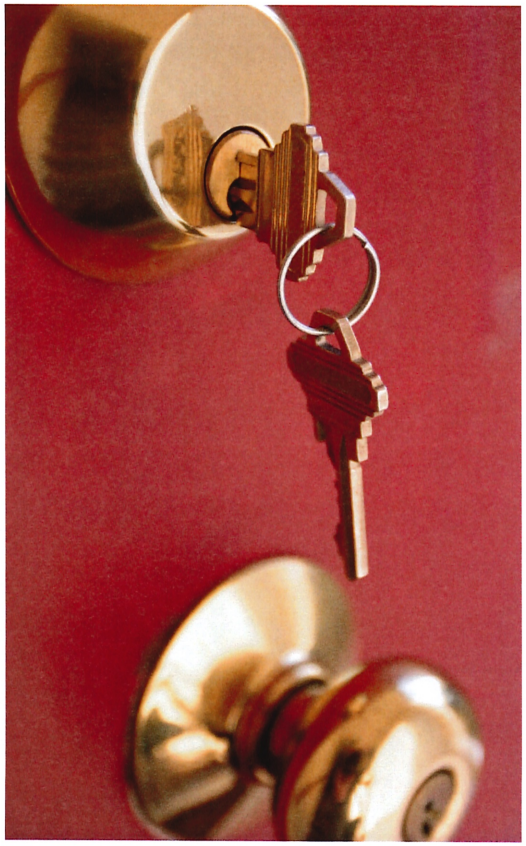
Take Action to Prevent Crime and Start an Apartment Watch

Just like the Neighborhood Watch, members of an Apartment Watch learn how to make their homes more secure, watch out for each other and their community, and report crime and suspicious activities to the police. Here are some ways to get an Apartment Watch going and growing.



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DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

Live in an Apartment?

How To Start and Grow an Apartment Watch

- Help arrange with local police for apartment security surveys and Operation Identification.
- Organize citizen patrols to walk around the apartment complex and alert police to crime and suspicious activities. Don't forget to patrol parking lots, stairways, laundry rooms, and playgrounds.
- Publish a newsletter that gives local crime news, recognizes apartment Watch captains, and highlights community activities.
- Organize a reception in the lobby of your building or a cookout on common property so neighbors can get to know one another.
- Keep pressure on management to make sure it provides adequate security.
- Start a McGruff House program for children – places where they can go in emergency or scary situations.
- Check the complex on a regular basis for such problems as burned-out lights bulbs, dark corridors, uncollected trash, or broken locks on mailboxes and doors. Report problems to the building manager.
- Organize meetings to brainstorm how you can help each other, such as starting an escort service for the elderly or after-school care for children.

Check Out Your Apartment

Does your . . .

. . . entry door have a dead bolt lock and wide angle viewer?

. . . sliding glass door have a wooden rod or metal brace in the track so it can't be opened and pins in the overhead frame so it can't be lifted out?

. . . landlord or building manager tightly control all keys?

Check Out Your Building

- Is there some kind of control over who enters and leaves the building?
- Are walkways, entrances, parking areas, elevators, hallways, stairways, laundry rooms, and storage areas well lighted, 24 hours a day?
- Are fire stairs locked from the stairwell side above the ground floor, so you can exit but no one can enter?
- Are mailboxes in a well-traveled, well-lighted area, and do they have good locks?
- Are things well maintained – are burnt out lights fixed promptly, shrubs trimmed, trash removed?

Check Out Your Neighbors

- Get to know your neighbors. Join or organize an Apartment Watch group so neighbors can look out for and help each other.
- Think about a tenant patrol that watches for crime around the building, provides escort services for the elderly and disabled, and monitors comings and goings in the lobby.
- Work with landlords to sponsor social events for tenants.
- Look beyond problems to root causes – does your building need a better playground, a social evening for teens, a tenant association, or new landscaping? Work with the landlord for changes that make everyone proud of where they live.