

**THE FAYETTEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT PRESENTS**

**THE COMMUNITY WATCH  
COORDINATOR'S GUIDE**



“CRIME PREVENTION  
IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY”

**THE CRIME PREVENTION UNIT**



# THE COMMUNITY WATCH COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

**Community Watch** is a crime prevention program citizens within the same neighborhoods cooperate with law enforcement to prevent crime.

The overall concept of Community Watch Groups are based on the idea that neighbors look out for one another and to send a message to potential criminals that someone is always watching.

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## **Community Watch IS NOT:**

- ✗ A vigilante group.
- ✗ A political group.
- ✗ Biased or discriminatory against income, race, sex, etc.
- ✗ Taking the law into your own hands.
- ✗ Pursuing criminals yourself.

## **Community Watch IS:**

- ✓ A partnership between law enforcement and the community to reduce crime.
- ✓ A method of two-way communication for the police and citizens.
- ✓ A concerted effort to report suspicious activity by calling 911.
- ✓ A way to reestablish ownership of your community.
- ✓ A method to increase communication among your community.
- ✓ Continual training on crime prevention techniques.
- ✓ Education of crime trends in your area and around the City of Fayetteville.
- ✓ A safe method to express crime concerns.
- ✓ A forum for training and support.
- ✓ Education about effective reporting procedures such as obtaining tag numbers and vehicle descriptions when calling 911, if possible. Using the phone tree to track suspicious individuals and their direction of travel, as well as observing the clothing descriptions.

A COMMUNITY WATCH  
IS A PARTNERSHIP  
BETWEEN LAW ENFORCEMENT  
AND THE COMMUNITY  
TO **REDUCE CRIME.**



## Starting a Community Watch

Neighborhood Watch, Block Watch, Town Watch, Apartment Watch, Crime Watch – no matter what it's called, this is one of the most effective and least costly answers to crime. Watch groups are a foundation of community crime prevention. They can be a stepping stone to community revitalization.

### Phase One: Getting Started - Meetings, Block Captains, and Maps

- Form a small planning committee of neighbors to discuss needs, the level of interest, possible challenges, and the Watch concept.
- Contact the Crime Prevention department to discuss Neighborhood Watch and local crime problems.
- Publicize your meeting at least two weeks in advance with door-to-door fliers. Follow up with phone calls the day before.
- Select a meeting place that is accessible to people with disabilities.
- Hold an initial meeting to gauge neighbors' interest; establish purpose of the program; and begin to identify issues that need to be addressed. Stress that a Watch group is an association of neighbors who look out for each other's families and property, alert the police to any suspicious activities or crimes in progress, and work together to make their community a safer and better place to live.

### Phase Two: Elect a chairperson

- Ask for **block captain volunteers** who are responsible for relaying information to members on their block, keeping up-to-date information on residents, and making special efforts to involve the elderly, working parents, and young people. Block captains can serve as liaisons between the neighborhood and the police and communicate information about meetings and crime incidents to all residents.

- Establish a regular means of communicating with Watch Members such as Newsletters, a telephone tree, e-mail, or utilize “Nextdoor.” \*Nextdoor is a private social network for neighborhoods. Visit [Nextdoor.com](https://www.nextdoor.com) to learn more.
- Prepare a neighborhood map showing names, addresses and phone numbers of participating households and distribute to members. Block captains keep this map up-to-date, contacting newcomers to the neighborhood and rechecking occasionally with ongoing participants.
- With guidance from a law enforcement agency, the Watch trains its members in home security techniques, observation skills, and crime reporting. Residents also learn about the types of crime that impact the area.
- If you are ready to post Neighborhood Watch signs, check with law enforcement to see if they have such eligibility requirements such as number of houses that participate in the program. Law enforcement may also be able to provide your program with signs. If not, they can probably tell you where you can order them.
- Organizers and block captains must emphasize that Watch groups are not vigilantes and do not assume the role of the police. They only ask neighbors to be alert, observant, and caring—and to report suspicious activity or crimes immediately to the police.
- The Watch concept is adaptable. There are Park Watches, Apartment Watches, Window Watches, Boat Watches, School Watches, Realtor Watches, Utility Watches, and Business Watches. A Watch can be organized around any geographic unit.

## Tips for Success

- Hold regular meetings to help residents get to know each other and to collectively decide upon program strategies and activities.
- Consider linking with an existing organization, such as a citizens' association, community development office, tenants' association, or housing authority.
- Canvas door-to-door to recruit members.
- Involve everyone -- young and old, single and married, renter and homeowner.
- Get the information out quickly. Share all kinds of news -- squash rumors.
- Gather the facts about crime in your neighborhood. Check police reports and learn residents' perceptions about crime. Often opinions may not be supported by facts, and accurate information can reduce fear of crime.
- Physical conditions like abandoned cars or overgrown vacant lots contribute to crime. Sponsor cleanups, encourage residents to beautify the area, and ask them to turn on outdoor lights at night.
- It's essential to celebrate the success of the effort and recognize volunteers.
- Address broader issues such as drug abuse, gangs, self-protection tactics, isolation of the elderly, and crime in the schools. Also host projects to assist the community such as collecting clothes for a needy family or the homeless. These projects are wonderful events for the holiday season and bring the community together.
- Don't forget events like National Night Out or a potluck dinner that gives neighbors a chance to get together.
- Such items as pins, t-shirts, hats, or coffee mugs with the group's name also enhance identity and pride.



# A Checklist for Starting a Neighborhood Watch Program

## You Will Need:

- ◇ A person or group of people committed to starting a Neighborhood Watch.
- ◇ A planning committee to initiate the program.
- ◇ A list of what issues initially need to be addressed in your community.
- ◇ A means of communicating with the residents, e-mail, fliers, telephone trees.
- ◇ Publicity for the initial Neighborhood Watch meeting.
- ◇ A meeting agenda to keep things moving and on track.
- ◇ A place to meet-resident's house or apartment, community center, school, church, or library.
- ◇ A map of the community with spaces for names, addresses, and phone numbers of all households.
- ◇ A sign-up sheet for those interested in becoming block or building captains.
- ◇ Brochures or other materials on topics of interest to the residents.
- ◇ Neighborhood Watch signs to be posted around the community.
- ◇ Facts about crime in your neighborhood.

## To Add Excitement

- Seek out neighborhood go-getters to be your advocates and mentors.
- Work with such existing organizations as citizens' association, tenants' association, or housing authorities.
- Provide speakers on topics of community interest.
- Link crime prevention into activities promoted by other groups: child protection, anti-vandalism projects, Start a neighborhood newsletter.

## To Build Partnerships

- The police or sheriffs' office's endorsement is critical to a Watch group's credibility. These agencies are the major sources of information on local crime trends, crime prevention education, and crime reporting.
- Local businesses and organizations can help provide fliers and a newsletter, offer meeting places, and distribute crime prevention information.
- Libraries can provide research materials, videos, computers, and a meeting space.
- Local media can aid Neighborhood Watches by publicizing recruitment drives.
- Look to volunteer centers, parent groups, and labor unions for advice on recruiting volunteers.
- Teenagers are valuable resources. They can be an integral part of a Watch group.
- Places of worship can provide meeting space and a good source of volunteers.

## Suggested Roles

It is important for all community watch members to become actively involved in the group to be most effective. When crime is down, giving watch members projects to work on and providing them with roles can help keep the group active. Everyone wants to feel like they are part of the team ! Some suggested roles for community watch members, besides the traditional officer positions include the following:

### Community Watch Community Relations

- Responsible for updating the telephone tree and CW list.
- Responsible for assisting National Night Out planner.
- Responsible for keeping record of Block Captains.

### National Night Out Planner

- Responsible for planning and implementing logistics for National Night Out.
- Responsible for educating members of ideas for National Night Out.
- Date, location, type of activity and solicitation of vendors or informational tables if applicable.
- For more information visit [NATW.org](http://NATW.org).

### Community Emergency Response Coordinator *(For more established groups)*

- Responsible for CERT training in Cumberland County when applicable.
- Informs residents of natural disasters and precautions to take.
- Maintains a list of individuals that may need special assistance during an emergency.
- Researches and advises residents of Homeland Security measures and precautions.

## **Burglary Liaison**

- Encourages residents to record serial numbers and may host a “Property Inventory” party or gathering.
- Notifies victims and surrounding residents about home security and precautions.
- May assist residents with security concerns or questions, and may coordinate with the House Repair person to install locks or reset door frames, etc.
- Maintains the CW engravers for property identification.

## **Senior Security | Widow Watch**

- Maintain a log of elderly or widows that would like “check-ins.”
- Make routine checks of elderly residents.

## **Neighborhood Maintenance Committee**

- Schedule neighborhood clean-ups.
- Point of contact for inspections issues.
- Assists with installation of security measures such as locks, etc.
- Coordinates a committee of residents willing to assist with repairs for those unable to make their own repairs. (Elderly, disabled, etc.).

## **Neighborhood Welcoming Committee**

- Have neighbors greet newcomers to the neighborhood and inform them of upcoming meetings or neighborhood activities.
- Send out get well or sympathy cards to neighbors as needed.

IT IS **IMPORTANT** FOR  
ALL COMMUNITY WATCH  
MEMBERS TO BECOME **ACTIVELY**  
**INVOLVED** IN THE GROUP TO BE  
**MOST EFFECTIVE.**



## Community Watch Objectives and Goals:

Setting objectives and achievable goals is an important step in keeping an active and productive community watch. We have found groups without goals become complacent and distracted, thus reducing participation. Therefore, we suggest you set simple goals to begin with and advance the goals as you go forth. The goals should reflect a problem solving approach to your concerns.

Community Watch Groups are independent entities from the police department. However, crime prevention specialists will actively support your group by providing crime statistics and regular community watch coordinator training. The Police Department will also support your group by assisting you in reporting crime concerns.

## Protocol for Community Watch Groups:

Many of our groups have been in existence for many years and are fully aware of how community watch groups should operate. Community watch groups operate independently with the support of the police department. The Crime Prevention Specialist will initiate new community watch groups, provide leadership training, and keep community watch leaders current on crime trends and crime prevention initiatives.

- Community Watch groups ***must meet at least once a year*** to be considered active.
- Community Watch groups ***must submit any crime related issues via email, letter or telephone if the Crime Prevention Specialist is not able to attend your community watch meeting.***
- ***The Police Department representatives will be scheduled first on the agenda as the representative may not be able to stay for the entire meeting.***  
Officers may need to go back in service or there may be other community watch meetings scheduled.
- All changes in meeting dates and times should be reported to your Crime Prevention Specialist immediately.

## **How to schedule a Community Watch Meeting:**

To schedule a meeting please contact your Crime Prevention Specialist.

To better accommodate all requests, we need at least two weeks notice to schedule a meeting.

***To view the community watch meeting schedule*** please visit the Fayetteville Police Department's website at [www.FAYPD.com](http://www.FAYPD.com), or download the FayPD app on your mobile device, and view the community policing section.

## Sample Community Watch Bylaws

### ARTICLE 1: NAME OF GROUP

This group shall be known as \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Watch.

The boundaries for this watch will be: \_\_\_\_\_.

### ARTICLE 2: GOALS

The community watch will be a non-partisan, neighborhood and community-focused group committed to building safer, more caring neighborhoods and improving the quality of life in the community.

- Our Watch goals will be:

* _____	* _____
* _____	* _____
* _____	* _____

### ARTICLE 3: MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this group will consist of responsible individuals within the defined community watch area, who are willing to perform watch duties without expecting monetary compensation for their participation.

### ARTICLE 4: WATCH OFFICERS AND DUTIES

- A. The community watch will be governed by a Community Watch Coordinator, elected by members of the watch. The Community Watch Coordinator will run meetings and coordinate information and activities with the Crime Prevention Specialist.
- B. The Secretary, elected by the members of the watch, will take notes of meetings and keep records of what actions need to be taken on proposed goals and who will perform them.
- C. The Treasurer, elected by members of the watch, will keep an accurate account of the group's resources, financial and otherwise.



## **ARTICLE 5: MEETINGS**

Community watch meetings will be held (quarterly, monthly, biannually, annually) on the \_\_\_\_\_ of the month.

## **ARTICLE 6: AMENDMENTS**

The Bylaws of the group may be adopted, amended or repealed by a two-thirds vote of them members present at a regularly scheduled meeting.

*In addition to scheduling a meeting after interviewing neighbors about community watch interest, you can begin to develop telephone trees and e-mail lists.*

## **Sample Community Watch Telephone Tree System**

The following numbers should be called in the order that they appear on the list.

If you cannot reach the member following your name, call the next member on the list.

The last number called should be the member that activated the tree. The phone tree system is best used by streets and/or street captains. Everyone on the street should have a copy.

Captain: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Telephone Numbers	Street Address	E-Mails



## Suspicious Activity:

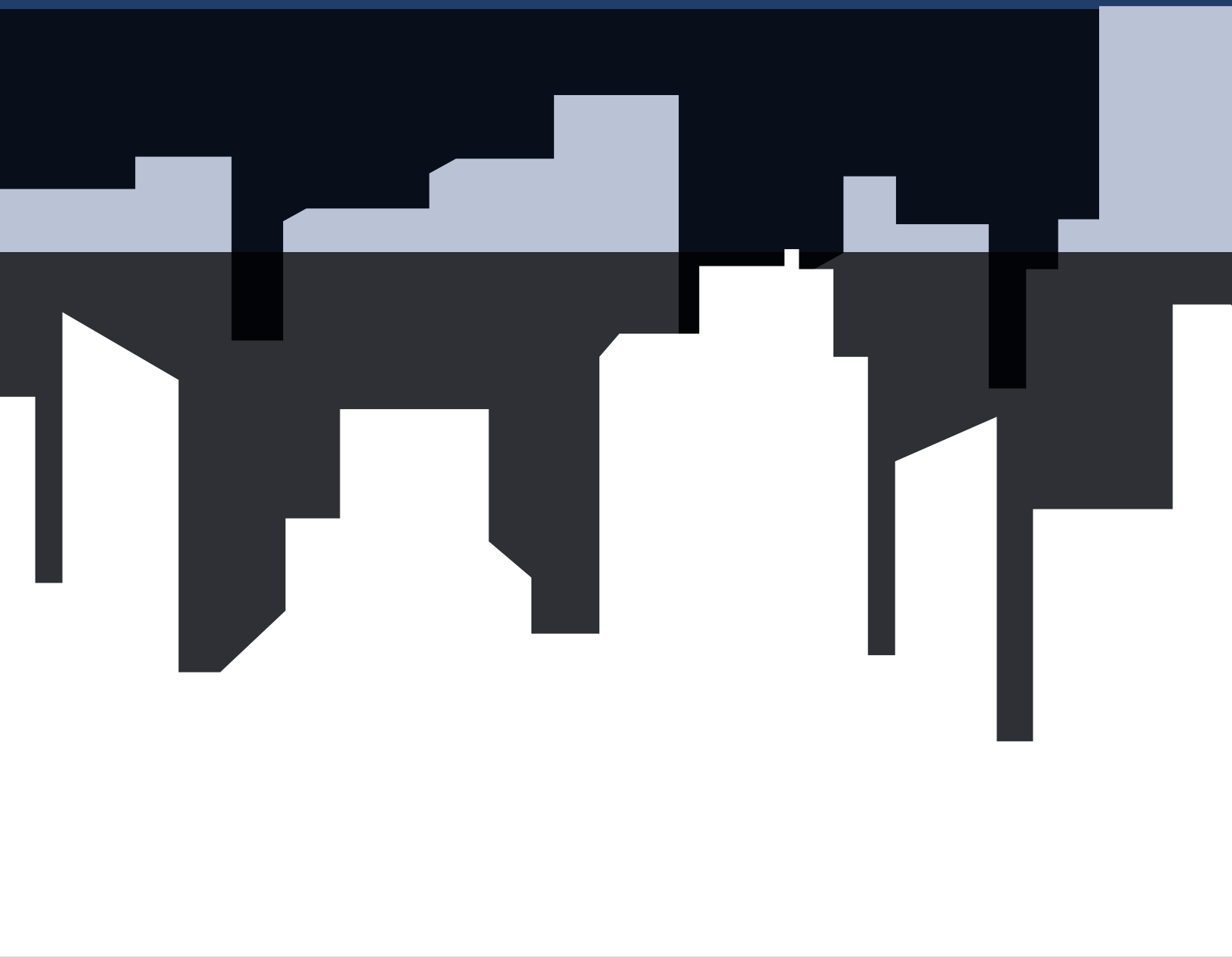
### What types of things do you look for?

- Someone screaming or shouting for help.
- Someone looking into windows and parked cars.
- Unusual noises.
- Property being taken out of closed businesses or houses where no one is at home.
- Cars, vans, or trucks moving slowly with no apparent destination, or without lights.
- Anyone being forced into a vehicle.
- A stranger sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child.
- An individual carrying electronics and equipment throughout a residential area.
- Someone driving and appearing to “scope” out the place.
- Unusual activity for your neighborhood.
- Someone ringing doorbells to see if residents are home.
- Anything that just doesn’t seem right—Pay attention to your instincts!

## How to Report

- CALL 911!
- Give your name and address (Optional). You may remain anonymous!
- Briefly describe the event -- what happened, when, where, and who was involved.
- Describe the suspect(s): sex, race, age, height, weight, hair color, clothing, and distinctive characteristics such as beard, mustache, scars, or accent.  
Give as much information as you can.
- Describe the vehicle if one was involved: color, make, model, year, license plate, and special features such as stickers, dents, or decals.
- Keep a record book of on-going behaviors, especially if the activity is too short for the police to respond. In this case, continue to call 911 but also inform your Crime Prevention Specialist of the event so that the information can be forwarded to the appropriate department. Please be as detailed as possible and include vehicle descriptions and tag numbers.

SETTING OBJECTIVES AND  
ACHIEVABLE GOALS IS AN  
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COMMUNITY WATCH.



## Property Crime

*Residential Burglaries, Motor Vehicle Burglaries and Motor Vehicle Theft*

*What can Community Watch do about Residential and Motor Vehicle Break-Ins?*

Property crime can happen to anyone regardless of income level, socioeconomic status, race, and geographical location. If you leave valuables in your vehicle then your chances of a motor vehicle burglary significantly increase. Leaving valuables in your car gives a potential offender desire and opportunity to steal.

To prevent property crimes you must reduce the desire and opportunity to commit the crime. Don't be an easy target. Most property thieves choose the path of least resistance, so don't make it easy for them. Lock your windows and doors in your home and vehicle. Flood your property with lighting because criminals don't want to be visible. Trim shrubs so there is no place for someone to hide. Most residential burglaries occur during the day, when no one is home, so start a daytime community watch "look out" to spot any suspicious activity or suspicious people. If the "look out" observes anything suspicious, have them call 911 and also use the phone tree system. Remember to be detailed about what you see and try to get as much information as possible.

If you are concerned about residential and motor vehicle burglaries, then consider purchasing an alarm system for your car or house. There are many residential alarm companies in Fayetteville that can assist you with this information. Remember not to leave boxes from newly purchased items by the roadway. Leaving a television box or computer box by the road advertises what you have in your house, again increasing the desire of the offender.

One of the most helpful things that you can do to help yourself and the department is to record your serial numbers and engrave your property with your NC driver's license number. By recording your serial numbers, your property can be returned to you if it is found. Unfortunately, we cannot charge the suspect or return the property because there is no proof that the property is stolen, UNLESS THE SERIAL

NUMBERS ARE RECORDED! Also, the department works on a continual basis with the local pawn shops. Therefore, if someone broke into a house and tried to pawn property which was inventoried, the pawn shop would alert detectives that someone was trying to pawn stolen property.

In addition to recording serial numbers and engraving property- don't keep valuables in the passenger area of a vehicle (valuables include not only purses but electronics like GPS units, iPods, DVD players, televisions, packages, etc.) Items can't be taken if they're not there. If you decide to keep valuables in the trunk of the car, lock it. If your car has an additional trunk lock that prevents the trunk from being opened from the passenger area without the use of a key, use it. Also hide charging cords and close cigarette lighter ports. Open cigarette lighter/electricity ports and power cords communicate the idea that the vehicle contains items that need to be powered (electronics). The round suction cup mark on a windshield is another indicator of electronics in the car like a GPS unit.

Additionally, just because you have a keyless entry system on your car doesn't mean you should leave your keys in your car. This is especially true during the winter. Don't leave your car running even when it's locked. Someone who is willing to break your window to steal change out of the center console will not hesitate to break the window to steal the whole car. Systems like OnStar and LoJack can be very useful in recovering stolen vehicles. If a purse or wallet is stolen from a car, cancel all credit cards and freeze active accounts immediately to prevent fraudulent charges. Report any unauthorized uses immediately.

Secure valuables inside the home. Keep valuables in a well-mounted safe. These items include personal papers (Social security cards, passports, birth certificates, checkbooks, credit cards, jewelry, deeds, firearms, etc.) Lock boxes and safes that are not mounted are only boxes full of your valuables to a thief. They can steal it now and open it later. Do not become comfortable or complacent because you may feel that a safe is too heavy or awkward to move for a thief to steal it. If it can be moved it will be moved.



Other items can be secured with additional devices. Flat screen televisions can be mounted with locking devices to prevent their removal. Laptops can be made more secure or at least can be more easily recovered with GPS tracking systems such as LoJack or upgraded with software to track the thief's location once they access the internet. Secure extra keys in the home. Car keys and extra house keys are valuable access tools to a thief. Don't hide valuables in random places- under a mattress, in a jar, under clothing in a drawer, etc. Lock up valuables. Period.

Don't host events at your home where you don't know the first and last name of each person that attends. Keep trusted neighbors advised on your whereabouts. Your trusted neighbors will more easily be able to identify and report suspicious activity if they know whether or not you're moving, out of town, or having friends over. Let neighbors know they can feel comfortable calling the police to report "suspicious activity."

Use good locks on your house. Replace old or damaged locks on windows and doors immediately. If you have children or worry about losing keys, keyless entry locks (including deadbolts) are currently available at most local home improvement stores. Never leave a window or door unlocked "just in case."

## **Drug Activity**

Drug activity is usually marked by the following characteristics:

- An increased or unusual amount of traffic (vehicle and or foot traffic) to and from a residence.
- An odd flow of traffic, i.e. vehicles come to the residence 1-4 times a month, take care of business, and leave.
- Does not appear anyone actually resides at the residence.
- Unusual hours of activity at the residence.
- Unable to determine who actually resides at the residence, due to the amount of traffic to and from residence.
- Unusual or excessive electrical wiring coming from the residence.
- Unusual chemical type odor.

### **If you suspect drug activity is taking place, you should:**

- Call 911 or Crimestoppers (910-483-TIPS) to report the activity.
- Be able to provide a specific address and suspect/vehicle information and tag number (without endangering yourself or others).
- Be patient. Narcotic investigations can be complex and take time to conduct.
- Continue to document suspicious activity and forward it to your Crime Prevention Specialist or Crimestoppers.
- For addiction help call:  
Alcohol/Drug Council 1-800-688-4232

## Gang Awareness

The Fayetteville Police Department (FPD) is committed to combating gang violence and activity that exists in our community. The FPD has partnered with federal, state, and local agencies to dismantle and disrupt criminal activity associated with gangs.

Gang activity is a community problem that requires the cooperation of law enforcement and residents. To promote this partnership members of the Crime Prevention Unit and some specialized units from the FPD go into the community in an effort to equip the residents with the information necessary to identify gang signs, symbols and activity. The department conducts presentations and works with at-risk youth and their families. Presentations have been conducted for countless schools, churches, community watch groups, parents, and social workers in an effort to reach out to adults who come in contact with gang members and their affiliates on a daily basis. Officers meet with many diverse groups to emphasize gang involvement can impact any community. Officers conduct special enforcement efforts in areas where gang activity has been recognized. The Youth Services Division and other community groups have partnered to participate in graffiti removal projects around the city and county.

Community members may log onto [www.ncgangcops.org](http://www.ncgangcops.org) to view useful information such as checklists and to view photos of gang signs and symbols to help you easily identify them. This website is operated by the NC Gang Investigators Association in which the FPD is very involved.

## What is a Gang?

A group or association of three or more persons who may have a common identifying sign, symbol, or name and who individually or collectively engage in, or have engaged in, criminal activity which creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Criminal activity includes juvenile acts that if committed by an adult would be a crime.

## How to Identify a Potential Gang Member

Youth who are on the fringe of gang involvement usually display some of the following behaviors and characteristics. While these guidelines are not written in stone, a combination of these signs indicate a child is more likely to become involved in a gang.

- Poor academic progress in school
- Lack of interest in school activities
- Large blocks of unsupervised time
- Signs of increased conflict at home
- Frequent disciplinary issues (home/school)
- Frequent contact with Police
- Drawing graffiti
- Imitating gang dress or behavior
- Tattoos drawn on the body
- Uses hand signs adopted by the gang

## Gang Presence Checklist

*(To be used as a guide only)*

- ◇ Is graffiti showing up in your neighborhood or school?
- ◇ Has any graffiti been crossed out by other graffiti?
- ◇ Do some students or people in the neighborhood wear noticeable “colors,” bandanas or tattoos?
- ◇ Do some students or people in the neighborhood display behavior that may be gang related, such as meeting in groups?
- ◇ Do some students or neighborhood kids flash hand signals?
- ◇ Are drugs available on or near schools or in neighborhoods?
- ◇ Has there been a significant increase in physical confrontation or “stare downs” in the last year?
- ◇ Are weapons increasingly present in the community?
- ◇ Have there been “drive by” shows or displays of weapons?
- ◇ Have there been any “drive by” shootings in the neighborhood or near the school?
- ◇ Has the truancy rate noticeably increased during the past year?
- ◇ Have the number of racial incidents increased in the community and/or school?
- ◇ Does the community have a history of gang presence or activity?
- ◇ Is there an increasing presence of “informal” social groups with unusual names such as “SUR” or “East Side”?
- ◇ Have your children come home with bruises for no reason?

## How to Minimize Gang Violence in Your Community

- 1. Teach Children** how to reduce their risk of being victims of violent crimes.
- 2. Get Involved.** Volunteer to help in community and neighborhood anti-crime and other community improvement efforts. Encourage groups you belong to – religious, social, civic - to help stop crime.
- 3. Use common sense tips** to reduce your risk of being a crime victim. Stay in well-lit, busy areas; travel with a friend if possible. Avoid known trouble spots.
- 4. Report crimes and suspicious activities** to police; agree to testify when necessary. Stand up for what you believe in if you want a safe community.
- 5. Get to know your neighbors** and agree to look out for each other. Get organized; work with the police.
- 6. Find ways to settle arguments without violence.** If you resort to violence to settle disputes, this is what you teach children. Be a good role model.
- 7. Use common courtesy.** It helps ease tensions that can lead to violence. Teach kids that good manners are important.
- 8. Don't support illegal activities,** like buying stolen property or using illegal drugs. It's the wrong message to send to children, and it involves you in criminal activity.
- 9. Volunteer your home** as a reliable source of help for kids who are scared or need assistance.

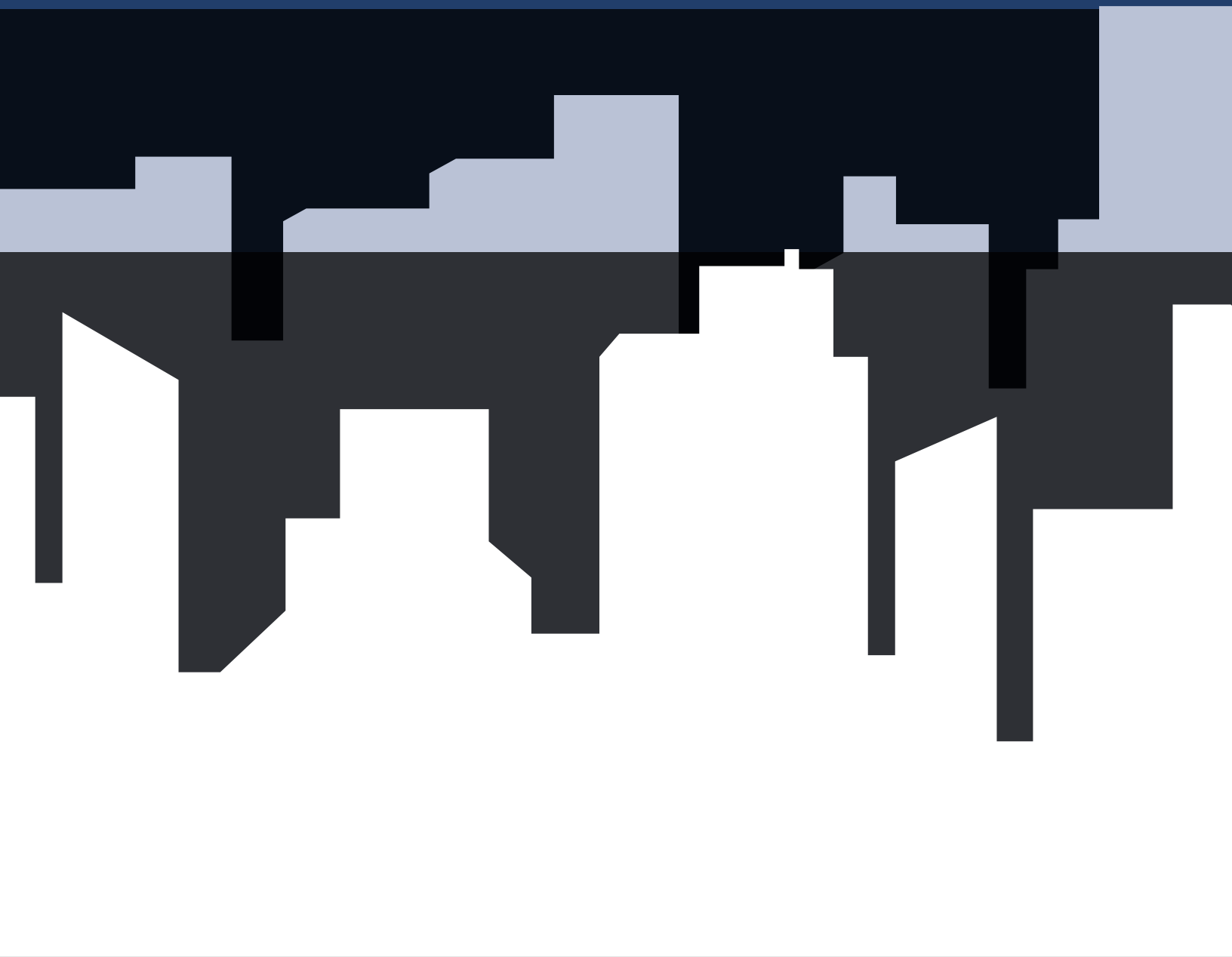
## What is Domestic Violence?

The primary purpose of domestic violence is to gain, sustain or reclaim control over a spouse or intimate partner. Domestic violence is the threat or use of physical, sexual, emotional and/or economic abuse against a current or former spouse, intimate partner, or household member. It includes assaults, exploitation, property destruction, theft, false imprisonment, isolation, stalking, sexual coercion, arson, sleep disruption, ridicule, and threats of homicide or suicide. It may also include interference with work, worship, education, healthcare, recreation, and family. It often involves surveillance of the abused partner. It produces terror.

Domestic violence is behavior designed to gain control and instill fear in victims. Most batterers create rules to bolster their control over partners. They carefully enforce those rules and the punishment for breaking them often includes violence. Abusers do not abuse all of the time. They often refer to past acts of violence and promise to repeat the violence, if partners do not comply with their rules and directives.

Domestic violence can be physical or emotional. It can include slapping, punching, beating, kicking, or threats to hurt you. It can include forcing you to have sex or keeping you from any of the family's finances. Violent behavior towards anyone is wrong no matter who does it. It is not okay for family members to hurt you.

THE POLICE OR SHERIFF'S OFFICE'S  
ENDORSEMENT IS CRITICAL TO A  
WATCH GROUP'S CREDIBILITY.





## What is identity theft?

Identity theft occurs when someone uses your personal identifying information, like your name, Social Security number, or credit card number, without your permission, to commit fraud or other crimes.

The FTC estimates that as many as 9 million Americans have their identities stolen each year. In fact, you or someone you know may have experienced some form of identity theft. The crime takes many forms. Identity thieves may rent an apartment, obtain a credit card, or establish a telephone account in your name. You may not find out about the theft until you review your credit report or a credit card statement and notice charges you didn't make – or until you're contacted by a debt collector.

Identity theft is serious. While some identity theft victims can resolve their problems quickly, others spend hundreds of dollars and many days repairing damage to their good name and credit record. Some consumers victimized by identity theft may lose out on job opportunities, or be denied loans for education, housing or cars because of negative information on their credit reports. In rare cases, they may even be arrested for crimes they did not commit.

## How do thieves steal an identity?

Identity theft starts with the misuse of your personally identifying information such as your name and Social Security number, credit card numbers, or other financial account information. For identity thieves, this information is as good as gold. Skilled identity use a variety of methods to get hold of your information, including:

**Dumpster Diving.** They rummage through trash looking for bills or other paper with your personal information on it.

**Skimming.** They steal credit/debit card numbers by using a special storage device when processing your card.

**Phishing.** They pretend to be financial institutions or companies and send spam or pop-up messages to get you to reveal your personal information.

**Changing Your Address.** They divert your billing statements to another location by completing a change of address form.

**Old-Fashioned Stealing.** They steal wallets and purses; mail, including bank and credit card statements; pre-approved credit offers; and new checks or tax information. They steal personnel records, or bribe employees who have access.

**Pretexting.** They use false pretenses to obtain your personal information from financial institutions, telephone companies, and other sources.

They may open new credit card accounts in your name. When they use the cards and don't pay the bills, the delinquent accounts appear on your credit report.

They may change the billing address on your credit card so that you no longer receive bills, and then run up charges on your account. Because your bills are now sent to a different address, it may be some time before you realize there's a problem.

#### **Phone or utilities fraud:**

- They may open a new phone or wireless account in your name, or run up charges on your existing account.
- They may use your name to get utility services like electricity, heating, or cable TV.
- They may create counterfeit checks using your name or account number.
- They may open a bank account in your name and write bad checks.
- They may clone your ATM or debit card and make electronic withdrawals in your name, draining your accounts.
- They may take out a loan in your name.

### **Government documents fraud:**

- They may get a driver's license or official ID card issued in your name but with their picture.
- They may use your name and Social Security number to get government benefits.
- They may file a fraudulent tax return using your information.
- Other fraud: They may get a job using your Social Security number.

### **They may rent a house or get medical services using your name.**

- They may give your personal information to police during an arrest. If they don't show up for their court date, a warrant for arrest is issued in your name.

### **How can you find out if your identity was stolen?**

The best way to find out is to monitor your accounts and bank statements each month, and check your credit report on a regular basis. If you check your credit report regularly, you may be able to limit the damage caused by identity theft. Unfortunately, many consumers learn that their identity has been stolen after some damage has been done.

- You may find out when bill collection agencies contact you for overdue debts you never incurred.
- You may find out when you apply for a mortgage or car loan and learn that problems with your credit history are holding up the loan.
- You may find out when you get something in the mail about an apartment you never rented, a house you never bought, or a job you never held.

## **What should you do if your identity is stolen?**

Filing a police report, checking your credit reports, notifying creditors, and disputing any unauthorized transactions are some of the steps you must take immediately to restore your good name.

## **Should you file a police report if your identity is stolen?**

A police report that provides specific details of the identity theft is considered an Identity Theft Report, which entitles you to certain legal rights when it is provided to the three major credit reporting agencies or to companies where the thief misused your information. An Identity Theft Report can be used to permanently block fraudulent information that results from identity theft, such as accounts or addresses, from appearing on your credit report. It will also make sure these debts do not reappear on your credit reports. Identity Theft Reports can prevent a company from continuing to collect debts that result from identity theft, or selling them to others for collection. An Identity Theft Report is also needed to place an extended fraud alert on our credit report.

You may not need an Identity Theft Report if the thief made charges on an existing account and you have been able to work with the company to resolve the dispute. Where an identity thief has opened new accounts in your name, or where fraudulent charges have been reported to the consumer reporting agencies, you should obtain an Identity Theft Report so that you can take advantage of the protections you are entitled to.

In order for a police report to entitle you to the legal rights mentioned above, it must contain specific details about the identity theft. You should file an ID Theft Complaint with the FTC and bring your printed ID Theft Complaint with you to the police station when you file your police report. The printed ID Theft Complaint can be used to support your local police report to ensure that it includes the details required.

A police report is also needed to get copies of the thief's application, as well as transaction information from companies that dealt with the thief. To get this information, you must submit a request in writing, accompanied by the police report, to the address specified by the company for this purpose.

### **What can you do to help fight identity theft?**

A great deal.

Awareness is an effective weapon against many forms identity theft. Be aware of how information is stolen and what you can do to protect yours, monitor your personal information to uncover any problems quickly, and know what to do when you suspect your identity has been stolen.

Armed with the knowledge of how to protect yourself and take action, you can make identity thieves' jobs much more difficult. You can also help fight identity theft by educating your friends, family, and members of your community. The FTC has prepared a collection of easy-to-use materials to enable anyone regardless of existing knowledge about identity theft to inform others about this serious crime.

### **FPD Fraud detectives give the following advice...**

Do not include your SSN and DL numbers on their checks; use the post office instead of your personal mailbox to mail your bills; don't record your PIN numbers for your credit cards/debit cards-memorize them; sterilize your wallet by taking out our social security card, birth certificates, high school diplomas, and any other identifying information-(they do make small wallet size documents.)

## Door to Door Sales and Soliciting

The Fayetteville Police Department offers the following Crime Prevention Tips when dealing with door to door solicitations. First and foremost you don't have to open your door. In the event you do open the door and make contact with a salesperson, consider the following:

1. Ask for photo identification.
2. Make sure you are dealing with a legitimate, licensed company. Ask for the company's address and phone number. Check a phone book and/or the better business bureau to verify the salespersons' claims.
3. Be suspicious of anyone who tries to sell the service or product by playing on your emotions. For example, some sellers will say it is your responsibility to protect your family.
4. Be suspicious of anyone who tells you he is selling the service or product at the lowest price or who tells you his competitors do bad work.
5. You should always comparison shop if you are convinced you need the product or service.
6. Be suspicious if the salesperson is unable to provide local customers for the purpose of checking references.
7. Do not be rushed. A legitimate salesperson will allow you time to check their claims.
8. Remember, anytime you get a "once in a lifetime" offer you should be suspicious.
9. Be wary of people offering a "free inspection". They may be interested in the contents of your home for criminal opportunities.

*Keep in mind; you never have to open your door to any stranger. Immediately call 911 to report ANY suspicious activity.*

## Speeding, Speeding, Speeding

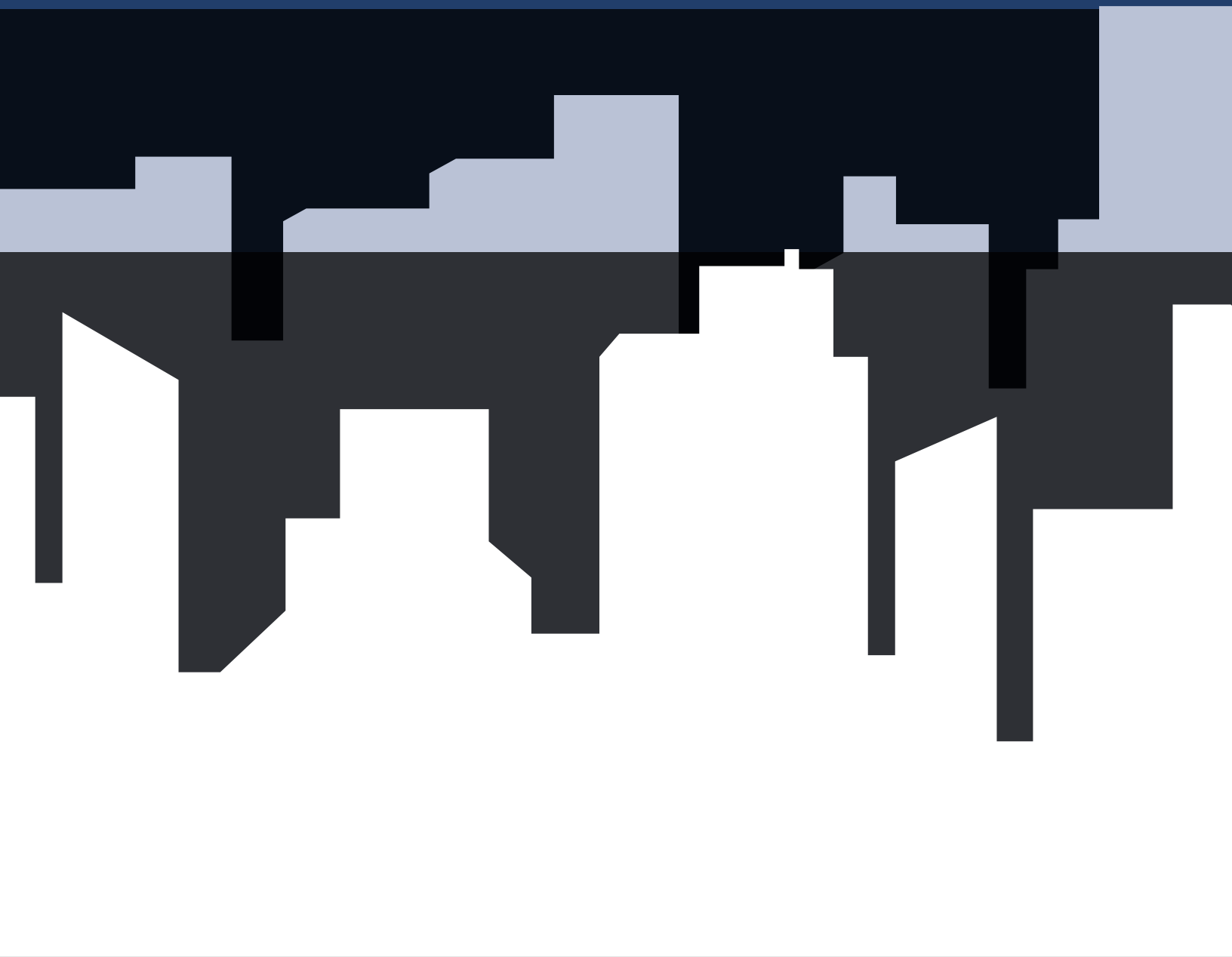
The Fayetteville Police Department Traffic Unit's goal is to reduce the number of vehicle accidents and fatalities. As you can see the goals of the Fayetteville Police Department and your goals within the community are similar. Officers must observe a speeding violation and second hand information is not sufficient to ticket an individual.

There are actions that can be taken to get an accurate perspective on your speeding concern. You may want to inquire about the availability of the Speed Sentry.

To request a Speed Sentry, contact your Crime Prevention Specialist who will provide your request to our Traffic Unit. Speed Sentry studies are based on availability. You may also contact Traffic Services at City Hall to discuss your concerns and see if your area is eligible to meet the speed hump requirements. Traffic Services may conduct traffic surveys in your area if you meet certain criteria.

If you have a problem with commercial vehicles speeding in your neighborhood, you can contact the company directly and advise the company of the employee's violations. ***For more questions on what you can do to reduce speeding in your neighborhood contact the Traffic Services Department at 433-1660 or the Fayetteville Police Department Traffic Unit at 433-1036.*** You may request extra patrol in your area by contacting your Crime Prevention Specialist. The extra patrols are based upon officer availability. The Patrol Officers are obligated to answer 911 calls as their first priority.

**PARTNERSHIPS** BETWEEN  
LAW ENFORCEMENT, RESIDENTS,  
AND BUSINESSES MAKE  
OUR COMMUNITIES **SAFER** PLACES  
TO LIVE, WORK, & PLAY.





## Contact your Crime Prevention Specialist Today!

### Campbellton District

467 Hay St.

Fayetteville NC, 28301

(910) 433-1873

(910) 433-1034

### Cross Creek District

6147 Raeford Rd

Fayetteville NC, 28304

(910) 433-1430

(910) 433-1033

### Central District

3811 Sycamore Dairy Rd

Fayetteville NC, 28303

(910) 433-1134

(910) 433-1198

### For More Information Contact Us:

**General Inquiries:** 910-433-1885

**Crimestoppers Tip Line:** 910-483-8477

**To file a police report, contact our Records Department:** 910-433-1529 / 910-433-1530

**Patrol & Investigative Bureau:** 910-433-1885

**Ask about our Citizen's Police Academy:** 910-433-1903

Download **"FayFixIt"** on your mobile device to report non-police related matters directly to city personnel! Report items such as over grown lawns, street light outages, damages or missing signs, street or sidewalk maintenance, and more! Download **"FayFixIt"** now!

### Follow the Fayetteville Police Department on Social Media

**Facebook** | @Fayetteville.Police

**Instagram** | @ FayettevillePD

**Twitter** | @FayettevillePD



**THE CRIME PREVENTION UNIT**

To find more resources & learn more  
visit the Fayetteville Police Department's  
website at [www.FAYPD.com](http://www.FAYPD.com)