

## ORLANDO POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### 2209.1, NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM

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CHIEF OF POLICE:	ERIC D. SMITH

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### 1. PURPOSE

This policy sets forth specific guidelines for the utilization of civilian volunteers associated with the Orlando Police Department through Neighborhood Watch.

### 2. POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Orlando Police Department to utilize the Neighborhood Watch Program to assist in the overall success of the organization. The goal of the Neighborhood Watch Program will be to make Orlando a safer, more livable city through crime prevention and problem-solving strategies.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

Neighborhood Watch is an organized partnership between the Orlando Police Department and the citizens of Orlando. It is a shared neighborhood problem-solving responsibility between the police and the citizens of Orlando. Neighborhood Watch participants are organized and trained volunteer citizens who act as the eyes and ears of the Orlando Police Department.

## **4. PROCEDURES**

### **4.1 ORGANIZATION**

The Neighborhood Watch Program shall fall organizationally under the Community Relations Division and shall work under the direction of the Crime Prevention Unit supervisor.

### **4.2 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Crime Prevention Unit supervisor and Neighborhood Watch Specialist(s) shall have administrative responsibility for the program to include training, planning, coordinating, evaluating and promoting Neighborhood Watch events/programs. Neighborhood Watch Specialist(s) will provide technical assistance in the development, operation and management of Neighborhood Watch programs.

### **4.3 REQUIREMENTS**

The Neighborhood Watch Specialist(s) shall ensure that active Neighborhood Watch groups meet the following minimum requirements:

- a. One Block Captain is required per Neighborhood Watch group.
- b. Conduct two meetings per year. Participation in National Night Out (NNO) can count as one of the meetings.
  - a. NNO began in 1984 as an effort to promote involvement in crime prevention activities, police-community partnerships, neighborhood camaraderie, and to send a message to criminals that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back. NNO is America's night to give crime and drugs a going away party. It is held each year in October. The Orlando Police Department encourages all residents to turn on their porch lights and gather outside with their neighbors to show unity against crime and drugs.
  - b. National Night Out gives neighbors:
    - i. A fun opportunity to get to know each other
    - ii. A relaxed atmosphere to meet the officers who protect and serve them
    - iii. An opportunity to meet local officials

### **4.4 BLOCK CAPTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES**

Neighborhood Watch Specialist(s) shall coordinate the duties of Block Captains. Block Captains are the direct liaison between neighborhood citizens and the Orlando Police Department. Block Captains will:

- a. Coordinate the required yearly meetings and distribute the invitations to all members.
- b. Distribute crime information from the Orlando Police Department to all block participants.
- c. Coordinate participation in the annual NNO event.
- d. Maintain accurate participation lists and notification chains.
- e. Only use notification chains to call neighbors for crime prevention related matters. These lists shall not be shared with anyone who is not a member of the Block Captain's Neighborhood Watch group.
- f. Ensure that this policy is provided to each member of their group.

#### 4.5 NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH SIGNS

Neighborhood Watch signs are one of the core elements of the Neighborhood Watch program. Neighborhood Watch Specialist(s) shall coordinate and facilitate the distribution and installation of Neighborhood Watch signs in neighborhoods with Neighborhood Watch groups that have met the following requirements:

- a. Attended two initial training meetings.
- b. Submitted a copy of their completed notification chain to the staff of the Neighborhood Watch Unit.

If a Neighborhood Watch group becomes inactive, the sign can be removed at the discretion of the Orlando Police Department. Neighborhood Watch signs are owned by the City of Orlando.

#### 4.6 SAFETY GUIDELINES AND RULES

It is paramount that volunteers who are associated with the Orlando Police Department through the Neighborhood Watch Program serve only as the extra “**eyes and ears**” of law enforcement. Neighborhood Watch participants should never try to take action on those observations. All suspicious or criminal activity observed by participants while engaged in Neighborhood Watch activities should be reported to the Orlando Police Department by calling 911 or, if not an emergency, 321.235.5300. Law enforcement should be the only ones to take action based on observations of suspicious activity.

#### 4.7 PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

The Neighborhood Watch program is a way to practice crime safety measures that minimize opportunities for criminals and help citizens avoid becoming victims of crimes. The program provides a way for citizens to participate responsibly with the Orlando Police Department in crime prevention safety techniques. The safety of the citizens who participate in Neighborhood Watch groups is of paramount importance. Citizens participating in the Orlando Police Department Neighborhood Watch Program agree to do the following:

- a. Never attempt to arrest or detain a person.
- b. Never check or inspect a suspected crime scene(s).
- c. Always report suspicious activity and wait in a safe place until the arrival of a police officer.
- d. Never confront or accuse a person suspected of a criminal offense.
- e. Never attempt to enforce any traffic laws.
- f. Report all suspicious information to the Orlando Police Department.
- g. Never disseminate photo(s), video(s) or any other document(s) of possible suspect(s) under the guise of the Neighborhood Watch program unless directed by the Community Relations Division.
- h. Never carry a gun or any other weapon when participating in Neighborhood Watch activities. Regardless of any local, State or Federal permits/license the participant may have been issued, guns shall not be carried by Neighborhood Watch members during their participation in Neighborhood Watch activities

#### 4.8 REPORTING

When calling the Orlando Police Department, Neighborhood Watch participants will identify themselves as a member of Neighborhood Watch; provide the dispatcher with their name and contact information; explain the incident and provide a description or the identity of the suspect; and remain on the phone with the dispatcher until it is determined by the dispatcher to disconnect.

#### 4.9 GENERAL

As a member of the Orlando Police Department Neighborhood Watch program, participants are not provided any type of insurance that would cover liability or injury while engaged in Neighborhood Watch activities. The Orlando Police Department accepts the service of volunteers associated with the Neighborhood Watch program with the understanding that participants will comply with this policy and that they serve at the sole discretion of the Orlando Police Department. The Chief of Police may, at any time, terminate the volunteer's relationship with the Department.

<b>5. FORMS AND APPENDICES</b>
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N/A