



## Martinez Police Department Neighborhood Crime Prevention

The following list is intended to introduce residents, who may not have participated in crime prevention efforts, to simple steps that can be taken to make a difference in their neighborhood.

**1. Report crime promptly.** Neighbors sometimes don't report criminal activity because they don't want to bother the police. They assume police are too short-staffed to respond, or they believe that there isn't much an officer can (or will) do about a given problem. Whether the issue is graffiti, petty vandalism, or something much more serious, police can't act without first hearing about the problem from you. Calling won't guarantee the police can fix the problem, but failing to call makes it likely that they will not. Don't assume someone else has called. Make the call yourself: 911 or the non-emergency number (925)372-3440. Emergency 911 calls made from a cell phone are normally routed to us, although depending on the cell tower, it may go to CHP. If you are reporting a crime from your cell phone, program the Martinez Police Department non-emergency number into your phone.

**2. Fix the broken window.** Report nuisances and other non-criminal problems promptly. Examples: junked cars on front lawns, abandoned autos in the streets, or garbage dumped illegally in a vacant lot or on the street. When you find yourself thinking, "Someone ought to do something," please step up and **DO SOMETHING for the community!** Call Code Enforcement, Public Works, or police dispatch so we can notify them. Then call your neighbors and ask them to call and make a report as well. Keep following up until the issue is resolved. Code Enforcement: 925-372-3598 and Public Works: 925-372-3580.

**3. Take away the opportunity for crime.** Think about your home, your vehicle, and even your lifestyle and ask what you could change to take away the opportunity for crime. Lock your vehicle and never leave valuables, even for a few minutes, in a vehicle where would-be thieves might see them. Bushes or trees on your property offer a convenient hiding place for thieves. Trim trees and bushes that block a clear view of your front door and address from the street or make it difficult for a person to see out of the windows in your home. In short, make your front porch visible and make sure your home looks like it has its "eyes" (windows) open.

**4. Reach out!** Meet the youth who live on your block and greet them by name. This is one of the simplest steps an adult can take, yet it can make a profound difference when there is a need for adults and young people to speak to each other in the midst of a neighborhood crisis. It is difficult to help form a safe and supportive community for young people without adults and young people knowing each other. Even those residents who don't have children should know the youth in the neighborhood. By doing this, each adult is better able to help in an emergency and is better prepared to resolve problems when they arise. You can also report truancy by calling the police department.

**5. Opportunity knocks.** Make a list of the names and phone numbers of every neighbor on your block. Don't just do this with one or two neighbors; set a goal of at least 10, and preferably 20 or 30. Find almost any resident who has turned around a problem block and you will find a resident who really knows the people who live there. Did you grow up in a neighborhood where "everyone knew each other," but find today that your neighborhood isn't like that? That's the case for many people, but it's not "society's" fault. Instead, think of it as something you can fix! If you don't know your neighbors' names and contact information, you can't call them



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about a concern or let them know about a neighborhood problem. Make a point of learning the names and phone numbers of your neighbors this weekend! You can learn how to start a neighborhood watch by calling your Neighborhood Policing Officer (NPO). If you do not know your NPO, call Dispatch at 372-3440 or Records at 372-3443 and they will be happy to provide the contact information.

**6. Turn your porch light on.** Do this every night at dusk and keep it on till dawn. Consider installing a motion sensitive light to brighten dim walk ways near your home. Crime tends to decline in neighborhoods that are well lit. Turning on porch lights is a simple way to start this process. It also makes the street feel more "welcome" to good residents who are out for a walk in the evening or early morning hours. Lit porch lights communicate a higher level of caring for the neighborhood by residents. This can become a daily routine or it can be accomplished by installing a timer. It is also immediate. Encourage other neighbors to do the same.

**7. Walk around the block.** It sounds simple enough, but neighborhoods benefit over time when residents walk around more. Taking a walk around your block can be particularly valuable, for those who feel comfortable doing it. Take a moment to chat with neighbors, including youth, when the opportunity arises. Avoid walking alone in areas where you feel unsafe. Instead, consider gathering a group of neighbors together to walk through your neighborhood once a week. It not only is good for the neighborhood, it is a healthy habit.

**8. Drive slowly on neighborhood streets.** While we often call for stop signs, traffic lights, and speed bumps, we sometimes forget that we can facilitate a means of slowing down neighborhood traffic ourselves. Remember it is legal to drive a few miles per hour below the speed limit in your neighborhood! For example, if the speed limit is 25, try 20 instead. Regular slower driving on neighborhood side streets by multiple neighbors will dampen the desire of racers to use your street. It isn't as fun to cut through a neighborhood if the likelihood of being stuck behind a car traveling at a more respectful pace has increased.

**9. Take ownership.** Pick up the litter near your home, even if you didn't put it there. Most people are less likely to litter where they don't see litter already. You can help stop the growth of trash in your neighborhood by picking up litter when you see it. Try taking a litter bag with you on your walks and watch what a difference your efforts make.

**10. Grow roots.** Stable neighborhoods are built on the commitment of long-term residents who would rather live in a healthy community than move to a bigger house. Communities reach stability when conscientious residents allow their roots to grow deep and transform a geographic area that exists as a "neighborhood" in name only into a real community of involved people. Please, stay and help.

**Finally, don't stop at 10 tasks:** Do whatever else you can to make your neighborhood a safe and enjoyable place to live, work, go to school, and raise a family. Remember: living in a good neighborhood isn't a right, it's a responsibility.