

Community Watch Program



"Crime Prevention through Community Engagement"

The concept of Community Watch has existed for hundreds of years. Originally, townspeople would grab a lantern and walk various business districts to prevent crime. Their presence was obvious and served as a deterrent to those looking to commit crimes.

Over the years, the program evolved into neighbours meeting to discuss community issues, learn crime prevention techniques and share information. Neighbours worked together to maintain an awareness of the activities that surrounded them and to report crime as it occurred. The seeds for community mobilization in support of crime prevention and community safety had gradually been planted.

The Community Watch Program has recently evolved into a variety of problem - oriented Watch programs that are community - driven and police supported. In partnership with local police, community members may learn how to make their homes and businesses less inviting for opportunistic criminals, how to participate in other crime prevention programs and how to recognize and safely report any suspicious activity in their respective neighbourhoods (Neighbourhood & Rural Watch), businesses (Business Watch), cottages (Cottage Watch) and highways (Road Watch).

Though it is a community's needs which determine what or all programs that are required, it is the community - driven support that remains critical for program sustainability and overall success of each program implemented. There must also always be an adequate number of community volunteers that agree to form a Community Watch Committee.

Strong individual, community, and police support is what enables a Community Watch program to be effective and by working together, we may all work towards our vision of safe communities – a secure Ontario.