

LONG BRANCH NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GUIDELINES

1. The Neighborhood Watch duty is one week in duration, with the rotation running from Saturday to Saturday. The off-going watch should contact the on-coming watch to arrange for the “hand-off” of watch materials. If a Saturday transfer is not convenient, the two teams should work out another arrangement.
2. The Neighborhood Watch schedule is issued at 6-month intervals by the Watch Coordinator. If you see that you will not be able to perform the watch on your assigned week, please try to arrange for a “swap” with another team for another week...and notify the Watch Coordinator of the change.
3. The watch materials include the magnetic signs that read “Long Branch Neighborhood Watch,” the watch log (notebook), and magnets. The magnets have recently been added, as several watch drivers have noted that the signs have a tendency to fall off. Use the extra magnets only as you feel necessary -- the normal slow patrol speed of watch drivers should generally not cause the signs to fall off. But rain or high winds may present a problem.
4. The signs should be placed on the sides of your car while you are making your rounds. The signs protect you and alert our neighbors and visitors of your presence -- a car driving slowly through the neighborhood could be reported as suspicious by another watchful neighbor.
5. Try to vary the times of your patrols. Once or twice a day, drive the streets of the neighborhood and make observations about anything unusual. If you go in the morning one day, try to go mid-afternoon or later in the evening the next day. Late night is a time of little activity in our community, and unusual activity is easy to spot.

6. The most common observations of watch patrols are garage doors being left open and gatherings/parties in the neighborhood, often with an increased number of cars parked in the streets.
7. Please make a note of any street lights that are out and call the number in the front of the watch log. This is a big safety concern but something that is easily remedied.
8. The most important thing to remember: your safety is paramount, and you are not expected to act on any suspicious activity other than calling the police non-emergency number or 911, depending on the situation. Your job is to act as an extra set of eyes and ears for the police department -- if you encounter something suspicious or a situation you're unsure about, do not hesitate to report it to the police immediately. This is true for all Neighborhood Watch volunteers, even if you are not on "duty" during a particular week. (Too often, events are reported days after they occur, and there is little the police can do in those situations.)
9. Please look at all the materials in the watch log book, especially "An Introduction to Neighborhood Watch" from the Fairfax County Police Department.
10. Thank you for volunteering for this important duty and for helping keep Long Branch a safe community for our residents and guests. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions, concerns, or ideas on how to improve our Neighborhood Watch program.

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