



**Richmond
Police Dept.**
100 years of service to
the community

Thirteen Ways to Improve Your Neighborhood Right Now!

The following list is intended to introduce residents who may not have participated in crime prevention efforts to simple steps that can be taken right now to make a difference in their neighborhood.

- 1. Report crime promptly.** Neighbors sometimes don't report criminal activity because they don't want to bother the police. They assume police are too short-staffed to respond, or they believe that there isn't much an officer can (or will) do about a given problem. Whether the issue is graffiti, petty vandalism, or something much more serious, police can't act without first hearing about the problem from you. Calling won't guarantee the police can fix the problem, but failing to call makes it likely that they won't. Don't assume someone else has called. Make the call yourself: 911 or the non-emergency number (510)233-1214. Emergency 911 calls made from a cell phone are routed to the CHP. If you are reporting a crime from your cell phone, program the Richmond Police Department non-emergency number into your phone. After calling, press 0 to be transferred directly to an emergency dispatcher.
- 2. Fix the broken window.** Report nuisances and other non-criminal problems promptly. Examples: junked cars on front lawns, abandoned autos in the streets, old mattresses left to rot in a backyard, or garbage dumped illegally in a vacant lot. When you find yourself thinking, "Someone ought to do something," **do something**. Call Code Enforcement, the property owner, or utilize the City's COR-Connect feature (available on the City of Richmond website: www.ci.richmond.ca.us) to report and document the issue. Then call your neighbors and ask them to call and make a report as well. Keep following up until the issue is resolved: Code Enforcement: (510)621-1569.
- 3. Take away the opportunity for crime.** Think about your home, your vehicle, and even your lifestyle and ask what you could change to take away the opportunity for crime. Lock your vehicle and never leave valuables, even for a few minutes, in a vehicle where would-be thieves might see them. Bushes or trees on your property offer a convenient hiding place for thieves. Trim trees and bushes that block a clear view of your front door and address from the street or make it difficult for a person to see out of the windows in your home. In short, make your front porch visible and make sure your home looks like it has its "eyes" (windows) open. For more crime prevention tips, contact RPD Crime Prevention Manager Michelle Milam at (510)620-6538.
- 4. Reach out!** Meet the youth who live on your block and greet them by name. This is one of the simplest steps an adult can take, yet it can make a profound difference when there is a need for adults and young people to speak to each other in the midst of a neighborhood crisis. It is difficult to help form a safe and supportive community for young people without adults and young people knowing each other. Even those residents who don't have children should know the youth in the neighborhood. By doing this, each adult is better able to help in an emergency and is better prepared to resolve problems when they arise. You can also report truancy by calling the police department.
- 5. Opportunity knocks.** Make a list of the names and phone numbers of *every* neighbor on your block. Don't just do this with one or two neighbors; set a goal of at least 10, and preferably 20 or 30. Find almost any resident who has turned around a problem block and you will find a resident who really knows the people who live there. Did you grow up in a neighborhood where "everyone knew each other," but find today that your neighborhood isn't like that? That's the case for many people, but it's not "society's" fault. Instead, think of it as something you can fix! If you don't know your neighbors' names and contact information, you can't call them about a concern or let them know about a neighborhood problem. Make a point of learning the names and phone numbers of your neighbors this weekend! You can learn how to start a neighborhood watch by calling (510) 620-6538 or e-mailing mmilam@richmondpd.net.
- 6. Make a list of landlords in your areas as well.** As owners of property in the community, landlords are responsible to the neighborhood and should be concerned about the health of the area where their properties are located. You can

find the name and address of the owner of any property, including the rental homes nearby, by contacting the Contra Costa County Recorder's Office: (925)335-7900.

7. Turn your porch light on. Do this every night at dusk and keep it on till dawn. Consider installing a motion sensitive light to brighten dim walk ways near your home. Crime tends to decline in neighborhoods that are well lit. Turning on porch lights is a simple way to start this process. It also makes the street feel more "welcome" to good residents who are out for a walk in the evening or early morning hours. Lit porch lights communicate a higher level of caring for the neighborhood by residents. This can become a daily routine or it can be accomplished by installing a timer. It is also immediate. While you wait for PG&E or the City to install that new streetlight everyone's been asking for, go ahead and add a little more light yourself. Then encourage other neighbors to do the same.

8. Walk around the block. It sounds simple enough, but neighborhoods benefit over time when residents walk around more. Taking a walk around your block can be particularly valuable, for those who feel comfortable doing it. Take a moment to chat with neighbors, including youth, when the opportunity arises. Avoid walking alone in areas where you feel unsafe. Instead, consider gathering a group of neighbors together to walk through your neighborhood once a week. It not only is good for the neighborhood, it is a healthy habit.

9. Drive slowly on neighborhood streets. While we often call for stop signs, traffic lights, and speed bumps, we sometimes forget that we can facilitate a means of slowing down neighborhood traffic ourselves. Remember it is legal to drive a few miles per hour *below* the speed limit in your neighborhood! For example, if the speed limit is 25, try 20 instead. Regular slower driving on neighborhood side streets by multiple neighbors will dampen the desire of racers to use your street. It isn't as fun to cut through a neighborhood if the likelihood of being stuck behind a car traveling at a more respectful pace has increased.

10. Take ownership. Pick up the litter near your home, even if you didn't put it there. Most people are less likely to litter where they don't see litter already. You can help stop the growth of trash in your neighborhood by picking up litter when you see it. Try taking a litter bag with you on your walks and watch what a difference your efforts make.

11. Grow roots. Stable neighborhoods are built on the commitment of long-term residents who would rather live in a healthy community than move to a bigger house. Communities reach stability when conscientious residents allow their roots to grow deep and transform a geographic area that exists as a "neighborhood" in name only into a real community of involved people. Please, stay and help.

12. Help your neighborhood association or similar groups. If you're willing, decide what greater contribution you would like to make - then take the lead and do it. If leadership isn't your desire, at least make sure someone in your household attends local neighborhood association meetings. You'll be kept better informed of the issues facing the neighborhood and how you can help. Even more importantly, you'll have the chance to shape, guide, and participate in the future of your neighborhood. Call (510) 620-6511 if you'd like more information.

13. Know your ordinances and laws. To become more informed as to the local ordinances within the City of Richmond, you can view the Richmond Municipal Code in its entirety by accessing our website at www.ci.richmond.ca.us. Go to "Government", "City Clerk's Office" and finally, click on "Municipal Code". There is a search window that allows you to enter keywords to find the appropriate section of the code.

Finally, don't stop at 13 tasks: Do whatever else you can to make your neighborhood a safe and enjoyable place to live, work, go to school, and raise a family. Remember: living in a good neighborhood isn't a right, it's a responsibility.

City of Richmond Police Department
www.richmondpd.net

City of Richmond Neighborhood Watch Group Registration Form

Whether you organize as a Neighborhood Watch Group or choose some other form of organizing structure, being registered with the City of Richmond Crime Prevention Program provides a means for individual neighborhoods to have direct contact with the City and facilitates communication. Organized and active neighborhoods serve as the formalized “eyes and ears” of the community for the City, allowing the quality and quantity of service provided in the community to be better measured and improved.

The purpose of Neighborhood registration is to encourage residents to take an active role in organizing their neighborhoods and provide training and resources to active watch groups.

Benefits of Registering Your Watch Group *Overview of Neighborhood Organizing*

- ✓ You can receive timely information on events and trainings
- ✓ Become eligible to obtain Neighborhood Watch Signs free of charge
- ✓ Get information on free resources offered to Neighborhood Groups
- ✓ Members of your Watch Group may be added to the City of Richmond Crime Prevention Newsletter mailing list
- ✓ Get instant Crime View Updates and Alerts via the Web
- ✓ Get assistance with the coordination of neighborhood community service projects
- ✓ Organization and leadership training
- ✓ Resources for group functioning and maintaining resident involvement

Confidentiality

Information you provide to the City of Richmond Crime Prevention Program is confidential, and will only be used by the police department and/or approved city agencies for mailing and records purposes. Your information will not be shared with anyone outside of the City.

Registration Requirements

In order for a neighborhood group to receive “registered” status from the City of Richmond Crime Prevention Program, the following conditions must be met:

- 1) You must have at least 5 households signed up to participate in your neighborhood watch**