



# Welcome to Neighborhood Watch of Spirit Lake

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## **Thank you for your interest in starting a *Watch* in your area!**

Staying connected to Spirit Lake Police Department's Neighborhood Watch Program gives you access to crime tips, educational materials, presentations, home security checks, important alerts and more.

### **Forming a WATCH GROUP**

- Fill out the Neighborhood Watch Program Application (pamphlet) and mail or email it as soon as possible. You may also call the information in to the Watch Coordinator.  
*Note: The information is kept solely on file with the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator for communication purposes.*
- Contact neighbors to see who may be interested in getting involved and check-in with them about their availability to attend a meeting.  
*Note: A group is usually comprised of your immediate neighbors—the homes located within your block or cul-de-sac. This may or may not include all the neighbors and may be as few as 6 homes or up to 20 or more homes.*  
  
*Homeowner's Associations, rural communities, mobile home parks, and condo or apartment complexes can also form watch groups. There may be one lead contact for the entire group and then smaller sub-groups where applicable.*
- Contact the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator to find a good date for a meeting. Contact information is at the bottom of this memo. If you're planning to meet at a local church, library, grange or other community location, you might want to check their availability first.
- Once you have a date set, encourage as many neighbors to attend as possible. Either pass out a flyer door-to-door or call or email them. You may want to offer beverages and/or snacks to encourage neighbors, but it is not required.
- At the meeting, the Spirit Lake Police Department's Neighborhood Watch Coordinator and/or officer will go over the crimes in your area and will give a short presentation on deterring crime. Crime prevention materials will also be provided for the group.

*Note: Neighborhood Watch signs may be provided or purchased on-line.*

### **Maintaining your WATCH GROUP**

**Staying in touch is the key to a successful *Watch* group!**

- Set up a contact information sheet for the neighborhood.

*Note: It is helpful to include names, street address, phone numbers, email addresses, vehicles owned, pet information, numbers to call in case of emergency and any special needs.*

- Create a distribution list to notify neighbors about various concerns—via phone tree, email, Facebook, or other form of communication.
- Set up a phone tree list in the event of an emergency.

Remind neighbors to report suspicious activity and any crimes to **SLPD: (208) 623-2701**.

***If a situation requires immediate law enforcement assistance, call 9-1-1***

- Encourage neighbors to look at and possibly sign up on the following websites:  
Nixle public safety and alert system: [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com)  
Crime Reports neighborhood crime incident data: [www.crimereports.com](http://www.crimereports.com)
- Consider distributing a Neighborhood Watch Newsletter—via email or door-to-door.
- Consider having a neighborhood party for National Night-Out Against Crime—held the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday evening in August. Have a BBQ, ice cream social, safety presentation, etc.
- Create a block map of the homes in your area (not required, but helpful in an emergency) and share with the group. Remind them that this information should be respected and used solely for the purposes of the watch group.  
***An 8 ½" X 11" sheet of paper is best for sharing, and a simple sketch is fine***
- Contact your local Neighborhood Watch Coordinator or volunteer to learn about programs available for your community

***Throughout the nation it has been shown that by building relationships with neighbors, we lower crime rates and improve the overall quality of life in our neighborhoods***

***For more information:***

**Spirit Lake Police Department**  
**Neighborhood Watch Coordinator**

Heather McDaniel

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**History of Neighborhood Watch**

*Neighborhoods have been looking out for themselves for a long time. In 1972, the National Sheriffs' Association recognized this important relationship and wanted to bring law enforcement and citizens closer together in their public safety efforts, and this is how the national Neighborhood Watch program was created. In Spirit Lake, informal Block Watches have existed in the past. But in 2018, the Spirit Lake Police Department, with the help of volunteers and proactive citizens, decided to create a new community force in order to further build the connection between law enforcement and the community. One of the first projects has been to encourage the formation of Neighborhood and/or Business Watches.*

*The goal of any watch program is to unite and educate citizens about what they can do to deter crime and have safer neighborhoods. By connecting with neighbors, watch groups have been able to improve the quality of life, and at the same time, restore pride in their neighborhood. Some groups have connected with local businesses and/or organizations to collaborate on projects such as community cleanups, park restoration, shred days and more.*