

SOUTH RIVER CITY CITIZENS (SRCC) NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PATROL PROGRAM

Purpose:

The SRCC Neighborhood Watch Patrol Program is an extension of the classic Neighborhood Watch concept, but provides a more proactive element to enhance the ability of a neighborhood to reduce criminal activity. It involves neighborhood volunteers patrolling in clearly-marked vehicles looking for signs of criminal activity, suspicious persons or vehicles and providing a visible presence in a neighborhood to deter criminal activity before it occurs. Criminals attempting to operate in a neighborhood patrolled by volunteers become more at risk of detection. Patrols also show residents that they do not have to be just victims; they can fight back against criminals.

Neighborhood Watch Patrols are non-confrontational. **Volunteers must understand and agree that no volunteer is to confront a suspicious person or approach a suspicious vehicle.** Instead, they are to call 911 and report their concerns to the Austin Police Department. Patrols are the eyes of crime prevention, never the arm. Individuals who express a desire to personally capture a suspect will not be allowed to patrol. A vigilante mentality is a danger to the program, the neighborhood and to the individuals themselves.

Volunteers for Neighborhood Watch Patrol within SRCC commit to at least two one-hour patrols per month. Ideally, this commitment is on a set schedule of day and time to allow for the coordination of maximum coverage of the neighborhood. With proper training, anyone willing to donate at least two hours per month to reduce criminal activity can accomplish this important task.

Magnetic Patrol signs for vehicles will be made available to volunteers at a location that is easily accessible. Volunteers stop by and get the signs just prior to beginning a patrol. The signs are returned after the one-hour shift is completed, and another volunteer picks them up and starts another hour of patrol. In this way several hours of the day can be covered with a minimum number of signs.

Neighborhood Watch Patrol works. Residential and vehicle burglaries have declined rapidly in neighborhoods where patrols are active. And although patrol volunteers may never actually see a burglar, it is apparent that the would-be burglar is seeing the patrol and deciding to move to less alert neighborhoods. A small number of involved residents can actually make the difference.

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Patrol Policies:

The personal safety of the volunteer is the foremost consideration when forming a Neighborhood Watch Patrol.

Patrol volunteers should receive orientation and training to include observation and reporting as well as a "ride along" (supervised patrol) before patrolling.

No weapons will be carried by the volunteer at any time when patrolling.

Volunteer patrol vehicles will be clearly marked with magnetic Neighborhood Watch Patrol signs.

Volunteers are not to get out of their vehicles while on patrol.

Volunteers will never attempt to apprehend a suspect. That is the job of APD.

If criminal activity is observed or suspected, the volunteer will call 911 and give a description of their observations and location of the incident.

If possible, night patrols will be conducted with two volunteers per vehicle. This may be waived for experienced volunteers who feel comfortable with single person patrols.

While patrolling, the volunteer should not play any audio equipment and should keep a window down at least half way in order to hear activity in the neighborhood.

Patrol volunteers will be provided with magnetic signs for the vehicle. Volunteers should have their own clipboard with a pen and note paper to record details of suspicious persons or incidents. Volunteers will provide their own cell phone, and when patrolling at night, a powerful flashlight.

When more than one vehicle will be patrolling at the same time the volunteers should know the cell phone number for each person patrolling.

SRCC Provided Equipment:

Magnetic vehicle signs (2)

Volunteer Provided Equipment:

Charged cell phone

Strong flashlight for night patrols

Clipboard, notepaper and ballpoint pen