

Beaverdale

Neighborhood Watch

Block Captain Guide





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Disclaimer

This document is meant as a guide. Its purpose is to describe how a typical Neighborhood Watch is organized and how it could function. It does not cover everything about Neighborhood Watch Groups and you are not required to follow what is in it. In fact, the only requirement is that you get to know your neighbors and you look out for one another. Simply put, use this guide to help organize your Neighborhood Watch Group.

What is a Neighborhood Block Watch?

Neighborhood Watch is:

1. Citizens and police working in partnership to reduce crimes and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods.
2. A cohesive body of concerned citizens addressing issues that concern the entire community.
3. Neighbors getting to know each other, taking the time to care about each other and working together in a program of mutual assistance.

Why Neighborhood Watch?

Whether you live in a high crime area or not, a comprehensive Neighborhood Watch Program holds many rewards for your family and neighborhood.

Neighborhood Watch programs instill a greater sense of security and reduce the fear of crime in your community.

The residents that live in an area know the needs of the area better than anyone. By communicating with each other and working together as a team, your community can make a difference.

Some benefits of Neighborhood Watch are:

1. **Reducing the risk of becoming a victim of crime.** The risk is reduced because participants are taught to take preventative measures to substantially decrease the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime. Law enforcement agencies report that Neighborhood Watch Programs reduce the risks of home burglaries, vandalism, personal assault, and fraud. Active Neighborhood Watch groups take control of their streets so that gangs and other criminals cannot.
2. **Being better prepared to respond to suspicious activity.** Communication between the neighborhood and the police department is crucial. Part of the Neighborhood Watch Program is



learning how to identify and report suspicious activity. You will also learn to provide the police with the information that they need to resolve the issue.

3. **Information that impacts your neighborhood.** Neighborhood Watch Programs are designed to keep participants apprised of trends in criminal activity so that they will be better prepared to prevent it from occurring in their neighborhood.
4. **Obtaining Neighborhood Watch signs to post in your neighborhood.** Criminals know that if a neighborhood has a Neighborhood Watch sign posted, the neighborhood is not an easy target. It is a notice that the neighborhood is organized and does not tolerate criminal activity in the area. The sign is proof that your neighborhood has safeguards in place to detect crime and report suspicious activity to the police. ***A watch sign is only effective by the strength of the watch group.**
5. **Knowing your neighbors.** Neighborhood Watch promotes getting to know your neighbors and their patterns. You will learn to be aware of activity that does not fit with regular schedules. This means that when you are away, you can feel more secure about your property. This also instills a sense of community.
6. **Reducing the fear of crime and making your neighborhood more livable.** Neighborhood Watch increases the number of arrests and convictions by serving as a conduit between law enforcement and the community.
7. **Allowing other areas of concern to be addressed.** Neighborhood Watch participants can address other issues that concern their neighborhood or community. You might choose to focus your attention on areas such as: recreational areas for children, neighborhood revitalization, fire prevention, or school safety programs.

How much work is involved in a Neighborhood Watch?

That depends on your neighborhood. Some neighborhoods have significant areas of concern that need to be addressed. Other neighborhoods might want to simply maintain their area and do not need to devote a great deal of time to a program. Your limitations are those that you set for yourself.

What are the responsibilities of the Neighborhood Watch Captain?

The role of the Neighborhood Watch Captain is to serve as the coordinator and liaison for the Neighborhood Watch Group. It is up to the Neighborhood Watch Captain to coordinate and delegate the responsibilities of their Neighborhood Watch group. This includes the following:



1. Maintain an updated list of all member names, addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers.
2. Set-up a communication network for your area. This might include creating a telephone tree, email group list, social media group or neighborhood map.
3. Greet new neighbors that move into the neighborhood. Have a welcome packet available to hand them with information on the Block Watch. Encourage them to get involved and be included in the neighborhood mailing list.
4. Identify neighborhood problems and seek resolutions.
5. Encourage involvement from other watch group members.

What are the ideal characteristics of a Neighborhood Watch Captain?

Every neighborhood and Neighborhood Watch Captain is unique. The ideal Neighborhood Watch Captain would have the following attributes:

1. An outgoing personality that truly cares about people
2. A sincere desire to better the neighborhood
3. Live in the neighborhood where they are Captain
4. Organized and detail orientated
5. Creative and willing to try new things
6. Excellent communication skills

What are the responsibilities of Neighborhood Watch Members?

Everyone participating in Neighborhood Watch plays a significant role in the success of the program. Residents should:

1. Learn neighbors' names and be able to recognize them and their vehicles.
2. Keep a copy of the neighborhood map in an easily accessible place and update it with new information.
3. Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings and activities.
4. Be alert to unusual or suspicious behavior in your neighborhood, communicate to neighbors and inform your Neighborhood Watch captain. Call the police department if warranted (emergency only 9-1-1, non-emergencies (515)283-4811



5. Do not take any risks to prevent a crime or try to make an arrest. Remember, your job is to report crime. Apprehending criminals is the responsibility of the professionals at the Police Department. **Neighborhood Watch Members are not vigilantes.**
6. Watch your neighbors' homes when they are away. Ask them to return the favor. This includes picking up mail/newspapers and putting back garbage cans if left out. Do not leave signals that say, "no one is home."
7. Above all, become involved. It is the most effective way to reduce/prevent crime and make your neighborhood safe.

Why do I need to know my neighbors?

Getting to know your neighbors, their families, their habits, etc.; is one of the most important aspects of a successful Neighborhood Watch Program. Knowing these aspects of your neighbors' lives will allow you to respond effectively to most emergency situations. This may help you to prevent a crime or even save a life. After all, how will you know if something is "out of the ordinary" if you do not know what is "ordinary"?

What is a Neighborhood Watch Map?

A Neighborhood Watch Map is designed to denote the precise location of each individual on your streets. If you decide to design a Neighborhood map, it should include home addresses, names of the occupants, telephone numbers and or email addresses. These maps should be kept in a place that is easily accessible to family members, yet safe from strangers. Sharing personal information is voluntary – you cannot force or require anyone to release their personal information. If someone chooses not to share their personal information, they are still welcome to participate in the neighborhood Watch Program.

How do I start a Neighborhood Watch Program?

Review the enclosed materials and discuss the idea of starting a Neighborhood Watch program with your immediate neighbors. Remember that 100% participation is desired, however, it is not a requirement for the program to work. Your first goal is to obtain at least 50% participation from the residents within your Neighborhood Watch boundaries. Usual boundaries include the immediate street in which you reside; however, you are free to choose your own program boundary. Requiring participation is how residents get to know who lives on their street. Often this is difficult to achieve if your area is too large. Most successful large groups start out on one block and then assist in setting up Neighborhood Watch programs on surrounding blocks. Each street should have a captain who hosts meetings for their block, but who also attends monthly meetings with other area captains within the Neighborhood Watch.



Next, talk with your neighbors. Their participation is crucial to the success of your program.

1. Introduce yourself if you do not know a neighbor.
2. Ask if they have interest in becoming involved in a Neighborhood Watch Program.
3. Discuss neighborhood concerns.
4. Describe the benefits of Neighborhood Watch Programs.
5. Let them know that Neighborhood Watch Programs do not require frequent meetings or personal risk.
6. Ask for their support and participation.

Once you have decided to proceed with starting a Neighborhood Watch Program, call your Neighborhood Based Service Delivery Officer of the Des Moines Police Department and invite them to attend. To ensure this, please set-up a mutually acceptable meeting date/time at least one month prior to notifying neighbors.

*Please note that people often think that their neighbors will be available on weekends. Past experience has shown us that weekend meetings result in poor attendance. The best nights for Neighborhood Watch meetings are Tuesdays and Thursdays. Weekends are good days to block parties, but not to hold initial Neighborhood Watch Meetings.

Ideally, the meeting should be held somewhere within the neighborhood. This makes it convenient for everyone to attend and makes your efforts visible within the community. Meetings can be held in someone's home, a neighborhood school, local park, churches, etc.

Once all of the logistics have been set, distribute an invitation or flyer. An example of a Block Watch invitation flyer is included in this manual. This flyer can be copied for your convenience.

What is expected of a Neighborhood Watch Captain at the first meeting?

Meetings can be informal or they can be planned affairs including BBQs, potlucks, etc. Keep in mind that the initial presentation given by the Police Department representative generally takes forty-five to ninety minutes, depending on the concerns of the group. This usually does not allow for other speakers to participate in the same meeting. A few tips for having a successful meeting include:

1. Have a sign-in sheet ready so that people can sign-in upon arrival.
2. Name tags are a good icebreaker if participants do not know each other
3. Having a small table is helpful so that your Police Department representative can have handout materials available for your neighbors.
4. Have chairs for everyone. If you do not have enough, you should include in your invitation that everyone should bring their own.

When it's time to begin, the Neighborhood Watch Captain should make opening remarks and then allow the Police Department representative to take over.



The Police Department representative will facilitate a discussion with the participants as to what brought them together. They will address their concerns about the future of their neighborhood and how a Neighborhood Watch can help. Points that will be discussed during this meeting include:

1. The importance of communication within the neighborhood as well as with the Police Department.
2. When to call the Police and how to provide information to better assist them in resolving issues.
3. Strategies to better secure your home.
4. What services and programs are available to you from the Des Moines Police Department?

After a Q&A session, the Police Department will again introduce the Block Watch Captain. This is a good opportunity for the captain to:

1. Thank everyone for coming.
2. Discuss development of a neighborhood map.
3. Invite people to stay and enjoy refreshments (if available).
4. Discuss the future plans of your Neighborhood Watch group and ask for volunteers (Co-Captains) to assist in planning and implementing said plans.

Neighborhood Watch Street Signs.

The City of Des Moines is working to provide Neighborhood Watch Groups with street signs to help designate their neighborhood as a participant in the Neighborhood Watch Program. The following guidelines have been instituted for this program:

1. An Application for a Neighborhood Watch Sign must be completed in its entirety. A copy of the form can be found in the Appendix of this Manual.

WHAT NOW?

The first meeting with your Neighborhood is only the beginning. Meeting on a regular basis allows participants to become better acquainted with each other and promotes communication. The key to keeping a Neighborhood Watch group active is maintaining interest. By getting everyone involved, you will create a feeling of pride and safety that leads to a more cohesive neighborhood. Get involved with the Beaverdale Neighborhood Association by attending quarterly meetings. A lot of community information is shared at these meetings. For more information go to Beaverdale.org. Additionally, the Neighborhood Watch Coordinators created a private Facebook Group to connect Block Captains for the purpose of sharing information and in turn they can share the information to their perspective watch groups. The Facebook Group can be found here:

Beaverdale Block Captains: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/720853734774347/>



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Make belonging to your Neighborhood Watch Group enjoyable. Remember that people will most likely become involved if the programs are fun and meaningful. Use your imagination. Here are some ideas to promote ongoing communication between neighbors:

1. Block parties. Residents can request to have their street blocked off to hold a party
2. Working parties. If residents have similar projects such as painting, landscaping, etc., they are accomplished more efficiently when a group performs the tasks together.
3. Holiday activities. Decorate your homes, have a Halloween contest, an Easter egg hunt or a 4th of July street party. These are examples of a few simple activities that will help maintain good relations between neighbors.
4. Car-pooling. Share a ride to work, to shopping centers, or to grocery stores when possible.
5. Neighborhood Yard Sales. Neighborhood yard sales attract a large number of customers and are a good way to clean out your home or garage.
6. Neighborhood Parents. Develop a "neighborhood parent system". Identify homes where children and furry kids (pets!) can go if they need assistance when their parents are not at home.
7. Telephone visits. Schedule to check on your elderly neighbors. Ensure that they are feeling well and not in need of any assistance. Be a good neighbor.

How do I Reach the Des Moines Police Department?

1. Call 9-1-1 for emergencies
2. Call 515 283-4811 for non-emergencies
3. Narcotics Complaint Line 515 283-4830
4. Traffic Complaint Hot Line 515 271-4650

Additionally:



NSBD Officer:
Senior Police Officer
Trudy Paulson
515 339-3059
tlpaulson@dmgov.org



Unit Commander:
Lieutenant
Tina Kalar
TMKalar@dmgov.org



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Appendix A: Burglary Deterrents, General Safety Guidelines, Reporting Suspicious Activity

Burglary Deterrents

- Cut Grass/Shovel Driveway
- Barking pet dog (doesn't have to be large dog, chihuahua works just fine)
- Close and lock windows when away from home
- Lock doors with deadbolt locks (use 4-inch screws for strike plate)
- Close garage even when home
- When away for extended period, hold mail/newspaper
- Have an alarm system or the indication of an alarm system
- Have surveillance cameras or the indication of surveillance cameras
- Trim back shrubs/bushes to prevent dark area or hiding spots
- Have motion triggered exterior lights

General Safety Guidelines

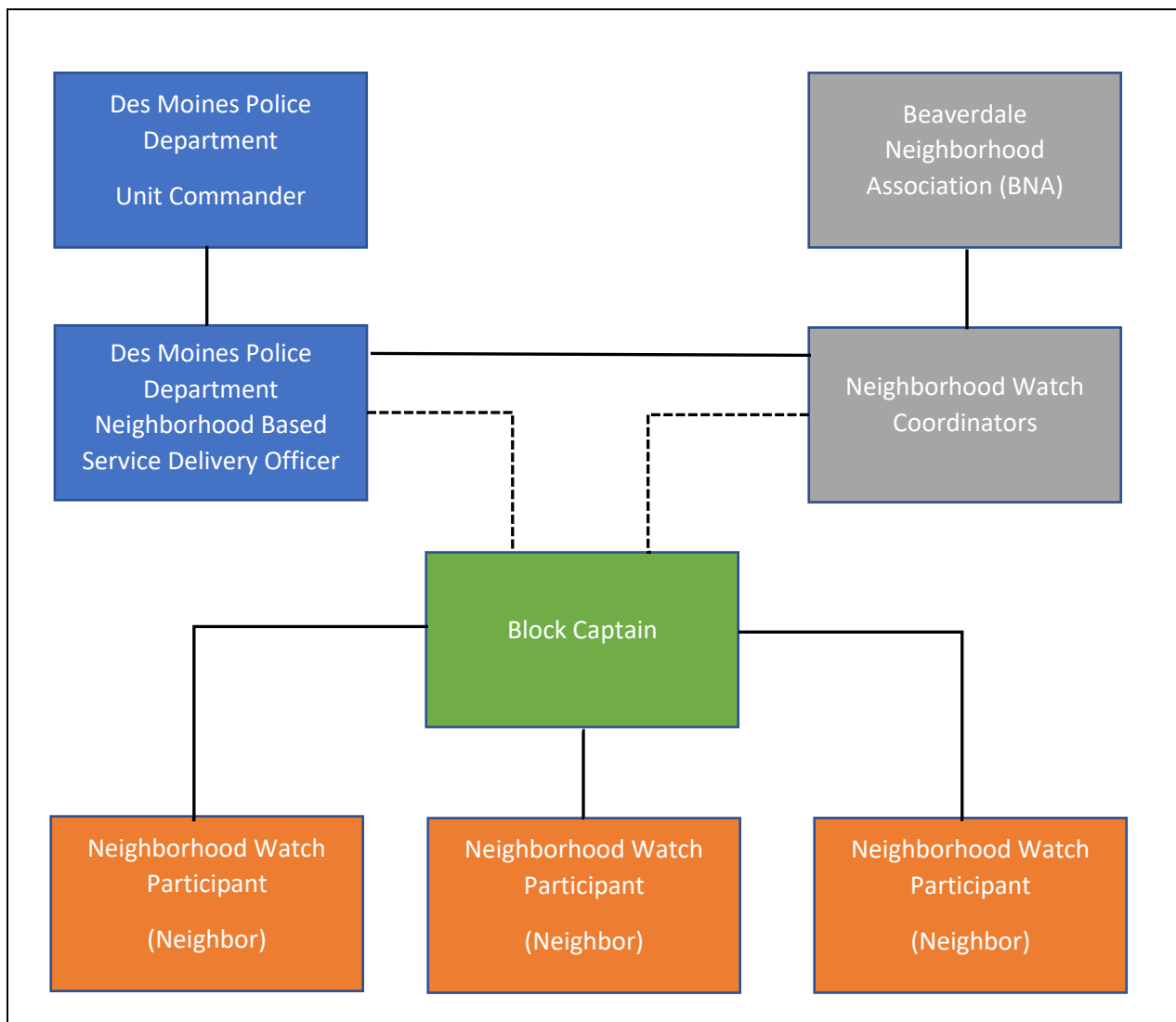
- Don't store valuables in the master bedroom. That is the first place a burglar goes
- Store valuables in a bank safe deposit box. If not an option, have a safe in the home that is bolted to floor or too heavy to easily move.
- Record serial #'s of valuables (firearms, electronics, etc.)
- Take pictures of jewelry
- Let a neighbor know if you intend to be away for an extended period of time.

Reporting Suspicious Activity/People to Police

- STAY CALM
- Start with the basics
 - Your Location
 - Description of person (race, gender, approximate age, height, weight, hairstyle/color, facial hair, scars, tattoos, clothing including shoes)
 - Vehicle description if applicable (license plate #, color, make, model)
- Move to specifics
 - Type of crime
 - When did crime occur
 - Where did crime occur

Appendix B: Beaverdale Neighborhood Watch Hierarchy

The heart of the neighborhood watch hierarchy revolves around the Block Captain. Multiple people could take on the Block Captain role in a Co-Captain capacity. The Block Captain is directly related to multiple neighborhood watch participants comprising of their neighbors. The Block Captain is loosely associated to the Neighborhood Watch Coordinators and the DMPD Neighborhood Based Service Delivery Officer (NBSD). The Neighborhood Watch Coordinators and the NBSD Officer work together to operate as guides to the Block Captain but they do not dictate how the Block Captain coordinates their neighborhood watch. The NBSD Officer reports to the DMPD Unit Commander and the Neighborhood Watch Coordinators are a sub group of the BNA Neighborhood Association.





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Appendix C: Neighborhood Watch Invitation

See attachment

Appendix D: Neighborhood Watch Sign Application

See attachment

Appendix E: Smart911

With Smart911, you can provide 9-1-1 call takers and first responders critical information you want them to know in any kind of emergency.

When you call 9-1-1, your Smart911 Safety Profile displays on the 9-1-1 screen and the 9-1-1 call takers can view your addresses, medical information, home information, description of pets and vehicles, and emergency contacts. You can provide as much or as little information as you like.

Smart911 is a national service meaning your Smart911 Safety Profile travels with you and is visible to any participating 9-1-1 center nationwide.

For more information, visit: smart911.com

Appendix F: Neighborhood Based Service Delivery (NBSD) Trudy Paulson

Senior Officer Trudy Paulson is our Neighborhood Based Service Delivery (NBSD) Officer with the Des Moines Police Department. She assists with community policing and Neighborhood Watch for the Beaverdale Area.



Trudy Paulson
Senior Police Officer

PATROL SERVICES BUREAU
NEIGHBORHOOD BASED SERVICE DELIVERY

Des Moines Police Department
25 East First Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Cell (515) 339-3059
Fax (515) 237-1661

tpaulson@dmgov.org



Neighborhood Watch Invitation

Hi Neighbor!

This information is from _____. I live at _____.
I have volunteered to be the Beaverdale Neighborhood Association (BNA) Neighborhood Watch Captain for our neighborhood area.

Attached is a request for information we neighbors need to share to form a Watch Group.
Please complete and return to me, preferably by person, or in my mailbox. This will provide the information needed to share with other participants to form our neighborhood watch group.

Let's all work together to keep Beaverdale safe.

Helpful numbers:

You can always call the Des Moines Police Department Non-emergency number at: 515-283-4811 or call 9-1-1 for an emergency.	
Other useful phone numbers are:	
Abandoned Cars:	515 283-4046
Animal Control:	515 248-6050
Appliance Haul Away:	515 283-4050
Complaints (Noise, Premises or Nuisance):	515 283-4046
Health Code Violations:	515 283-4997
Mosquitoes:	515 283-4997
Odor Complaint Hotline	515 244-0336
Sewer Maintenance:	515 283-4950
Snow Removal:	515 283-4950
Street Cleaning:	515 283-4950
Vacant Residential Complaints:	515 283-4046
Vacation Watch:	515 283-4811 (When calling indicate begin and end dates of vacation)

Your Neighbor.

Revised: 11/21/2022

Beaverdale Neighborhood Association

Neighborhood Watch Program

With the help of the Des Moines Police Department and the Beaverdale Neighborhood Association Board of Directors, you are now a helpful part of the Beaverdale Neighborhood Watch Program. Together, we can help keep our neighborhood safe.

Your volunteer block captain(s) will maintain the contact list. They will be responsible for contacting neighbors, acquiring contact information and distributing directories.

If you see anything suspicious, don't hesitate to contact your block captain or the police.

Please fill in the watch directory information and return it to your block captain. Only fill in what you feel comfortable sharing.

Thank You

Watch Directory Information:

Names _____

Address _____

Phone Numbers _____

E-mail Address _____

Children _____

Pets _____

Vehicles & License Plate # _____

Emergency Contact _____

Neighborhood Watch Sign Application (Beaverdale)



Congratulations! You and your neighbors have taken a positive step to come together as a community in order to promote safety and crime prevention. Now, you would like to make known that your community operates as a team. Neighborhood Watch Signs indicate to the public that the neighbors in the area are on alert. Remember, a sign doesn't make a successful neighborhood watch. It's YOU and the active participation of your neighbors which contribute to its success!

To apply for a Neighborhood Watch Sign:

- Meet with the Neighborhood Based Service Delivery Officer (NBSD) as a group. (Senior Police Officer Trudy Paulson: 515 339-3059, tlpaulson@dmgov.org)
- Complete the Application
- Send the completed application to your NBSD Officer

Upon approval, the city will determine if new/replacement sign(s) are warranted. If approved, there is a \$40 fee for each sign. Sign fees are currently being subsidized by the Beaverdale Neighborhood Association (subject to change). Neighborhood watch areas may purchase signs with their own funds. However, those requesting reimbursement may be subject to a wait list due to number of requests and available budget.

*Application does not guarantee neighborhood watch sign(s) will be granted.



Neighborhood Watch Sign Application



APPLICANT INFORMATION (SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY BLOCK CAPTAIN)

Last Name		First		M.I.	Date	
Street Address					Apartment/Unit #	
City		State		ZIP		
Phone		E-mail Address				

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH AREA

Describe the watch area/boundary. e.g. 48th Place from Hickman to Snyder Ave, please use the space below to sketch the watch area (see example). If more space is needed, please attach additional sheets.

Has your entire watch group met with your Neighborhood Based Service Delivery Officer (NBSD)?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, when?
Does your watch area currently have watch signs?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, please indicate location of signs on attached sketch of watch area.

DISCLAIMER AND SIGNATURE

This application does not guarantee neighborhood watch sign(s) will be granted. Final decision is determined by The Traffic and Transportation Department of the city of Des Moines. If granted, The Traffic and Transportation Department will determine location and number of signs. Traffic and Transportation reserves the right to remove signs, if warranted. There is a \$40 fee per sign. The Beaverdale Neighborhood Association is currently subsidizing the fee (subject to change). Neighborhood watch areas may purchase signs with their own funds. However, those requesting reimbursement may be subject to a wait list due to number of requests and available budget.

***Check payable to:** The City of Des Moines

Block Captain Signature	Date
Signature of NSBD Officer	Date



NSBD Officer:
Senior Police Officer
Trudy Paulson
515 339-3059
tlpaulson@dmgov.org



Unit Commander:
Lieutenant
Tina Kalar
TMKalar@dmgov.org

Beaverdale Neighborhood
Watch Coordinators
Mike McCarthy
Brent Millis
NeighborhoodWatch@beaverdale.org

















Neighborhood Watch Sign Application






BEAVERDALE
Neighborhood Association

Example Watch Area Boundary Sketch: (Can be hand-drawn)

Cross Street Name

   <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Neighbor Address #</div>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Neighbor Address #</div>   <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Neighbor Address #</div> 	Watch Area Street Name	  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Neighbor Address #</div>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Block Captain Address #</div>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Neighbor Address #</div>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Neighbor Address #</div>  
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Cross Street Name

	Indicates neighborhood watch participant.
	Indicates Block Captain.
	Indicates existing neighborhood watch sign.



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