executive Group and all schemes have been registered en-bloc. In order for schemes to be eligible for this insurance they must have completed a formal registration and be approved by the Police. All schemes must read the policy documentation. A copy is on the Force Website on the NHW page.

There is a £100 excess for third party property damage

The following community activities are covered for public liability:

- attending conferences and exhibitions
- specified promotional, social and special events including fund raising (up to 4 events per Neighbourhood Watch)
- group and association meetings
- house meetings
- police liaison
- preparation and distribution of food or beverages, literature, newsletters, posters and stickers
- erecting, running and dismantling of stalls as a stallholder only at boot sales, jumble sales, fetes and fairs
- sign erection and maintenance, including signs whilst erected, provided that the lower edge of any sign is not less than 2.1 metres above the footway
- visits to schools, town halls and other public places for promotional, teaching and demonstration purposes
- hosting of school groups for the purpose of learning about your community activities
- other training or educational work

Community activities do not include:

- car window etching
- boat, house, pet or speed watch
- installation, siting or maintenance of any security locks, devices or equipment
- property marking



## **Training**

Once your scheme is established you may wish to spend some time developing your skills and knowledge.

### Skills associated with the Co-ordinator Role

There is modular training available on <http://www.mynhw.co.uk/training-kits.php>.

This will help with running meetings; creating publicity and many other day to day skills for co-ordinators.

### Crime Prevention and Community Safety Skills

The increased knowledge of crime prevention and community safety for co-ordinators and members is important and relevant to the expansion and development of Neighbourhood Watch in Cambridgeshire. Section Three of this guide is dedicated to providing information in this area.

You may also want to run information sessions on security for your members. For help with this contact your Neighbourhood Policing Team as they may be able to offer advice in organising training sessions and identify appropriate people to deliver them for you. They will also keep you up to date with current crime prevention initiatives.



## **Resources**

The Home Office publish a range of publicity materials which may be of use to your scheme. To order these you must first be registered. Details of how to register are contained in *Appendix 1*.

Before ordering, it may be worth checking with your Community Safety Unit as they usually keep quantities of crime prevention materials for your use.

### NHW Logo

You may also wish to use the NHW logo on your letters or forms. To do this you will need to obtain a licence from the Home Office. Details are contained in *Appendix 1*.

## **Useful Contacts**

Over time you will create your own extensive list of contacts. We have listed the officers of the CNHWEG to help you get started.

See *Appendix 1* for details.



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## **Structure of Cambs. Neighbourhood Watch**

NHW is a national scheme and within Cambridgeshire we have a County organisation designed to support you with any issues you may have been unable to resolve locally.

### **The County Group (CNHWEG)**

The County Group in partnership with the Police is responsible for shaping the policy for Neighbourhood Watch across the County of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The Group was formed in 1998 with the prime objectives of:

- Promoting, in partnership with the Police, Neighbourhood Watch for the benefit of the community therefore helping to protect people and their property.
- Supporting Neighbourhood Watch scheme members.
- Promoting good citizenship and encouraging neighbourliness and closer communities.
- Enhancing the image of Neighbourhood Watch.
- Providing advice, training, information and practical assistance for members, to enable them to promote their schemes and develop good practice.
- Providing a structure to assist local communities to reduce crime and the fear of crime, thereby improving the quality of life.

The Group consists of Neighbourhood Watch elected representatives from each of the three police divisions and police representatives. The officers of the County Group and their contact details are listed on the Contact Sheet *Appendix 1*.

The group meets quarterly at Cambridgeshire Constabulary Headquarters, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon.



Elections for the positions held by Neighbourhood Watch members are held each year at the Annual General Meeting.

### **Cluster Groups**

- Where there are a number of schemes in close proximity, there is much to be gained by the co-ordinators coming together to form a cluster or area groups.
- It is useful to know what crimes are occurring in your area, with an opportunity to discuss common problems and common solutions.
- Your scheme will not be working in isolation, but as part of a larger group. Joint projects and initiatives will produce mutual benefits in tackling crime across the area.
- Regular meetings provide opportunities to meet officers from the Neighbourhood Policing Team.
- Cluster groups provide opportunities to share equipment, expertise and good practice.
- Working together provides greater opportunities to share newsletters, social events, visits and training.

To establish whether your group is in a Cluster Group, contact either one of the officers of CNHWEG, your Local Neighbourhood Policing Team or, where available your police liaison support officer.



## Methods of Communication

You will quickly build up contact numbers of other co-ordinators local to you and your Neighbourhood Policing Team. Other useful sources of information are:

### The NHW Website

This can be found at [www.mynhw.co.uk](http://www.mynhw.co.uk) and contains much useful information. It also provides an email link should you wish to communicate with national NHW officers, or have a question you would like answering.

### The Cambridgeshire NHW Site

Up to the minute information about Cambridgeshire NHW can be found on this website at [www.cambsnhw.org.uk](http://www.cambsnhw.org.uk)  
This is a very good resource and starting point for solving problems, and we suggest that you add it to your bookmarked items.

### The Cambridgeshire Constabulary Website

The crime pages on the Force Website are the method of communication for general, routine crime information and crime prevention advice. Sanitised details of appropriate local crimes are available daily for co-ordinators to search by postcode and can be downloaded. You are encouraged to use this site, which can be found at [www.cambs-police.co.uk](http://www.cambs-police.co.uk).

### e-Cops

e-cops is an innovative e-mail newsletter scheme from Cambridgeshire Constabulary which keeps you informed of local crime information, community news and policing activities in your neighbourhood. A regular e-mail bulletin from your Neighbourhood Policing Team tells you what is happening in your area. You're encouraged to sign up to e-Cops bulletins, and can do this at <https://www.cambs-police.co.uk/myneighbourhood/ecops>.



## **Contacting the Police**

### The Phonetic Alphabet

When contacting the Police, particularly if reporting car index numbers, you may find it useful to use the phonetic alphabet. This has been designed to reduce errors in communications to a minimum.

<b>A</b>	ALPHA	<b>J</b>	JULIET	<b>S</b>	SIERRA
<b>B</b>	BRAVO	<b>K</b>	KILO	<b>T</b>	TANGO
<b>C</b>	CHARLIE	<b>L</b>	LIMA	<b>U</b>	UNIFORM
<b>D</b>	DELTA	<b>M</b>	MIKE	<b>V</b>	VICTOR
<b>E</b>	ECHO	<b>N</b>	NOVEMBER	<b>W</b>	WHISKY
<b>F</b>	FOXTROT	<b>O</b>	OSCAR	<b>X</b>	X-RAY
<b>G</b>	GOLF	<b>P</b>	PAPA	<b>Y</b>	YANKEE
<b>H</b>	HOTEL	<b>Q</b>	QUEBEC	<b>Z</b>	ZULU
<b>I</b>	INDIA	<b>R</b>	ROMEO		

Call Cambridgeshire Police if you witness a suspicious incident.

An example of some situations which should be regarded as suspicious:

- Person(s) seen waiting for no apparent purpose outside a house, flat or business premises, particularly if unoccupied or closed for business.
- Strangers standing or walking around a residential area for prolonged periods and for no obvious reason.
- Property being removed from unattended houses or business premises, perhaps at unusual times.
- Persons loitering by parked vehicles and perhaps tampering with cars or bicycles.
- Strange vehicles occupied and parked for long periods in residential areas.
- Strangers watching young children or engaging them in conversation.



When you call Cambridgeshire Police you can assist the operator in providing the best possible service by advising them of the following:

- You are a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator.
- A brief description of what the call is connected with, for example:
  - To report a crime.
  - To report a suspicious incident.
  - To pass on intelligence, if it's concerning a previous crime or incident please have the crime reference number to hand.
  - To pass on a non urgent message to a particular officer.

From this information there may be other questions the operator will need to ask before making a decision on grading the call and routing it to its most appropriate destination.

When you report a crime ask for the incident number. If you quote this number when subsequently calling the Police they can advise you of any development in the matter.

The following guidelines will help you to decide on which number to use to call the Police:

**Non Emergency number**

**0345 456 456 4**

**Keep 999 for emergencies. 999 should only be used if:**

- Lives are in danger, violence is being used or threatened or you think a crime is happening or about to happen.
- You want to report a serious crime, such as an assault or burglary, or you see someone you know, who is wanted by the Police.
- You have seen an accident, or something that may cause an accident, or you are worried about your own safety or someone else's safety.



You should remember that a 999 call to report an incident does not guarantee an immediate response from the Police as calls are graded and responded to according to urgency.

Write down as soon as possible, in as much detail as you can what you saw. Accurate reporting can help the Police react to your call quickly.

We have provided a form on which to capture details of incidents. See *Appendix 1*.

## **Crimestoppers**

Crimestoppers is a partnership between the community and the Police. It is backed by a registered charity Crimestoppers Trust whose mission is to unite organizations in the fight against crime. The essence of the scheme is to increase the volume and quality of information provided to the Police and contribute to intelligence led policing.

Crimestoppers enables people to pass information about crime and disorder or the activities of criminals to the Police anonymously. A UK wide telephone number **0800 555 111** is available to ring in total confidence. The information is received by the Police in a dedicated Crimestoppers office and, if likely to be of positive assistance, is forwarded for investigation. The caller may ask for a reward if their information leads to an arrest and charge of a suspect. A system is in place to enable a reward to be paid without jeopardizing anonymity.

## **Terrorism**

In recent years the world has had to get to grips with terrorist crime. Groups have resorted to terrorist crime to publicise their political, religious or ideological cause. Some seek to target particular organisations or individuals while others are more discriminate in their targeting, placing members of the public at direct risk.



It is important to keep the threat in perspective. Terrorist incidents are still uncommon, but when they occur they attract considerable publicity. For most people terrorism will remain something which is only heard on the news. But terrorist activity can happen anywhere, any place and at any time.

The challenge for everyone is to combat the threat from the broad range of terrorist activity, from whatever source, in support of whatever cause – the challenge is growing. The very nature of terrorism means the terrorist often has the element of “surprise” on his side. So awareness, vigilance and timely, accurate and good intelligence are the keys to combating terrorist activity.

The Police cannot defeat terrorism alone, communities defeat terrorism. If you see any suspicious activity:

**CALL THE FREE CONFIDENTIAL ANTI-TERRORIST HOTLINE  
NUMBER 0800 789 321 OR YOUR LOCAL POLICE STATION**

If you see a suspicious package:  
**DON'T TOUCH, WARN OTHERS, MOVE AWAY AND CALL 999**

## **Cambridgeshire Bobby Scheme**

The Bobby Scheme is run by The Shrievally Trust, a registered charity which provides a service to older people aged over 65 and with the aim to prevent burglary by improving home security. Burglary, especially for older people, is a very traumatic experience. By providing rapid assistance and reassurance to the victims, the Bobby scheme aims to alleviate and prevent break-ins.

There are a number of Bobby vans and security advisors to cover Cambridgeshire and Peterborough whose task is to repair minor damage done to property as a result of burglary and to improve home security by installing new locks, chains and other security devices to victims and potential victims. The advisors also provide reassurance to the householder.



If you are aware of someone aged over 65 who is vulnerable and who may benefit from the Bobby Schemes services please contact the Co-ordinator on 07866 602100.

When calling remember to ask for the current charging position. This can change and it is important to give your members the up-to-date position.

## **Registered Traders Scheme**

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Distraction Burglary and Rogue Trader Taskforce manage the Registered Traders Scheme. This scheme helps older and vulnerable members of the community find reliable and honest traders to carry out maintenance and repair work in their homes.

The scheme is for Cambridgeshire residents who are either over 60 or have a learning difficulty or physical disability and needs help in finding a trader. To contact the scheme telephone Age Concern on 01354 696677/01354 696650. The scheme would also like to hear from traders who may be interested in joining the scheme.



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## Vehicle Security

Theft from motor vehicles is a crime we can all help to reduce. Vehicle Crime can cost us dearly in damage to the vehicle, a great deal of inconvenience and increased insurance premiums. Over half of all car crime is carried out by the opportunist thief, so don't give criminals an easy ride.

- Steering wheel and gear stick locks are not expensive and are easy to fit.
- Have the vehicle Registration Number etched onto all glass surfaces, including the head lamps.
- Satellite Navigation Systems are the most sought after items. Always remove the system, including the "sucker" marks left on the surface.
- To protect your wheels and tyres, fit locking wheel nuts.
- Consider marking all your valuables that you frequently take in your car. Keep a note of any serial numbers.
- Remove the ignition key every time you leave your vehicle. Even when filling up with fuel or just popping into a shop. It only takes seconds for someone to get into your car and drive away.
- Lock all doors, close all windows and shut the sunroof every time you leave the vehicle unattended.
- If you do not have a garage, always try to park in a well lit, open location over looked by houses. Remove any items including clothing from the vehicle.
- Don't leave any thing on display, even an old coat left on a seat can be a target for someone to smash and grab.



## **Home Security**

Most burglaries are carried out by opportunist thieves. In 2 out of 10 “break-ins” thieves do not have to use force - entry is made through an open door or insecure window.

Reduce the risk of burglary happening by taking a few simple precautions.

### ***Boundary/Perimeter***

Start at the outside and walk around the whole of the perimeter.

- Check fences, gates, shrubbery and hedges. Look for possible hiding areas or easy ways of gaining entry.
- Check for good visibility from surrounding houses and roadways. Low boundaries at the front of the house give maximum visibility, but high walls or fences of 1.8m (6ft) provide good security at the rear.
- Side entrances should be secured with lockable gates. The height should match that of the rear fence so that any burglar attempting to climb or force the gate will be seen from the road or a nearby house.

### ***Windows***

A third of all burglaries are carried out through a window at the back of the house.

- Fit key operated window locks to all downstairs windows and easily accessible upstairs windows, especially those that cannot be seen from the street or those above a flat roof or next to drain pipe. Remove keys from locked windows and keep them out of sight, but make sure you know where they are in the event of a fire.
- A window lock means the thief will need to break the glass and risk attracting attention.



- Louvre windows are particularly vulnerable because the slats can be removed very easily. Fix the louvre in place with an epoxy resin glue and fit a special louvre lock.
- Fit laminated glass to vulnerable windows. It makes them extremely difficult to break or make a hole.
- Do not forget the garage windows. This is more important if the garage is attached to the house with an internal door leading to the inside of the house.

### **Doors**

If your doors are not secure, then neither is your house.

- Make sure the doors and frames are strong and in good condition, otherwise good locks are useless.
- Some lower door panels are fitted with thin timber materials that, if attacked, offer little resistance. Consider replacement with good quality plywood panels.
- Fit back and front doors with a five lever mortice deadlock.
- Should the door not be thick enough to have a mortice dead lock, the night latch should be changed to a rim dead lock or a rim automatic dead lock.
- French windows and patio doors should be fitted top and bottom with security mortice bolts. If not already fitted, add an anti-lift device to the top channel of the doors.
- If you have an integral door to the garage, this should be of solid construction and locked with a five lever lock and two mortice bolts.
- Consider replacing glass panels with laminated glass.
- If the letter box is close to the locking mechanism fit an internal security letterbox flap.
- Do not forget door viewers and chains for personal security.

### **Around The Home**

When you leave the house even if it is only or short time, make sure that doors and windows are secure. It only takes seconds to steal your property.



- Do not leave keys in obvious places, burglars know where to look.
- Keep garage doors closed and locked.
- If you have a common alleyway, speak to your neighbour about sharing the cost of fitting a strong lockable gate across the entrance.

### ***Lighting***

Good lighting can deter a thief. Fit exterior lights to the front and rear of the house of the house. Exterior security lights are not expensive. Preferred exterior lighting is 'dawn to dusk lighting' rather than lighting with infra red sensors.

### ***Sheds***

The first place that many burglars look is the shed because they are of light construction and are easily forced open. Sheds often contain tools, which can be used for breaking in to the main property.

- If you are unable to secure them with mortice locks, use padlocks or lockable bolts.
- Keep expensive tools in the house, secure ladders with a strong chain and padlock.

### ***Burglar Alarms***

Visible burglar alarms make a thief think twice, noise attracts attention. There are many systems on the market, ranging from a DIY kit to sophisticated systems costing hundreds of pounds.

If you wish to have an expensive system installed, obtain several quotes from reputable installers, preferable those who are members NACOSS.

### ***Property Marking***

To assist in the prevention and detection of crime and the return of stolen property to the rightful owner, property should be marked by a method which is secure, visible and leads to the identity of the owner



Property marking is recommended because:

- It ensures that it can be returned to you if it has been recovered.
- The property becomes less valuable to a thief and is not so easy to dispose of.
- The risk for the person purchasing the property of being prosecuted for handling or receiving stolen goods is increased dramatically.
- The marking of property also has a strong deterrent effect, and it's advisable to advertise that you have marked your property.
- It is often the case that property not positively identified as stolen is returned to the suspected thief.
- Property marking costs little and can bring peace of mind.

Most properties have items that are attractive to the opportunist thief. Cash, jewellery, portable TVs, computers, etc. Some of these items can be concealed from view, so once inside the criminal will have to make time to search.

The Police Service does not test products and cannot recommend any particular company to members of the public but can offer them a list of suppliers who provide similar products / services or direct them to a source and/or directory that lists such suppliers.

There are several ways to mark property depending on the type of object to be marked. The cost of the product has also to be considered.

- You should prepare an inventory of valuable items, including a description and their value. Colour photographs are useful and valuable for your own and police purposes.
- The most common methods of marking are:
  - Ultra Violet [UV] or Invisible Marking
  - A UV pen can put an invisible mark on your property, which can only be seen using UV light. The item is marked with a postcode followed by the house number or name of property. The mark will fade in time, especially when exposed to



sunlight, and can be washed off so it needs renewing regularly.

- Ceramic marking pens have been developed to mark china, glass or any glazed surface. They do not cut or scratch the surface but leave a permanent mark.
- UV pens and easy to use property marking kits can be bought reasonably cheaply from stationers and DIY stores. It is important that stickers are displayed to state that property has been marked.
- The Immobilise Registration Scheme [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com) allows property to be marked electronically and has been endorsed by all 43 Police Forces. Immobilise is a free, web based national register which allows people to record details of their property on a secure database on the internet. Each individual has their own account and anything with a serial number can be registered. Additional items, photographs and certificates can also be downloaded. A free bulk upload service is available for business, public services and other organisations to enable them to register all their property very quickly and easily. Police officers can search Immobilise from any terminal with an internet connection. A second search engine also sits alongside the NMPR. This is called CheckMEND. CheckMEND can be used by both the public and second hand dealers to check items of property they wish to purchase and ensure that they are not handling stolen property.

There are also a number of commercial companies offering property marking and asset registration services. The Association of Chief Police Officers endorses, via its Secured by Design<sup>2</sup> scheme, property marking companies / products which satisfy their criteria. Go to [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com), click on licensed companies and then property identification.

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<sup>2</sup> Secured By Design is managed by ACPO Crime Prevention Initiatives Limited (ACPO CPI) a "not for profit" company wholly owned by ACPO. ACPO CPI also licenses companies to use the Secured By Design logo on those of their products which meet the attack test standards drawn up by bodies such as the British Standards Institute.



## Uninvited Callers

We all wish to live our lives in safety, and we all have a right to feel safe in our own homes. These guidelines are designed to offer practical advice on dealing with bogus callers and rogue traders.

- Lock the doors when you go out, even if it is only for a few minutes. Lock up when you retire for the night, remove the key from the lock, but put the key where you can find it quickly in an emergency but do not leave it on view.
- There is no need to be embarrassed about refusing to let callers into your home and it is always sensible to take precautions. If unsure do not open the door.
- Fit a chain and use it every time you answer the door. Do not remove it until you are sure that the caller is genuine. Take your time when answering the door, think what you will do if it is an unwanted caller.
- Beware of all callers, including women and children, burglars don't always look suspicious. Many are well dressed and use persuasive language to impress you.
- Be particularly cautious of unexpected callers who appear at dusk or in the evening.
- Be wary of cowboy builders or roofers who say that your house is in need of repair. Most reputable builders do not cold call clients.
- Do not be tempted to leave the house to inspect an 'urgent repair' needed to the roof or guttering. Always seek 2 or 3 quotes before you ask a trader to do the work.
- When answering the front door, always ensure that the back door is locked.
- Do not allow anyone to enter your property to use the telephone or toilet.
- A favourite guise of a distraction burglar is to claim to represent the water, gas, electricity or the local council and frequently appear in overalls carrying a tool box.



- Ask to see identification and contact the relevant company/organisation to check they are who they say they are. All water, gas, electricity, telephone and council representatives carry identity cards with a photograph. Keep the door on the chain and ask the individual to pass the card to you for inspection. Genuine callers will not mind being asked for identification. Lock the door when you make the telephone call and do not invite the caller in until you are sure they are genuine.

#### Remember the Simple Message

<b>LOCK</b>	Ensure the back door is locked
<b>STOP</b>	Are you expecting anyone? Look through the window if possible to see who it is.
<b>CHAIN</b>	Put your door chain on before you open the door.
<b>CHECK</b>	Take the identification and look at it, if you are unsure, don't let them in. A genuine caller will not mind being challenged.

You should arrange with at least two neighbours on whom you can call for help.

Keep their telephone numbers beside the telephone

It is sometimes necessary to pay people at the door. This can be an anxious time, but following a few simple precautions can minimise the risk.

- It is advisable not to bring a bag, purse or wallet to the door.
- If at all possible pass money to the caller and receive any change whilst keeping the chain on the door.
- Report any suspicious callers to the Police giving a good description of the individuals.



## **Door Step Sellers**

When you answer the door, whatever the seller may say,

**LOCK** Check back door is locked

**STOP** Ask yourself - are they who they claim to be?

**CHAIN** Use a spy hole and put the door chain on before you open the door. If you are alone and are worried about letting them in ask them to call back when someone else can be with you.

**CHECK** An honest caller won't mind being asked to show some form of identification, but examine it carefully, If you think there is something suspicious, call the Police.

### ***Do I want to buy anything?***

If you do not wish to buy anything, say "no thank you" and shut the door.

### ***Am I being pressured?***

You might be offered what appears to be a generous discount if you buy or sign on the spot, or you could be told that the price is about to go up. These are danger signals. The chances are that the seller doesn't want to give you a chance to change your mind. Even if you are interested you might get a better deal elsewhere. Say that you wish to think it over and do not sign anything. They won't mind calling back if they are genuine.

### ***Could I get a better deal elsewhere?***

Before you commit yourself to spend a lot of money on anything, find out what it would cost elsewhere, particularly for work on your home. Get quotations from at least two reputable firms and compare prices.



### ***Can I afford it?***

If you are buying on credit, insist on being told in writing how many instalments you will have to pay and what they add up to including credit charges. Look at the APR (Annual Percentage Rate) - the higher it is, the more you are paying back. Otherwise, you could end up paying more than you expected. Rogue salespeople often try to conceal the real cost. It's up to you to find out.

### ***Can I find them again?***

Goods sold by any trader must be of a "satisfactory quality", "fit for the purpose" and as "described". If they are not then in some cases you can return them and claim your money back. Services must be carried out with "reasonable care and skill" and within a reasonable time." But having legal rights doesn't help if you are unable to trace the seller or their company. Always keep a note of names and addresses. Be suspicious if the seller and or the company has only a mobile telephone number.

### ***If you want to buy***

Sometimes it may be too late to have second thoughts after you have signed on the dotted line. Read carefully before you sign. "Sign here just for me to show my boss that I called" is familiar sales persons patter. Don't do so unless you have read the form in full and understand it. If anything is unclear, ask the caller to leave the form with you for a day or two and ask a friend to go over it with you.

If you are paying more than £35 for any thing, check that the agreement sets out your cancellation rights. Never sign a blank or partly completed form even if you are told it will save you paperwork. And never sign a satisfaction note or completion form until you are happy with every thing.

### ***Know your rights***

If, as a consequence of someone calling at your home, (whether you invited them or not) you then enter into a contract for goods or services which cost more than £35, you usually have seven days to



change your mind. The seller is obliged by law to give you written details of your right to cancel (with some exceptions). This may be included in the contract or on a separate form.

Failure to do this is a criminal offence, and the contract cannot be enforced. If you cancel the contract within this period in most cases you are entitled to the return of your deposit. However, if you have already received certain goods (such as perishable foods) or if certain services have been carried out, then you will have to pay for these despite having cancelled the contract.

If you cancel the contract after goods have already been supplied to you, you must let the seller collect them. You are not obliged to return them. You must take reasonable care of them in the meantime.

- If you bought the goods or service on credit you usually have a five day cancellation period.
- If there is something wrong with the goods or they are not as described, you may have other rights against the seller.

This is a simplified summary of the law and does not deal with all the exemptions. If you would like further advice about doorstep sellers please telephone Trading Standards for advice on Consumer Direct (08454 04 05 06).



## **Tidiness Against Crime**

Improving the neighbourhood so that people take pride in it deters crime and is an effective way of getting young people involved. If an area looks untidy with graffiti, broken windows, piles of rubbish, derelict buildings and land or abandoned cars, then crime may actually concentrate there.

Removing the dereliction and cleaning up the area may reduce crime but more importantly will reduce the disproportionate fear of crime. If an area looks as if people care for it, the criminal will be able to tell that the same people will not tolerate crime and will take positive action to maintain the environment.

One of the first tasks of a Neighbourhood Watch group should be to look around the area and make sure that it is clean and tidy and make it appear as if the residents are proud of it. This can involve simple things such as:

- Cleaning juvenile scribble off lamp posts and graffiti off walls and fences. Remove it quickly and regularly.
- Cleaning up litter, arrange with members for a regular sweep of the area.
- Try to ensure dogs don't wander loose or foul footpaths and grass areas – If there is a problem, contact the Council Dog Warden.
- Keep gardens neat and tidy, help those who are elderly or infirm to maintain their garden.
- Report defective street lights to the County Council and damage to footpaths to the local Parish or District council.
- Abandoned cars attract vandalism, they create a particular danger to young children, and may become targets for arson. Report details of such vehicles to the City or District Council for your area and they will ensure that they are removed.
- If you need help or advice contact the litter officer at your district council office.



The simple steps above could serve to take away some of the signs that a criminal will note when he is selecting his target.

## **Fire in the home**

The majority of deaths and injuries from fire happen in the home, with the majority of these incidents being caused by the careless handling of fire or hot substances, portable heaters and candles placed too close to flammable materials.

If a fire occurs in your home you may have to make your escape in the dark and in difficult conditions. Escape from a fire will be a lot easier if you have already planned your escape route and know where to go.

- Make sure your planned escape route remains free of any obstructions. Everyone in the house should be made aware of the escape route.
- If you have serious mobility difficulties you may wish to consider having your bedroom on the ground floor, and as near as possible to an exit. If you need assistance to make your escape, it is essential that you have some means of summoning help by your bed, maybe an emergency buzzer or telephone.

## **Smoke Alarms**

A smoke alarm can give you those precious minutes of warning that could help you and your family to get out safely. Smoke alarms cost little, are simple to fit and can give you peace of mind knowing you will be alerted to a fire in the home. Ensure you replace the battery once a year.

If you are hard of hearing there are special devices available, flashing lights or vibrating pads instead of an audible signal. Your



local Fire Service will provide free advice on which device is most suitable.

### **What to do if a fire starts**

- If possible close the door of the room where the fire is and close all doors as you leave. This will help to delay the spread of fire and smoke.
- Before opening a closed door use the back of the hand to touch it. Don't open it if it feels warm – the fire will be on the other side.
- Get everyone out as quickly as possible. Don't bother to pick up valuables. Make your way out as safely as you can and try not to panic.
- Telephone the fire brigade on 999, clearly state the address of the fire.
- Never go back into the house until a fire officer has told you that it is safe to do so.

Almost all fires in the home are preventable. Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service will be happy to advice on fire prevention and safety.



## **Appendix 1**

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## Contacts Sheet

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## How to register with the Home Office

NHW coordinators can order materials from the Home Office. The website address for ordering materials is [www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/publicity\\_catalogue](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/publicity_catalogue). (Please note that between the words publicity and catalogue there is an underscore \_)

We recommend adding this site to your list of favourites to save making errors on input.

The first time you visit the site you will need to register before an order can be placed.

### **Registering**

Look at the top right hand side of the screen for “**Not Registered? Click Here**” this can be found below User Name and Password. After registering you will only need to enter your user name and password when returning to the site.

### **Completing the forms**

Most of the information requested is straightforward except:

Organisation - Type in NHW.

Profession - Select NHW Coordinator from the drop down list.

Building Name - If your building does not have a name you can again use NHW.

Leaving the box headed “secondary address” will not cause a problem if left blank.

You must complete all boxes marked with an asterisk.

Then select **Continue**. You will be told that if successful you will receive an email within the next three days.

To **order materials** you must first register but you can browse the available list of materials and download pdfs without registering.



## How to Obtain a Licence to use the NHW Logo

In order to use the NHW logo on any publicity material such as education materials, websites etc. NHW members must first obtain a licence from the Home Office.

The purpose of the licence is to preserve the reputation and integrity of the logos so as to ensure that they remain available for use by bona fide Neighbourhood & Home Watch groups, and to protect from inappropriate commercial exploitation such as to promote or endorse commercial products and services<sup>3</sup>.

### Process

1. Email your request for a licence to [nwatch@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nwatch@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)
2. You will be sent, by email, a copy of the Terms and Conditions associated with the granting of the licence.
3. Read the Terms and Conditions and be clear that you can comply with them. Then reply to the email confirming acceptance of the Terms and Conditions and stating how you plan to use the logo.
4. Receive an email from the Home Office which will grant you a licence for a period of 5 years and which will also have a copy of the logo attached.
5. Keep your licence in a safe place.

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<sup>3</sup> Extracted from Home Office Guidelines



## Incident Report

An exact description of what you have seen:

--

Time:	
Date:	
Place:	
<b>Description of the people involved</b>	
Male / female	
Approx age:	
Approx height:	
Hair colour/length/style:	
Clothing:	
Other distinguishing features:	
<b>A description of any vehicle involved</b>	
Registration number or part of:	
Make and Model if known	
Type (saloon estate etc)	
Colour:	
Condition of vehicle:	
Direction of Travel	
Other features:	

Police informed

Date:  Time:  Incident No.:



**Neighbourhood Watch Street Sign Order Form**

Please complete your details below and return this form to your local Police Community Support Officer.

To: Police Community Support Officer .....  
..... Police Station  
..... (add address)  
.....

Please supply me with ..... Neighbourhood Watch Street Sign(s)

I have enclosed a cheque for the sum of: £.....  
( £12 each, payable to .....)

The Signs should be delivered to:-  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

To identify the sign, if stolen, please engrave the sign with the postcode and street number of the scheme where the co-ordinator lives so that it can be returned.

Could you please note these details below:

Street Number ..... Postcode .....



### **Proposed Location of Neighbourhood Watch Signs**

Please draw a simple sketch plan of the area in which the pole is situated, giving the name of the road on which it is situated and the details of any numbers or markings on the surface of the pole.

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT A SIGN MAY NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES BE FIXED TO A POLE SHARED WITH EASTERN ELECTRICITY, OR ONE MARKED WITH A RED 'D' (a decayed pole identified for replacement)**