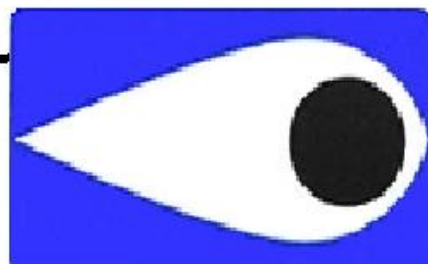


Mesquite Police Department

Residential Security



Forming a Neighborhood Watch Program



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DISCLAIMER

The information provided in this manual should be considered as minimal recommendations to reduce the opportunity for a crime to occur. In most cases, following these suggested guidelines will help you from becoming a victim; however, it should be noted there are no absolutes and each situation may have different circumstances.

Also, there is no such thing as a crime-proof structure or building, and anything that is made by man can be defeated by man. By following these strategies, you will make committing a crime more difficult for the offender and reduce your likelihood of victimization.

If you have any questions regarding the information contained within this guide, you can contact the Mesquite Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit at:

972-329-8757 **972-329-8781**
North of Highway 80 **South of Highway 80**

or

crimeprevention@mesquitepolice.org

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Quick Reference Directory

Police Department

Alarm Office.....	972-216-6676
Crime Prevention Unit (north of Hwy 80).....	972-329-8757
Crime Prevention Unit (south of Hwy 80).....	972-329-8781
Internal Affairs.....	972-216-6236
Jail.....	972-216-6243
Police, Fire & EMS Dispatch (Emergency).....	911
Police, Fire & EMS Dispatch (non-emergency) ..	972-285-6336
Police Front Desk.....	972-216-6261
Police Records.....	972-216-6246
Property Room.....	972-216-6970
Vehicle Impounds.....	972-216-6261

Other Agencies

Animal Control.....	972-216-6283
Birth Certificates.....	972-285-5429
City Manager.....	972-216-6293
Code Enforcement.....	972-216-6276
Dallas County Constables Office.....	972-288-7665
Department of Public Safety.....	214-861-2125
District Attorney's Office.....	214-653-3600
Driver Licensing.....	214-861-2000
License Plates/Vehicle Registration.....	888-368-4689
MTED.....	972-329-6833
Parks and Recreation.....	972-216-6260
Recycling Hotline.....	972-216-6972
Residential Sanitation.....	972-216-6284
Dallas County Clerk.....	214-653-7177
Dallas County Sheriff.....	214-749-8641
Dallas County Tax Office.....	214-653-7811
Social Security Administration.....	800-772-1213
Streets.....	972-216-6282
Texas Poison Control Center.....	800-222-1222
Traffic Sign Maintenance.....	972-216-4104
Volunteer Services.....	972-329-8331
Voter Registration.....	214-819-6300

Utilities

Atmos Energy-Gas.....888-286-6700
AT&T.....800-464-7928
Ignite Independent Associates.....972-278-6490
Oncor Electric Delivery.....972-216-8906
Power to Choose.....866-797-4839
Reliant Energy.....866-222-7100
TXU Energy.....800-242-9113
Water, Sewer & Garbage Collection.....800-242-9113

Community Centers

Dunford.....972-279-9285
Evans.....972-285-4145
Evans Senior Center.....972-279-6881
Florence.....972-279-7477
Goodbar.....972-279-7969
Goodbar Senior Center.....972-285-6761
Rutherford.....972-216-7790

Chapter 1



Residential Security

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Burglars and Burglaries

What is a burglary?

Definition: Unlawful or forcible entry or attempted entry of a residence. This crime usually, but not always, involves theft. The illegal entry may be by force, such as breaking a window or slashing a screen, or may be without force by entering through an unlocked door or an open window. As long as the person entering has no legal right to be present in the structure and has the intent to commit a felony or theft, a burglary has occurred. Furthermore, the structure need not be the house itself for a burglary to take place; illegal entry of a garage, shed, or any other structure on the premises also constitutes household burglary.



Did you know...

- A residential burglary occurs every 9.8 seconds, which accounts for a total of 3,188,620 burglaries each year²
- Forcible entry is involved 45.8% of residential burglaries²
- Only 11.4% of victims recover some of their stolen property and only 3.7% are fortunate enough to recover all of their stolen property²
- The average burglary victim incurs an economic loss of \$1,539²
- Almost 25% of burglaries occur while the residents are either at work or on their way to work²

How do burglars operate?

- Many burglars are brazen and operate during the day and in full view of the public.
- Some burglars drive service vehicles and pose as repairmen, landscapers, maids, etc.
- Burglars occasionally knock on the door to see if anyone is home. If there is no answer, they kick in the door and burglarize the residence.
- Some burglars may live in your neighborhood and get information about the property you have through family and friends that visit you at your residence.

What are burglars looking for?

The typical burglar is looking for high value items that can be easily converted to cash. The following items are high-value targets for burglars:

- Currency
- Laptop computers
- Flat screen televisions
- Cellular phones
- Jewelry
- Other electronic devices

How to Discourage Burglars

Security can be simple if you look at each line of defense available to your home. When referring to residential security there are three sectors of defense:

- **Perimeter**-The area surrounding your property
- **Exterior**-The exterior structure of your residence
- **Interior**-The interior structure of your residence

Perimeter Security

Perimeter security consists of fencing, landscape, lighting, and alarms.

Fencing

A common fixture in most residential neighborhoods is fencing. The proper fencing can deter criminals and prevent them from targeting your house for a future burglary.



See-through fence



Privacy fence

Experts recommend a see-through type fence as show in the left photograph on the previous page. This type of fence helps keep people out while still allowing neighbors to see in. The installation of a privacy fence, as shown in the right photograph on the previous page, is highly discouraged. If a burglar enters through an unlocked gate or climbs over the privacy fence, he or she is no longer visible to neighbors or people passing by, therefore criminals can burglarize your house in relative seclusion. See-through type fences include: wooden picket, chain link, wrought iron, etc.

Regardless of the type fencing you choose for the perimeter security of your home, intruders can easily access your property if the gate is unlocked; so install locks on your gates and check them regularly.

Note: Some building codes and city ordinances may place restrictions on the type and height of fences that may be installed, so check on these possible restrictions before installing any fencing.

Landscape

Landscape around your home can either help or hinder a burglar. Tall shrubbery and trees can conceal a burglars attempt to enter the residence, while low-lying thick or thorny bushes can act as a deterrent. With most burglaries occurring during the day, the way you place and manicure your landscape may be one of the most important aspects of perimeter security.

Landscape Considerations:

- Thick thorny hedges can deter intruders
- Keep shrubs 18-24 inches away from exterior entrances
- Trim shrubs to a point at least six inches below the window
- Trim up the bottom 12 inches of shrubbery. This allows you to see if someone is hiding behind the bushes
- If planting trees, position them away from the house and trim low hanging limbs that can serve as a ladder for burglars
- Have your landscape maintained while you are away from home



Lighting



Lighting is an important aspect to crime prevention and is one of the best deterrents against nighttime crime around your home. To reduce your risk of being victimized, we recommend you keep each side of your house that has an entry point (door, window, etc.) illuminated at night.

There are several different types of lights currently on the market; however, most standard lights provide sufficient brightness to adequately illuminate your home. A simple rule of thumb is to keep your residence and property well-illuminated.

As previously mentioned, we recommend you illuminate your house from dusk to dawn. Since most people are occasionally away from their home at the onset of either dusk or dawn, we recommend the use of electronic devices that automatically activate the exterior lights of a home. Three types of light activation devices are:

- Motion detection
- photocell
- electrical timer

Motion detection lighting, also referred to as stand-by lighting, is activated when an object (such as a person) passes by the sensor. When the sensor detects movement, a switch activates the light and it illuminates the surrounding area.

Photocell lighting detects the amount of ambient light in a given area. When the area lacks sufficient illumination, the sensor activates the light and the light remains on until sufficient ambient lighting is detected; at which point the sensor deactivates and turns off the light.

Electrical timers are another method of automatically activating your exterior lights. By installing an electrical timer, you can adjust the time you would like the lights to turn on and the time you want them to turn off. If you use an electrical timer, we recommend you adjust the timer at the start and end of day light savings time to account for the shift in hours of darkness.

Dogs



Dogs are an excellent burglary deterrent. Although a vicious looking dog, such as the one pictured to the left, is a strong deterrent, small dogs can also be a deterrent. Although small dogs may not present much of a danger to potential criminals, their bark attracts unwanted attention, and thus causes many burglars to look for an alternative target.

Signs

Warning signs are also perimeter deterrents. Warning signs alert would-be burglars that your home is well protected. Although these signs do not deter all criminals, they do cause many would-be burglars to think twice; many of them elect to move on and find a house that appears more vulnerable.

The most familiar and effective warning signs are:

- Neighborhood Watch
- Operation I.D.
- Security alarm
- "Beware of Dog"



If you do not have an alarm system or a dog, we still recommend you install these signs in conspicuous locations around your home. Most burglars do not know that you do not have a dog or an alarm, and thus the sign itself will deter many criminals from targeting your home.

Address

In emergency situations, responding police, ambulance and fire personnel look for address markings to identify houses. If your house is not marked or is poorly marked, it may take longer for emergency personnel to reach you. Your house should be marked in the front and rear of your residence (required by City Ordinance). The house numbers should be large enough to easily recognize it from the street. Consider placing the house number near a light, which will aid in identifying your house at night.

Exterior Defenses

Exterior defenses help prevent an intruder from gaining access directly into your home. These items consist of:

- Doors
- Windows
- Locks
- Alarms

Standard Exterior Doors

Nationwide 55% of residential burglars enter through the front door, while 22% enter through the rear door.¹ The remaining burglars gain access through the window or other potential points of entry. The security provided by a locked door is only as good as the weakest component of the door lock system.

A door lock system consists of the door frame and supporting walls, the door itself, hinges, locking mechanism, and a strike plate. Often the most overlooked part of door security has to do with the strike plate (photographs shown below). The strike plate is attached to the frame of the door and the bolt enters through the strike plate to secure the door closed. Most strike plates are attached to the door frame using two one-inch screws, therefore only the thin door frame is protecting you from a potential burglar. We recommend you remove the standard strike plate screws and replace them with three inch screws. By installing longer screws, the security of the door is greatly enhanced, because the strike plate screws will not only pass through the door frame, but also into the wall stud surrounding the door, therefore making your door assembly much stronger as shown in the diagram on the following page.



Standard strike plate



High security strike plate

Doors should be at least 1-3/8 inches thick and constructed of either a metal or a solid-wood core design. Wood panel doors, hollow core doors, glass vision doors, and French doors are not recommended due to their penetrability.

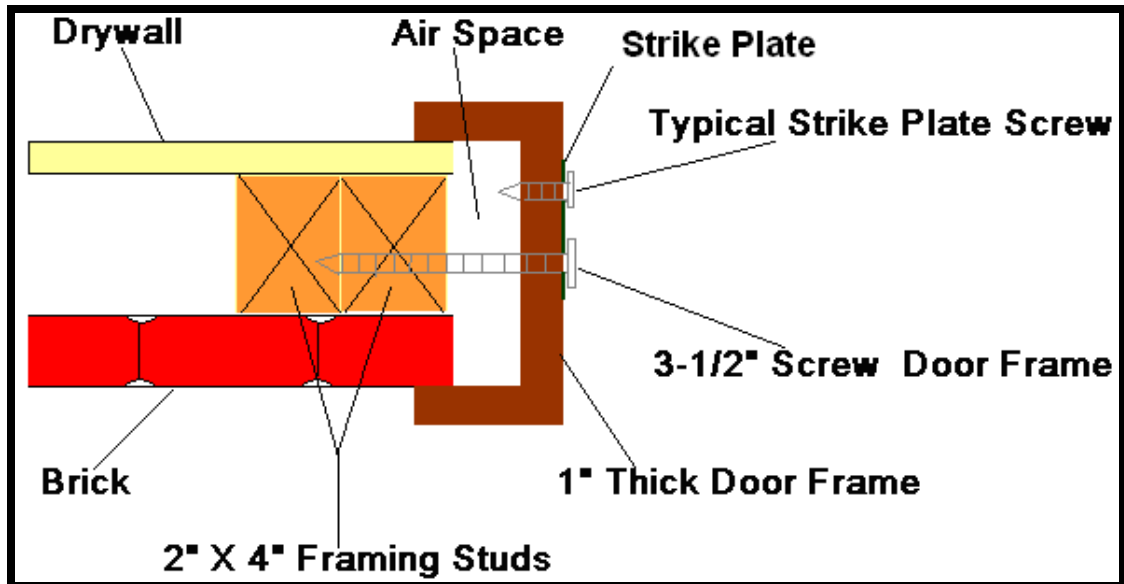


Diagram of door frame and strike plate screws

Another component to door security is the frame itself. To check security of the door frame perform the following tasks:

- Close the door and check for noticeable movement in the frame. This can be accomplished by grabbing the doorknob tightly and then firmly pushing and pulling on the door.
 - If the frame is loose, take the following corrective action:
 - Strengthen the frame by installing long nails or screws four inches above and below the strike plate and hinges
 - Install a high security strike plate (see photograph on the previous page), with three-inch wood screws.
 - Add shims or grout to fill airspace between the door frame and wall.

Although most people know that doors are attached to their frame with hinges, many people fail to recognize that the hinges should be mounted on the interior of the house. There are, however, doors that open outward, and thus have the hinge pins facing outward. In instances such as these, non-removable pins should be used. If you do not have non-removable pins, you can “pin” the door hinges yourself.

To pin your door hinges perform the following steps to each hinge:

- Remove the two outermost screws from both sides of the hinge
- Insert a screw or concrete nail into the outermost screw holes on the door frame, leaving the nail or screw end protruding $\frac{1}{2}$ inch.
- Drill out the outermost screw holes on the door. When the door is closed, the head of the nail or screw will come to rest inside the drilled out hole on the door, therefore the door assembly will remain firmly in place even if the hinge pins are removed.

Other Exterior Doors

Two other doors typically found in houses are sliding glass doors and garage doors.

Sliding Glass Doors

Sliding glass patio doors are especially vulnerable and can be removed from their tracks if not properly secured. There are four methods often used to provide additional security to sliding glass doors: door pins, “Charlie Bars”, deadbolts and “pinning.” How to use each of these methods is described below:

- **Door pins**-To use a door pin, you must first, close the door and drill a hole through the inner frame of the interior door and half way through the exterior door. Be careful not to drill too close to glass to prevent damage to the glass. When you want to lock and secure the door, simply put a pin in the newly drilled hole and it will prevent the door from being opened.
- **Charlie Bars**-These are devices (often bars) that are permanently attached on one end with a hinge and can be slid into place to help prevent the sliding door from being opened from the outside. Two types of Charlie bars are depicted in the photographs below.
- **Deadbolt locks**-Similar to standard doors, sliding glass door can be outfitted with a deadbolt lock.
- **Pinning**-To prevent burglars from removing your sliding glass door from the outside of your home you must pin the door. This is accomplished by placing two screws in the top track of sliding door. To do this, mark the upper track at the edge of the sliding door when it is closed. After marking the outer limit of the door, slide the door open, and measure inward approximately four inches from your original mark and then mark this location. Install one screw on each of the inner marks. Drill the screws to a depth that allows the door to slide freely, but does not permit the door to be lifted off of its track when closed.



Foot pedal Charlie bar



Typical Charlie bar

Garage Doors

Concerning residential security, garage doors are the most overlooked door. To protect belongings within your garage and home, we recommend you take the following precautions:

- Keep your garage door closed and locked when possible.
- If your door has a track and roller system, install a lock on the track just above a roller to prevent it from being opened from the exterior.
- Electric garage doors provide convenience. If you are purchasing a garage door opener, select one that has a lock override to disable it while you are on vacation. Additionally, select an opener with a multi-frequency so that you can change the frequency from its factory setting.
- Ensure your garage door opener is hidden in your car and not visible from the outside.

Door Locks

Standard door knob locks are not considered security locks. Security locks use a deadbolt system, and the use of these locks varies based upon need and circumstance. View the chart on the following page to determine the appropriate lock for your situation. Also, consider the following when installing locks:

- Install the deadbolt at a level that everyone in the house can access.
- Do not forget the importance of a high security strike plate, which should be installed with steel three inch screws.
- Ensure locks meet city ordinances and life safety codes.

Windows

If a burglar cannot make entry through a door, he will probably attempt to gain access through a window. Many windows are not viewable from the roadway, and are often concealed by unmaintained shrubbery. There are several types of windows, and each window type requires special attention to ensure the security of your home. Window types include: Double hung, sliding glass, louvered or jalousie, and casement.

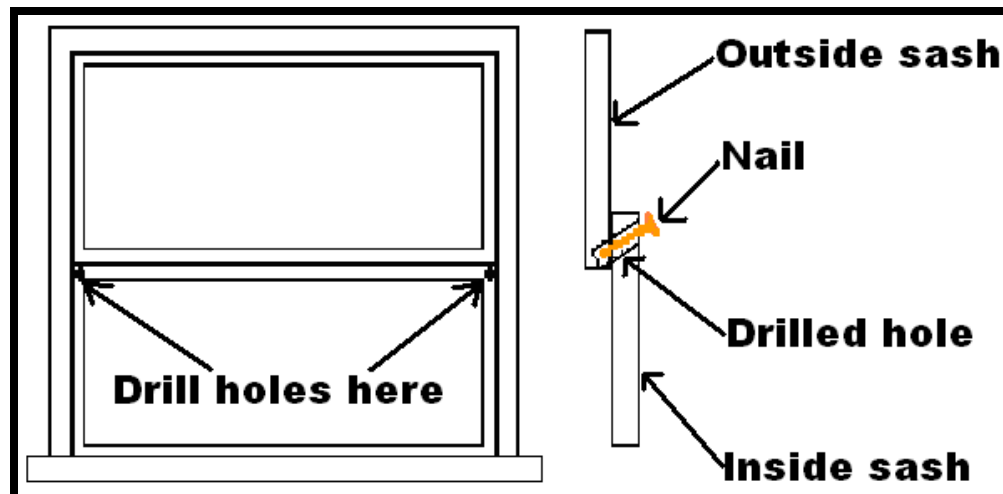
Double Hung Windows

There are a couple of methods for securing double hung windows. One easy and cost effective method is “pinning”, which is illustrated in the photograph on the bottom of the following page. To pin a window, drill a 5/16 inch hole at an angle through the overlapping portion of the inner and outer sash of the window. Drill holes on the left and right side of the window. Afterward you can slide a loose fitting nail into each hole, and thus pin your window closed.

Lock Selection		
Type	Price	Comments
Single cylinder deadbolt	\$15-\$50	-Is key operated from the outside, and operated with a thumb-turn on the inside. -Used when there is no glass within 40 inches of the lock.
Double cylinder deadbolt	\$30-\$80	-Is key operated from both the inside and outside. -Keep key readily available for fast exits in the event of an emergency -Ensure everyone in the house knows the location of the key*
Full mortise lock	\$80-\$150	-Offers double lock protection; knob lock plus deadbolt. -Usually requires professional installation -Considered the best lock system.
Rim mounted or vertical/horizontal deadbolts	\$30-\$80	-Mounts on the interior or surface of a door. -Serves as a good secondary lock.
Threshold or header bolts	\$10-\$45	-Used to secure the inactive door of a double or French style door.

Deadbolt Lock chart

*City ordinances and life safety codes may restrict the use of double cylinder locks, so check these ordinances and codes before installation.



Example of how to "pin" a double hung window

For aluminum cased windows, you can purchase and install secondary window locking devices as shown in the photographs below. These devices can be purchased at any hardware store, but avoid using key-operated secondary locking devices if children will be in the home.



Secondary window locking devices

Sliding Glass Windows

Refer to sliding glass door recommendations

Louvered (Jalousie) Windows

Louvered windows present a significant security risk do to the fact that the individual glass panes can easily be removed from the exterior of the residence. The best security solution for these types of windows is to replace them with either casement or double hung windows. If window replacement is not an option, you can decrease your vulnerability by gluing each panel to its frame.

Casement Windows

Casement windows are typically opened and closed using a manual crank mechanism. As with any mechanical device, over time the operating mechanism will begin to show signs of wear. Periodically check the crank handle to ensure that there is no excess play and that the latch is operating properly. As an additional safety measure, remove the crank handle.

Additional Note on Windows

- Second story windows are easily assessable points of entry for burglars; as such these windows should be secured in the same manner as ground level windows.
- Bars or grillwork can be used if permitted by life safety codes, but **only** as a last resort. Although window bars make it difficult for a burglar to gain entry, it also makes it nearly impossible for you to exit your home in the event of a fire or other emergency. Check for compliance
- Impact-resistant acrylic or polycarbonate laminate can be installed over glass panes to reduce the penetrability of both windows, and doors with glass panels.

Gate and Storage Shed Security

Many storage sheds and gates are secured with hasps and padlocks. Hasps should be constructed of case hardened steel and installed with carriage bolts. The carriage bolts should be installed from the outside, with the nuts and washers on the inside. After securing the nuts in place, deface the threads to prevent the nuts from working their way loose. When selecting a locking device, decide what you want to protect and how much it is worth to you. Padlocks used to secure gates and sheds should be well constructed. A well constructed padlock has the following features:

- Case hardened steel 9/32 inch shackle
- Double locking at the heel and toe
- Five pin tumbler
- Key retention feature so that the key cannot be removed until the padlock is in the locked position

For security of higher valued items, we recommend a jimmy-proof type lock. A sample jimmy-proof lock is shown in the photograph below.



Typical jimmy-proof lock

Interior Defenses

Alarm Systems



Alarm systems are not intrusion *protection* devices, rather they are intrusion *detection* devices, and hence they are not a substitute for good locks. Security alarms simply alert you to the fact that an intrusion has taken place. This is not to say that alarm systems are not a deterrent; in fact, the number one factor burglars consider when targeting a house is the security of the residence, which includes alarm systems.³ When selecting an alarm system, first determine what your intended purpose of the alarm will be. For example, do you want the alarm to deter potential

burglars, alert you to potential intrusions, warn you in the event of a fire, or provide emergency health notification?

Alarm Construction

There are three major components of an alarm system: Sensor, control panel, and enunciator.

- Sensors are often installed on every exterior door and window. Other sensors can be installed on the interior of the residence and pickup motion, temperature, or pressure.
- The control panel is used to activate, deactivate and monitor the alarm system.
- The enunciator alerts occupants to an intrusion. Enunciators may be audible, visual, or both. In addition to alerting occupants, enunciators also alert and scare off many burglars.

Ideal Alarm Features

Traditionally alarm systems are hardwired into buildings; however, with technological advances over recent years, many alarm systems can now be installed wirelessly and monitored via cellular telephones. Alarms can be set up for local notification only (alarm only sounds at your residence), or can be remotely monitored through an alarm security company. With remotely monitored systems, if the company receives an alarm from your home, they in-turn will notify the police.

When selecting an alarm system, consider having the following features:

Control Box

- Battery back-up in the event of a power outage
- Approved by Underwriters Laboratories
- Tamper proof
- 10-60 second time delay to disarm the system upon entry
- Test lights that indicate the system is working properly
- Zoned system to help pinpoint a break-in location

Sensors

- Magnetic contact sensors are considered the most reliable sensors. They should be located on each exterior door, window and air conditioner unit (to detect air conditioner tampering). Sensors can be either surface or recessed mounted
- Pressure mats placed beneath the carpet
- Smoke and heat detector accommodations
- Active or passive photoelectric sensors; active photoelectric sensors detect individuals through movement, whereas passive infrared

systems use temperature differences to detect intruders. These sensors must be high enough to prevent accidental activation by pets.

- Ultrasonic or microwave motion sensors; ultrasonic sensors use sound waves to detect movement, whereas microwave sensors use electromagnetic waves to detect movement. These types of sensors are not recommended for houses with pets.

Installation

- Some alarm systems are not complicated and can be installed by a novice; however, hiring a professional will greatly reduce the possibility of a faulty system and frequent false alarms.
- Do-it-yourself systems range from \$150 to \$500. Having a professionally installed alarm system is similarly priced as the do-it-yourself systems; however, many alarm companies offer periodic specials that include free installation if you subscribe to one of their home security monitoring plans (contract required).

Note: City Ordinance requires all alarm systems to be registered with the Mesquite Police Department. For further information regarding alarm permits, contact the police department's **alarm officer at 972-216-6676**.

How Secure is Your Home?

Use the checklist on the following two pages to assess the overall security of your home. The more questions that you can answer yes to, the more secure your home is.



Home Security Checklist

Perimeter

Yes No N/A

1. Does lighting cover all exterior building openings?			
2. Does the lighting remain on from dusk to dawn?			
3. Is landscaping trimmed away from all windows and doors?			
4. Is the house number clearly visible from the street?			
5. Do all gates have locks on them?			
6. Are there alarm signs posted near entry points? *It does not matter if you have an alarm system or not			

Exterior Doors

Yes No N/A

1. Are all doors either solid core or metal with a minimum thickness of 1-3/8 inches?			
2. Are doorframes strong enough to prevent forced entry?			
3. Are door hinges protected from removal from the outside?			
4. Are deadbolt locks with one-inch throws used on all doors?			
5. Are double-cylinder deadbolt locks used at locations where doors have glass panes, or where glass is within 40 inches of the door?			
6. Are strike plates attached with three-inch case-hardened steel screws?			
7. Are sliding glass doors secured by a secondary locking device to prevent prying?			
8. Are there 180° or greater peephole viewers on all solid doors?			
9. Are the garage doors kept closed and locked with an adequate locking device?			

Windows**Yes No N/A**

1. Are all standard window locking devices operable?			
2. Do all windows have secondary locking devices installed?			
3. Are locking storm windows installed?			

Interior**Yes No N/A**

1. Are all valuables marked with your driver's license number?			
2. Are small valuable items, such as jewelry and currency kept in a safe that is properly secured to the ground?			

Homeowner's Insurance **Premium Reduction**

Previously Article 5.33A of the Texas Insurance Code provided homeowners with up to a 20% discount on homeowner insurance premiums if the property covered by the insurance policy met certain security criteria. Although this article was subsequently repealed, many insurance companies still honor these premiums reductions. Homeowners may qualify for a five percent discount on their homeowner's insurance premium if each of the following criteria is met:

- Exterior Doors are solid core doors that with a minimum thickness of 1 3/8 inches, and are secured by dead-bolt locks. The "throw" of the deadbolt lock must penetrate a metal strike plate by at least one inch. If the door has breakable glass within 40 inches of the lock, the lock must be key-operated from both sides unless prohibited by life safety codes.
- Metal doors are secured by dead-bolt locks as described above.
- Double doors meet the same specifications for exterior doors as listed above, and the inactive door is secured by header and threshold bolts that penetrate metal strike plates. If the double doors have breakable glass within 40 inches of header and threshold bolts, the header and threshold bolts must be flush-mounted at the edge of the door.
- Sliding glass doors are secured by secondary locking devices to prevent lifting and prying.
- Dutch doors have concealed flush-bolt locking devices to interlock upper and lower halves and are secured by a dead-bolt lock as described above.
- Garage doors are equipped with key-operated locking devices.
- Windows are secured by auxiliary locking devices. Auxiliary locking devices required by this section include screws, wooden dowels, pinning devices, and key-operated locks. In areas where life safety codes permit it, metal bars or grating that are not easily removable may be substituted as auxiliary locking devices. Jalousie or louvered windows do not meet the specifications for this section unless they have metal grating mounted as provided for above.

Homeowners may also qualify for an additional 15% discount if the property is equipped with an electronic burglar alarm that meets the following requirements:

- All exterior structure openings are contacted (have a contacted alarm sensor).
- The system includes interior and exterior sirens.

- All equipment is Underwriters Laboratories (UL) approved and is monitored by a UL approved central station.*
- Sales, services, installation, and monitoring of the system are done in compliance with the Private Investigations and Private Security Agencies Act (Article 4413(29bb), Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes).

*Information concerning alarm equipment and its UL listing can be obtained from your alarm company. This information must be presented to the inspector at the time of the Insurance Premium Reduction inspection.

The Mesquite Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit offers free Insurance Premium Reduction inspections. To schedule an appointment, fill out the bottom portion of the Report of Inspector's Findings form (see page 45), and then contact the **Crime Prevention Unit at 972-329-8757 if you live north of Highway 80 or at 972-329-8781 if you live south of Highway 80.** You may also contact us via the Internet at crimeprevention@mesquitepolice.org.

How to Protect Property within Your Home

Operation Identification

Operation Identification is a nationwide program designed to deter criminals and assist law enforcement with the detection and identification of personal property, and assist in returning stolen or lost property to its rightful owner.

There are three components to Operation Identification: Marking, inventory, and display. Each of these components is described below:

Marking-All valuables should be tagged with an identifiable mark. We recommend the tag (marking) be associated with either your driver's license or your state issued identification card number. If you use your driver's license or identification card number, simply engrave the abbreviation of the state your license or identification card was issued, followed by either DL for driver's license or ID for identification card, and then followed by your driver's license or identification card number. For example if your Texas driver's license number was 12345678, then you should engrave your property with "TX DL 12345678." If items are too small to be engraved, we recommend you take pictures or videotape these valuables.

Inventory-All valuables should be inventoried and a copy of the inventory should be kept in a safe location. On the inventory, be sure to include the brand, model number, and serial number of all listed items. In the unfortunate event that your property is stolen and subsequently located by the police,

having this information will significantly increase your chances of having your property returned to you.

Display-For Operation Identification to have any deterrent affect, potential burglars must know that your property has been marked. After you have marked your property, place Operation Identification decals on key entry points to your residence.

Operation Identification stickers will be furnished by the Mesquite Police Department after verification of compliance. To schedule a compliance inspection, contact the police department's **Crime Prevention Unit at 972-329-8757 if you live north of Highway 80 or at 972-329-8781 if you live south of Highway 80. You may also contact them via the Internet at crimeprevention@mesquitepolice.org.**

At a minimum, the following items should be engraved or photographed and inventoried:

Items to be Marked

Items to be Photographed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVD/blueray players • MP3 players • Computers • Printers • Televisions • Cameras • Video recorders • Video game consoles • Firearms • Cellular phones • Power tools • Lawn mowers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewelry • Silverware • Crystal • Coin collections • Furniture • Ancestral items • DVD/CD collections
--	--

Photographs and photocopies should be in color. These photographs should be maintained with your inventory in a safe and secure location.





Serial Number Central

Often the police department locates property that cannot be identified as stolen or be tied to any particular victim, because victims of property crimes often are unable to provide a unique description of their property. The most unique and helpful identifier of property is the factory serial number. Generally, people don't think about recording the serial numbers of their property until it is too late. Additionally many victims find it difficult to locate their inventory sheets after being burglarized. We believe that if we can improve the documentation associated with personal property, we will

improve our effectiveness in fighting property crimes. This will result in more successful prosecutions and more stolen property being returned to its rightful owner.

In an effort to improve citizens' documentation of their personal property, the Mesquite Police Department offers citizens a location to store information about their property on a secure computer server through Serial Number Central. This program is password protected, and thus after setting up an account, residents can record details about their personal belongings. This information inputted into Serial Number Central can only be accessed by the account holder and the police department. In the event that your property is stolen or missing, the police department can retrieve this information to identify and return recovered property to its rightful owner. For more information regarding Serial Number Central go to the police department's website at **www.mesquitelpolice.org**. From the home page, you can navigate to Serial Number Central by clicking on Community Policing, which is under the "Squad Notes" tab located at the top of the police department's webpage. Below is a screenshot of the Serial Number Central login screen and a sample Serial Number Central account.

Login screen for Serial Number Central

Type	Description	Edit
 GLOCK - 17 - (S/N: 85436454)	BLACK	Edit
 SONY - 453678 - (S/N: 2345679933)	BLACK FLAT SCREEN WITH LARGE SCRATCH ON BACK	Edit
 SAMSUNG - TOCCO - (S/N: 123456789)	BLACK SLIDE PHONE	Edit
 DIAMOND RING - NA - (S/N: NA)	WHITE GOLD, 2-1/2 CAROTS, ENGRAVED WITH KDG ON INSIDE OF BAND	Edit

Sample screenshot of a Serial Number Central account

Chapter 2



Vehicle Security

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Vehicle Burglaries and Theft

What is a vehicle burglary?

Definition: A person commits a vehicle burglary if, without the effective consent of the owner, he breaks into or enters a vehicle or any part of a vehicle with intent to commit any felony or theft.

What constitutes theft of a vehicle?

Definition: A person commits a vehicle theft if he unlawfully appropriates a vehicle with intent to deprive the owner of his property. Appropriation of property is unlawful if it is without the owner's effective consent.

If you lend your vehicle to someone and they fail to return it, this is not considered a vehicle theft, because you consented to the person using your vehicle. In this type of situation, you must send a demand letter to the person who borrowed your vehicle demanding that they return your vehicle. For further information regarding this type of situation contact the Mesquite Police Department.



Did you know...

- In the United States, a car is stolen every 33 seconds²
- Auto thefts result in \$4.6 million in losses annually²
- In Texas, approximately 68,000 vehicles are stolen each year²
- Ford, Dodge and Chevrolet pickup trucks are the top three stolen vehicles in Texas
- 40-50% of stolen vehicles were either unlocked or had the keys inside of them
- Vehicle burglaries occur 2 -1/2 times more often than vehicle thefts

How do vehicle burglars and thieves operate?

- Some burglars and car thieves look for easy targets. They look for vehicles that are unlocked or have the key either in a hide-away spot or inside the vehicle.
- Criminals also look for vehicles that are parked in dimly lit areas.
- Other burglars and thieves target specific vehicles due to their lack of security.
- If your car doors are locked, burglars and thieves will typically attempt entry in one of three ways: Jimmying the door open, punching the door lock, or shattering a window.
- Occasionally, burglars and vehicle thieves will have accomplices who are on the lookout for police and potential witnesses.
- Vehicle thefts and burglaries generally occur at opposite times. Vehicle thefts typically occur between 6 p.m. and midnight, whereas vehicle burglaries most often occur between 6 a.m. and 1 p.m.

What are vehicle burglars looking for?

As with residential burglars, vehicle burglars are looking for high-value items that can be easily converted to cash. The following are high-value targets for vehicle burglars:

- Cell phones
- Global Positioning System (GPS)
- Money/credit cards
- Personal Identification
- Laptop computer and other electronic devices
- Tires and rims
- Airbags and catalytic converters

How to discourage car thieves and burglars?

- Hide or remove valuables
- Lock your car and take the keys with you
- Do not keep your car title in your vehicle
- Install an alarm system and alarm decals
- Install a tamperproof ignition disabling system (often incorporated into alarm systems)
- Use a steering wheel locking device
- If possible, park in an enclosed garage
- Park in well lit areas
- Register your vehicle in the H.E.A.T. program

What is the H.E.A.T program?

Help End Auto Theft (H.E.A.T.) is a statewide vehicle registration program administered by the Texas Department of Public Safety that helps law enforcement officers identify stolen vehicles. By registering your vehicle, it gives law enforcement officers the authority to stop your vehicle between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. to verify vehicle ownership.

H.E.A.T. registration is easy

Just complete the H.E.A.T. registration application to have your vehicle entered in a statewide database, accessible by law enforcement agencies, 24 hours a day. For further details and registration, go to the Texas DPS website at https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/DPS_WEB/Heat/index.aspx or call their office toll- free at 1-888-447-5933.



The image displays three H.E.A.T. (Help End Auto Theft) decals. The top decal is white with a black border, featuring the text 'H.E.A.T.' in large black letters, 'HELP END AUTO THEFT' in smaller black letters below it, and a small box containing the number '0000000'. Below this decal is a text block explaining that this white front decal indicates a peace officer may stop the vehicle between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. anywhere in Texas and 24 hours a day when crossing the border into Mexico. The middle decal is yellow with a black border, featuring the text 'H.E.A.T.' in large black letters, 'HELP END AUTO THEFT' in smaller black letters below it, and a small box containing the number '80000000'. Below this decal is a text block explaining that this yellow front decal indicates a peace officer may stop the vehicle between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. anywhere in Texas and when crossing the border into Mexico. The bottom decal is circular with a white background and a blue border, featuring the text 'H.E.A.T.' in large black letters, 'HELP END AUTO THEFT' in smaller black letters below it, and a map of Texas with a star in the center. Below this decal is a text block explaining that this rear decal indicates a peace officer may stop the vehicle between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. anywhere in Texas.

H.E.A.T.
HELP END AUTO THEFT
0000000

This white front decal indicates a peace officer may stop the vehicle between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. anywhere in Texas and 24 hours a day when crossing the border into Mexico.

H.E.A.T.
HELP END AUTO THEFT
80000000

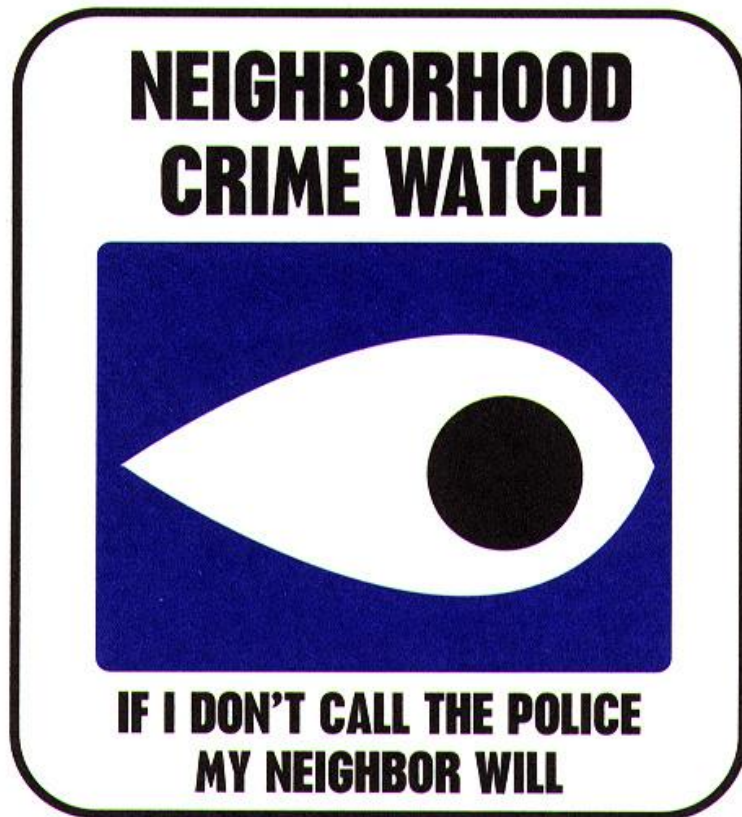
This yellow front decal indicates a peace officer may stop the vehicle between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. anywhere in Texas and when crossing the border into Mexico.

H.E.A.T.
HELP END AUTO THEFT
THE STATE OF TEXAS

This rear decal indicates a peace officer may stop the vehicle between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. anywhere in Texas

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Chapter 3



Neighborhood Watch

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Neighborhood Watch Program

What is a Neighborhood Watch Program?

The Neighborhood Watch Program is a community driven crime prevention program where neighbors get back to the old adage of being our brothers' keeper. It is not designed as a substitute for police protection, but rather as a complement to the policing effort. Its purpose is to fight crime by actively joining citizens and law enforcement in creating the best crime fighting team possible.

The Neighborhood Watch Program operates under three principles: Being neighborly, training, and sense of pride.

- **Being neighborly**-This involves getting to know neighbors in your community and watching out for each other.
- **Training**-to protect yourself and your neighbors, you must be educated about suspicious activity and home security strategies.
- **Sense of pride**-A sense of pride develops when neighbors work together to make their community safer, subsequently causing more citizens to become involved.

What is the role of a crime watcher?

The potential for crime exists at every location within any city. Since it is impossible to put a police officer on every street corner, it is imperative that citizens watch out for themselves and their neighbors by being in-tune to suspicious and criminal activity. The purpose of a crime watcher is to be the eyes and ears for the police.

There are four participant levels within any crime watch: Police representative, chairperson, block captain, and resident. The responsibilities of each participant level are as follows:

- **Police representatives**-provide guidance to the chairperson and is available to give presentations on various crime prevention topics.
- **Chairpersons**-are the linchpin of any crime watch. They are the liaison between crime watch members and the police department. Chairpersons are responsible for:
 - Planning all aspects of the quarterly crime watch meetings
 - Pass pertinent information onto block captains, such as crime bulletins or current crime trends
 - Maintain a current map of the crime watch area, and a crime watch roster that includes the names, addresses, phone numbers, and

email addresses of each resident to be used in the event of an emergency, or disseminate pertinent neighborhood watch information (see the Neighborhood Watch Block Map on page 47 and Neighborhood Watch Notification form on page 49).

- **Block captains**-assist the chairperson with setting up crime watch meetings, and disseminating information from the chairperson to residents on the block captain's street. The block captain also maintains a crime watch map and crime watch roster for his or her particular street (see the Neighborhood Watch Block map on page 47 and Neighborhood Watch Notification form on page 49).
- **Residents**-, along with the chairperson and block captains, are the eyes and ears of the neighborhood. They keep an eye out for, and immediately report any suspicious activity.

To truly know if someone or something is suspicious in your neighborhood, you must first be able to identify who lives in your neighborhood. It is incumbent that all crime watch members get to know their neighbors and their neighbors' vehicles. By knowing who your neighbors are and what type of vehicle they drive, you will be better prepared to watch over your neighbors' homes and property.

In addition to keeping an eye out for suspicious activity, all members of the crime watch are encouraged to educate their children about preventing crime and encourage them to develop friendships with police officers. We also recommend residents implement crime deterrent methods, such as installing security alarms or participating in Operation Identification, to reduce their likelihood of victimization.

How do you start a Neighborhood Watch?

There are three steps for starting a crime watch.

Step 1

Determine the area that you would like to encompass within your neighborhood watch and subdivide the area into manageable sectors to be headed up by block captains (one block captain can typically oversee 10 to 30 houses, or one street). Then talk with neighbors and friends and explain:

- That you would like to start a neighborhood crime watch
- The crime problems associated with your neighborhood. This information is available by contacting the police department's **Crime Prevention Unit at 972-329-8757 if you live north of Highway 80 or at 972-329-8781 if you live south of Highway 80.**
- Explain the need and value of a neighborhood watch
- Enlist the help of others to assist with the program (i.e. block captains)

Step 2

Contact the **Crime Prevention Unit** to coordinate a date, time, and location for your first meeting (**call 972-329-8757 if you live north of Highway 80 or 972-329-8781 if you live south of Highway 80**). Allow at least two weeks advance notice for your first meeting. Be prepared to discuss the boundaries of your crime watch and possible locations for your meeting.

Step 3

The final step is to plan the first meeting. When planning the meeting, consider the following:

- Try to meet in a convenient place that is not too far from your neighborhood. Although smaller crime watches can be held in someone's home, larger crime watches should meet at larger facilities, such as a local school or community center.
- Design a flyer and deliver them to every home within your desired crime watch area (see sample flyer on page 51). Place the flyer on the front door. **Do not place the flyers in mailboxes as it is illegal to do so without sufficient postage.**
- At each meeting have a sign-in sheet to collect contact information of crime watch members (see form on page 53). Having contact information allows you to disseminate future crime watch information such as crime bulletins, or to contact members in the event of an emergency.
- Consider using nametags and having refreshments to create a more relaxed atmosphere.
- Coordinate with your crime prevention officer and discuss topics for this and future meetings. Crime watch meetings typically include:
 - Introductions
 - Crime statistics
 - Training and education topics such as
 - Home security
 - Vehicle security
 - Personal security
 - Identifying and reporting suspicious activity
 - Code enforcement
 - Presentations by local elected officials

Special Comments

- The Neighborhood Watch Program does not require frequent meetings, but we do encourage one meeting per quarter.
- Do not get discouraged if everyone does not attend. Although some people in your neighborhood may not be interested, many are interested, but cannot attend every meeting due to other personal and professional commitments. Research has shown that 98% of crime watches have an

average meeting attendance rate of 30 or less, and the majority of those crime watches have an average attendance rate of between 11 and 20 residents.¹

- Residential neighborhood watch signs can be purchased from the city and installed for a nominal fee. The placement of the signs, however, must fit into the city's Sign Placement Plan. Once the signs are erected, the City of Mesquite will assume responsibility for maintenance and replacement of all crime watch signs. If a neighborhood watch sign is to be placed at a location that currently does not have a signpost, you must get permission from the resident of that location to erect the sign in front of their property (see the Permission for Sign Placement form on page 55).
- Smaller individual neighborhood watch signs, which can be placed in your flowerbed, can also be purchased for a nominal fee. The smaller signs (shown below) can be customized to have the name of your neighborhood watch displayed at the bottom of the sign. You can purchase one of these signs by filling out and following the instructions on the Keep Mesquite Beautiful, Safe and Secure form (see page 57).



Individual neighborhood watch sign (12"x18")

Suspicious Activity

Purpose of Reporting Suspicious Activity

The purpose of reporting suspicious activity to the police is to stop criminal activity, relay accurate details about suspicious and criminal activities, and increase police presence in your neighborhood.

What is Suspicious Activity?

Suspicious activity is anything, given the time of day, that seems to be out of the ordinary and signals that crime may be afoot. See the chart below for many of the commonly identified suspicious activities.

Suspicious Activity Chart

Vehicle Related	
Circumstance	Possible crime/activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle repeatedly driving slowly through the neighborhood with no apparent destination • A parked vehicle, especially one that is occupied, that is parked at an unusual location given the time of day • Abandoned vehicle • Vehicle repair or parts removal • Business transactions from a vehicle • Objects being thrown from a vehicle • Vehicle without license plates • Someone being forced into a vehicle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burglary or vehicle theft • Burglary or drug activity • Stolen vehicle • Theft or vandalism • Drug sales or sale of stolen property • Disposing of evidence • Stolen vehicle • Kidnapping or assault
Home related	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound of breaking glass • Normally quiet dogs continuously barking • Open or broken doors or windows • Unusual amounts of property around and inside a home • Individuals walking in the neighborhood carrying unusual amounts of property • Unusual chemical or ammonia odor coming from a house or building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burglary or vandalism • Burglary • Burglary • Stolen property • Burglary • Drug manufacturing

How to Report Suspicious Activity

If you see any suspicious activity, write down a description of the people and any associated vehicles, and then contact the police immediately. Use the Suspect and Vehicle Description form (located on page 59) as a guide. **Do not take personal risks to prevent crime. The responsibility for investigating crimes and apprehending criminals should remain with the police.**

For emergencies such as injured persons or significant in-progress crimes call 911 and remain on the line until the dispatcher tells you that it is okay to hang up. For non-emergencies, such as minor crimes or offenses with a significant delay between the time the crime occurred and the time the incident was discovered, call the police non-emergency line at 972-216-6759.

All landline telephones (hardwired telephones) in the City of Mesquite are part of an Enhanced 911 System where dispatchers automatically see the caller's phone number, name, and address; however, not all cellular phones have this same feature; consequently it is important to relay your location when speaking to police dispatchers.*

* When an emergency dispatcher receives a 911 hang-up, officers are dispatched to the hang-up location. This often causes officers to be diverted from other calls to respond to the hang-up. To reduce false 911 calls and 911 hang-ups, inform your children of the tracking feature associated with the Enhanced 911 System.

When you call, provide the dispatcher with as much information about the incident as possible. Answers to the following questions are very important:

- What happened?
- Where did it occur?
- When did it occur?
- How many suspects are there?
- What are the physical descriptors of the suspect?
- What is the suspect's mode of travel?
- If the suspect left in a vehicle, what is the license plate number and vehicle description?
- In which direction did the suspect leave?
- Did you hear what was said?
- Were there any other witnesses?
- Is there any other information that you feel is important?

The police department will not publicly release the names of callers or witnesses, and you may choose to remain anonymous. We recommend, however, that you provide your personal information. By providing your information, officers can contact you and let you know that they have arrived

at the location. Additionally, by having your information officers will be able to contact you if additional information is needed.

All calls within the City of Mesquite are dispatched based upon priority. During peak call-load times officers may not be available to immediately respond to your call. Remain patient and officers will respond as soon as possible.

Remember, it is better to call the police and not need them, than it is to need them and not have called.



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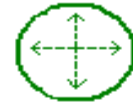
Sample Crime Watch Forms

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Neighborhood Watch Block Map

Indicate north
with an arrow



Name	_____
House #	_____
Phone #	_____
Email	_____
Name	_____
House #	_____
Phone #	_____
Email	_____

Street Name _____

Name	_____
House #	_____
Phone #	_____
Email	_____
Name	_____
House #	_____
Phone #	_____
Email	_____
Name	_____
House #	_____
Phone #	_____
Email	_____
Name	_____
House #	_____
Phone #	_____
Email	_____

Street Name _____

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Neighborhood Watch Notification Tree

Chairperson		
Name	<input type="text"/>	
Addr	<input type="text"/>	
Phone	<input type="text"/>	
Email	<input type="text"/>	

Block captain	Block captain	Block captain
Name <input type="text"/>	Name <input type="text"/>	Name <input type="text"/>
Addr <input type="text"/>	Addr <input type="text"/>	Addr <input type="text"/>
Phone <input type="text"/>	Phone <input type="text"/>	Phone <input type="text"/>
Email <input type="text"/>	Email <input type="text"/>	Email <input type="text"/>

Residents on block Captains street	Residents on block Captains street	Residents on block Captains street
Name <input type="text"/>	Name <input type="text"/>	Name <input type="text"/>
Addr <input type="text"/>	Addr <input type="text"/>	Addr <input type="text"/>
Phone <input type="text"/>	Phone <input type="text"/>	Phone <input type="text"/>
Email <input type="text"/>	Email <input type="text"/>	Email <input type="text"/>
Name <input type="text"/>	Name <input type="text"/>	Name <input type="text"/>
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Name <input type="text"/>	Name <input type="text"/>	Name <input type="text"/>
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Phone <input type="text"/>	Phone <input type="text"/>	Phone <input type="text"/>
Email <input type="text"/>	Email <input type="text"/>	Email <input type="text"/>
Name <input type="text"/>	Name <input type="text"/>	Name <input type="text"/>
Addr <input type="text"/>	Addr <input type="text"/>	Addr <input type="text"/>
Phone <input type="text"/>	Phone <input type="text"/>	Phone <input type="text"/>
Email <input type="text"/>	Email <input type="text"/>	Email <input type="text"/>

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NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM



Hello Neighbors,

I would like to invite you to attend our first Neighborhood Crime Watch meeting which is currently scheduled for **Tuesday, 17 July 2012 at 6:30 PM.**

We have had several incidents in our neighborhood over the past several months, and we would like to address these issues. An Officer from the Mesquite Police Department will be present to discuss the recent criminal activity in our area. He will also give a presentation on home security and crime prevention techniques, and tips to better protect your home and property. He will also address any questions or concerns that you might have.

As with any neighborhood watch program, the most important aspect of crime prevention is recognizing suspicious individuals in the area and contacting the police. The only way to know if someone does not belong in your neighborhood is by knowing who lives in your neighborhood. So come join us at **Smith Elementary School cafeteria on Tuesday, 17 July 2012 at 6:30 PM.**

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 972-123-4567.

Sincerely,
John Doe

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Permission for Sign Placement

I hereby give my permission for a Neighborhood Crime Watch sign to be placed at:

Location: _____

Date: _____

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Address:</u>	<u>Signature:</u>
<u>Name:</u>	<u>Address:</u>	<u>Signature:</u>
<u>Name:</u>	<u>Address:</u>	<u>Signature:</u>

Crime Watch Name: _____

Crime Watch Captain: _____

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Keep Mesquite Beautiful, *Safe* & Secure

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Neighborhood Watch Group _____

KMB Flower Bed Neighborhood Watch Sign

of Signs (12X8 aluminum signs with 3 foot pole): _____

** Minimum of 10 (\$15/sign) = \$150 total*

Do you want bottom line customized?

**If not, it will say neighborhood watch* _____

KMB Neighborhood Watch Car/Window Sticker

of Car/Window Stickers: _____

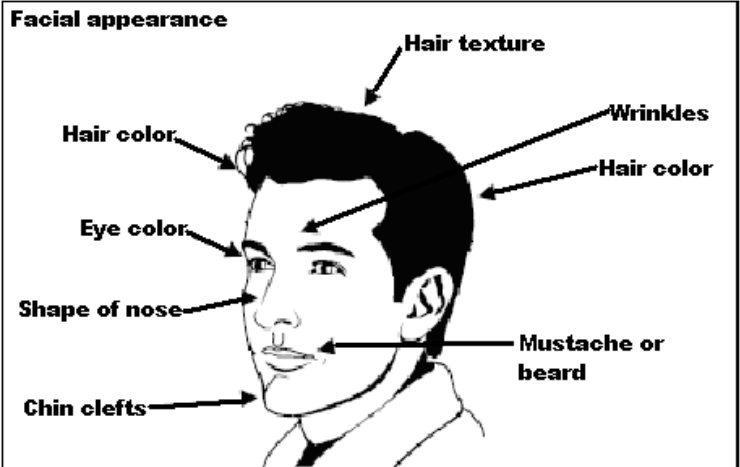
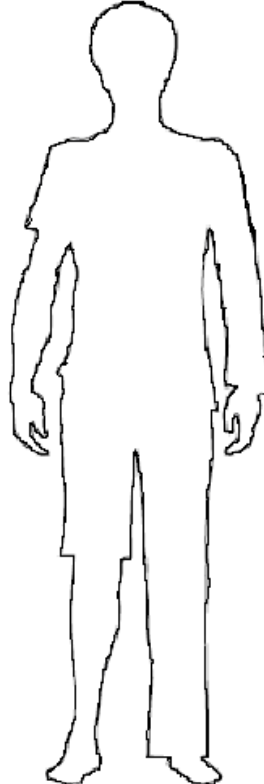
** \$1 per sticker*

Total Price: _____

**Please mail check to:
Keep Mesquite Beautiful
P.O. Box 850137
Mesquite, TX 75185**

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Suspect and Vehicle Description Form

Sex Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Race / Ethnicity White <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Black <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Age	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Facial appearance</p>  </div> <p>Only those specific facial details you definitely remember</p> <p>What did the suspect say or do?</p> <p>Details of the incident</p>																	
Height		Left/right handed																		
Weight		Hat (color/type)																		
Hair		Tie																		
Eyes		Coat																		
Glasses		Shirt																		
Tattoos		Trousers																		
Scars/marks		Shoes																		
Complexion		Weapons																		
				<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">VEHICLE</td> <td style="width: 25%;">Color</td> <td style="width: 25%;">Make</td> <td style="width: 25%;">Model</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Body style</td> <td>Damage/rust</td> <td>License #</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Direction of travel</td> <td>Date of report</td> <td>Phone #</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Witnesses</td> </tr> </table>	VEHICLE	Color	Make	Model	Body style	Damage/rust	License #		Direction of travel	Date of report	Phone #		Witnesses			
VEHICLE		Color	Make	Model																
Body style	Damage/rust	License #																		
Direction of travel	Date of report	Phone #																		
Witnesses																				

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- ¹Community crime prevention programs: Neighborhood watch. (2004). *TELEMASP Bulletin*, 11(2), 1-10. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com>
- ²Federal Bureau of Investigations (2011). *Crime in the United States*. Retrieved from www.fbi.gov
- ³Garcia-Retamero, R., & Dhami, M. K. (2009). Take-the-best in expert-novice decision strategies for residential burglary. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 16(1), 163-9. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com>

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For more information regarding this booklet or additional crime prevention tips, or to start a Neighborhood Crime Watch, contact the Mesquite Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit at:

972-329-8757

North of Highway 80

972-329-8781

South of Highway 80

or

crimeprevention@mesquitepolice.org

Neighborhoods



in Action

**Developed by the Mesquite Police Department's
Crime Prevention Unit**