



A GUIDE FOR APARTMENT WATCH LEADERS

Partnering to make Greensboro safe for all people.



GREENSBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT



GREENSBOROPOLICE



GREENSBORO-POLICE-DEPARTMENT



GREENSBOROPOLICEDEPARTMENT



@GSO_POLICE



ABOUT APARTMENT WATCH:

Apartment Watch Defined

Greensboro Apartment Watch is a formal program designed to make apartment complexes safer. It is a partnership between owners of rental developments, property management companies, renters and law enforcement officials, all working together to improve quality of life for tenants.

Apartment Watch is NOT

- A vigilante group or residents taking the law into their own hands.
- A group of residents pursuing criminals themselves or becoming involved in criminal events.

Getting Started

Step 1: Get to know your Community Resource Officer and attend training workshop (*page 3*)

Step 2: Get a security survey (*page 5*)

Step 3: Include a crime free addendum in your lease (*page 7*)

Step 4: Develop a plan to promote and maintain the apartment watch (*page 8*)

Community Resource Teams

District 1
100 Police Plaza
Greensboro, NC 27401
336-373-3677

District 3
300 South Swing Road
Greensboro, NC 27409
336-373-2637

District 2
2602 South Elm-Eugene Street
Greensboro, NC 27406
336-373-2496

District 4
1106 Maple Street
Greensboro, NC 27405
336-373-4035

To determine what division you are located in visit our website at www.gsopd.org and click on "Our Communities."

PURPOSE AND GOALS:

Police officers cannot be everywhere, at all times. In the absence of an officer, a successful apartment watch group can be the “eyes and ears” of law enforcement. Property Managers have an understanding of what goes on in their communities, and can reduce crime by utilizing prevention practices and cooperating with law enforcement.

General Purpose of Apartment Watch

- Managers/Residents can problem-solve current problems in their community
- Managers/Residents can work together to achieve future goals
- Managers/Residents can gather resources to address community needs
- Managers/Residents can improve the quality of life in their community

Specific Goals of Apartment Watch

- Managers/Residents build relationships with community officers
- Managers/Residents build relationships with each other
- Managers/Residents learn how to make their homes and property more secure
- Managers/Residents watch out for each other, the apartment community, and report suspicious activity to the police

Standards for Maintaining “Active” Status as a Watch Group- *The designated Community Resource Officer has discretion to decide if groups are within compliance of these standards for the maintenance of their group status and community signage.*

- Must have active Manager/Leader
- Manager/Leader will attend Community Advisory Council (or equivalent for their district) once a quarter
- Groups must hold 2 meetings a year
 - Participation in National Night Out can include one of the group’s annual meetings
 - Apartment properties can meet this requirement by including the CRO in any social event/community gathering held by property management
- Meetings should have at least 5 percent attendance from that community

STEP ONE: Get to Know your Community Resource Officer and Attend a Training Workshop

Community Resource Officer (CRO):

- Guides management as they form Apartment Watches
- Provides leadership and supports management as they face challenges and work on goals
- Offers updated crime prevention information and training
- Communicates directly with Apartment Watch Coordinator

Find your CRO [here](#)

Training Workshop:

- CRO will hold a training workshop for apartment managers and staff
- CRO will provide information about good security practices, including the principles of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)
- CRO will provide resources and helpful materials to apartment watch

STEP TWO: Get a Security Survey

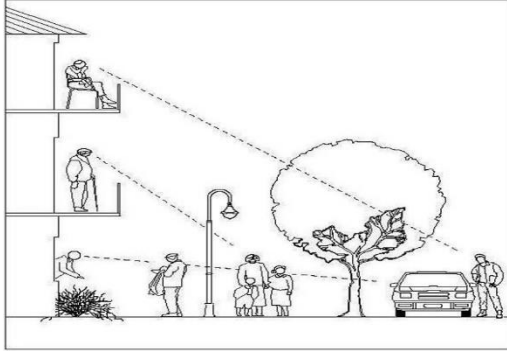
- The security survey is part of your Apartment Watch certification
- Good physical security, along with CPTED, makes property less attractive to criminals

The Following Areas Will Be Assessed:

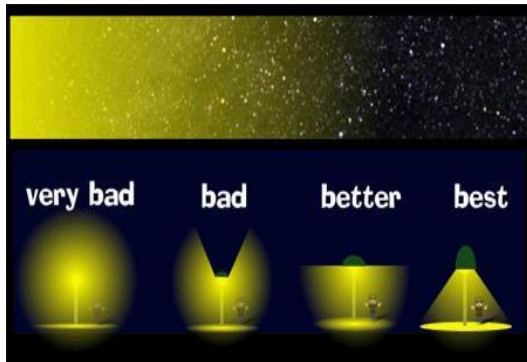
- Exterior Lighting
 - Parking lots, common areas, recreation areas, swimming pools, property perimeters, alleyways, easements
- Landscaping
 - Perimeter trees and bushes, common area trees and bushes, around window units, around stairwells, around walking paths, around perimeter lights, around building lights, dumpsters, around parking areas
 - Proper landscaping is generally defined as bushes/shrubs being less than 3 feet tall and no mature tree canopies lower than 6 feet from the ground
 - Consideration will be given to the 3 foot rule if the item in question is trimmed up from the ground 12 inches to eliminate any hiding place or obstruction of lighting
- Exterior of Units
 - Doors should be solid core or metal
 - Deadbolts should be 1" or greater
 - Peep-holes/Eye viewers with 180-degree views is preferred
 - Security strike plates with 2" or longer metal screws
 - Sliding doors with drop bars
 - Sliding windows have security latch in working order
 - Windows are not covered by bushes above the sill
 - Units have numbers or letters clearly posted and visible

CPTED Examples:

- The principle is **to be seen**. A person is less likely to commit a crime if he or she thinks someone will see them do it. Lighting and landscaping play a large role in this.



- Light should be unobscured and unobstructed.



- Trees and bushes should be trimmed up, giving visibility and elimination hiding places.



STEP THREE: Include a Crime Free Addendum in Your Lease

- The following is an addendum that can be included in a lease. We recommend that an attorney review the lease addendum.

Article 7 of Chapter 42 of the North Carolina General Statutes gives property owners and managers the right to enforce rules and regulations in the agreement, and states that tenants involved in criminal activity are subject to eviction when such activity is in any way related to the leased premises.

Specifically, the Article provides that the General Assembly “recognizes that the residents of this State have the right to the peaceful, safe, and quiet enjoyment of their homes. The General Assembly further recognizes that these rights, as well as the health, safety, and welfare of residents, are often jeopardized by the criminal activity of other residents of rented residential property, but that landlords are often unable to remove those residents engaged in criminal activity. In order to ensure that residents of this State can have the peaceful, safe, and quiet enjoyment of their homes, the provisions of this Article are deemed to apply to all residential rental agreements in this State.” The Article further provides that a civil action for complete eviction may be brought by the landlord of a leased residential premises, or the landlord’s agent in the following circumstances:

- (1) Criminal activity has occurred on or within the individual rental unit leased to the tenant; or
- (2) The individual rental unit leased to the tenant was used in any way in furtherance of or to promote criminal activity; or
- (3) The tenant, any member of the tenant’s household, or any guest has engaged in criminal activity on or in the immediate vicinity of any portion of the entire premises; or
- (4) The tenant has given permission to or invited a person to return or reenter any portion of the entire premises, knowing that the person has been removed and barred from the entire premises pursuant to this Article or the reasonable rules and regulations of a publicly assisted landlord; or
- (5) The tenant has failed to notify law enforcement or the landlord immediately upon learning that a person who has been removed and barred from the tenant’s individual rental unit pursuant to this Article has returned to or reentered the tenant’s individual rental unit.

“Criminal activity” is defined in the Article as “(i) activity that would constitute a violation of G.S. 90-95 other than a violation of G.S. 90-95(a)(3), or a conspiracy to violate any provision of G.S. 90-95 other than G.S. 90-95(a)(3); or (ii) other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right of peaceful enjoyment of the entire premises by other residents or employees of the landlord.”

There is a similar action for partial eviction when the person committing the criminal activity is not the “tenant” as defined in the lease agreement. Likewise, there are certain defenses enumerated in the statute to such an eviction, including evidence the “tenant” did not know, or have reason to know, of the criminal activity occurring on the property.

STEP FOUR: Develop a Plan to Promote and Maintain the Apartment Watch

Taking the steps to make your community safer for your residents is a big deal. Let your residents know what you have done to reduce the potential for crime. Hold a meeting to explain Apartment Watch. Explain the major criteria for participating in the program, and how these steps benefit the residents. Your CRO will be more than glad to join you, and explain the finer details of the program (like CPTED).

Promote

- Talk with neighbors and express your desire for apartment watch. Solicit their help in getting this project going.
- Talk with new neighbors, and make special efforts to involve the elderly, working parents, and young people. Use great resources like social media and Nextdoor.com to advertise the group and the work you are doing.
- Hold an initial meeting to explain Apartment Watch. Explain the major criteria for participating in the program, and how these steps benefit the residents. Your CRO will be more than glad to join you, and explain the finer details of the program (like CPTED).

Maintain

- Keep in contact with your Community Resource Officer, communicate challenges and questions.
- Decide how members will communicate with one another and communicate consistently. Greensboro Police suggests watch groups utilize [Nextdoor](#) to do so.
- Decide if meetings will work for your apartment community or send email/newsletter updates to residents.
- Keep goals fresh; apartment watches without goals will fade away.

RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY:

*If you detect any suspicious activity in your neighborhood or anywhere, call 911. Do not worry about being embarrassed – if it is suspicious to you then it is suspicious to someone else. **Let the police apprehend criminals. Never put yourself in danger!***

Recognizing

Suspicious Persons

- Door to door canvassers especially if subjects enter the back or side yard. A legitimate canvasser will stay at the front door and in the front yard.
- Someone tampering with a residence, vehicle, business, etc.
- A person running especially if he or she is carrying something of value. They may be fleeing the scene of a crime.
- A person carrying property if it is not wrapped as it just purchased and during an unusual hour or unusual place.

Suspicious Situations Involving Property

- A large amount or unusual accumulations of property such as TVs, bicycles, car parts, etc. and they are not being used.
- Property being removed from or being placed in vehicle or buildings at odd hours or if the property is known to be vacant.

Other Unusual Situations

- Continuous repair operations at a non-business location. It is possible that stolen property is being stripped, refinished or altered in some other way.
- Broken windows or doors at closed businesses or residences where the owners are absent.
- Unusual noises – gunshots, screaming, sounds of fighting, abnormally barking dogs – anything which suggests foul play or illegal activity.
- Large number of people/vehicles frequently at a home and for short periods of time.

Suspicious Vehicles

- Slow moving vehicles without lights on which seem to be following no deliberate path.
- Certain parked, occupied vehicles – This situation is especially significant if observed at an unusual hour in a commercial area.
- Abandoned vehicles – may be stolen and dumped in that area.
- Persons attempting to forcibly enter a vehicle, especially at night or in parking lots.

Reporting- *Do not personally confront the situation. Await the arrival of the police officer.*

If any of the above situations deemed suspicious are observed, the citizen is advised to call 911 to report:

- Identify yourself by name and address
- When reporting the incident include:
 - What happened
 - Where
 - When
 - If anyone was injured
 - License plate of the vehicle
 - Description of the vehicle
 - Description of the persons
 - Direction of flight

In an emergency you may be asked to repeat information to ensure accuracy for the responding officer. While this is being done an officer has already been dispatched. All information that may identify the caller, the victim or the witness is kept confidential.

Police Response

If the crime is in progress your call will be answered immediately. If the crime has already been committed a slower response should be expected. The first priority in answering calls is for crimes in progress. Once these calls have been answered, the officer will go to the requested location.