

PLYMOUTH POLICE DEPARTMENT



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH HANDBOOK

Working together, we make a difference!

Message from the Chief:

Thank you for participating in the Neighborhood Watch Program! The Plymouth Police Department is committed to providing professional police protection and service to the entire community. However, keeping our community safe takes the cooperation and participation of all our citizens. Neighborhood Watch is one of the most successful, time-tested collaborative efforts between the police department and the community. For this partnership to work, it is vital to maintain an open line of communication to address community concerns and to share useful information. A well-informed and involved citizenry is law enforcement's greatest ally.



Working together, we make a difference.

Michael S. Goldstein
Chief of Police



Mike Goldstein was appointed Chief of Police on February 28, 2004. He was hired by Plymouth as a police officer in 1990 and has been promoted through the ranks of officer, sergeant, lieutenant and captain. Chief Goldstein is a long-time Plymouth resident, having grown up in the community and graduated from Armstrong High School. He became interested in law enforcement as a Police Explorer starting in 1984, and continued this interest through the Reserve program in 1987, while he completed his schooling. Chief Goldstein holds a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and a Master's degree in Public Safety Education and Administration from St. Thomas University. Chief Goldstein and his family live in Plymouth.

Table of Contents

What is a Neighborhood Watch?	4
The Crime Prevention Unit (CPU).....	4
Starting a Neighborhood Watch.....	5
Managing the Neighborhood Watch Start-Up Meeting	6
Requirements for Maintaining Your Watch Group	7
Neighborhood Watch Participant Responsibilities	8
Reporting Suspicious Activity	9
Home Security	10
Operation ID	10
Common Neighborhood Concerns	11
Other Community Partnership Programs.....	14
Appendix 1 – Who to Contact	16
Appendix 2 – General Resource List*	17
Appendix 3 – Sample Block Map	18
Appendix 4 – Basic Home CPTED	19

What is a Neighborhood Watch?

A Neighborhood Watch is a group of neighbors who are willing to communicate with each other and pass along crime and non-crime related neighborhood information. The groups are educated in crime prevention and trained to observe suspicious activity and report the activity to each other and the police.

Neighborhood Watch **is**:

- A community – police crime prevention partnership.
- Neighbors coming together to help each other not become victims of crime.
- Neighbors coming together to address community issues.
- Learning and practicing CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) - Surveying and upgrading, if necessary, your home security and lighting.
- Learning to identify suspicious activity and reporting the activity to the police and other neighbors.

Neighborhood Watch **is not**:

- Armed Citizens patrol.
- Vigilante groups.
- Encouraging residents to take risks to prevent crimes.
- A program that guarantees that a crime will never occur in a neighborhood.

The Crime Prevention Unit (CPU)

The Plymouth Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit (CPU) is responsible for developing and overseeing the various crime prevention and safety programs offered by the Department. The CPU is made up of the Crime Free Multi-Housing/Crime Prevention Officer, the Community Relations Officer, and the Police and Fire Public Safety Education Specialist. Consider the CPU as your group's liaison with the police department. Any questions or concerns you may have regarding Neighborhood Watch, please direct them to the CPU. The CPU can provide your group with crime prevention information, and refer you to other units within the City that may be of service to your neighborhood. The CPU is available to do presentations for your group regarding Crime Prevention, Personal Safety, Narcotics, and other topics. If you are interested in a specific topic not listed, contact the CPU and they can arrange a special topic seminar. (See Appendix 1 for CPU contact information)

Starting a Neighborhood Watch

Starting a Neighborhood Watch is easy. The following steps must be taken when starting your group:

1. Decide on the number of households your watch program can effectively cover. Keep in mind the geographical layout of the neighborhood and the ease in which neighbors can observe each other's property. Some groups will involve all the houses on one street facing each other while other groups may be organized around alleys, greenbelts, or cul-de-sacs. Most groups are around 10-25 households, but can be larger due to neighborhood boundaries and associations.
2. Visit with your neighbors and explain you are starting a Neighborhood Watch program.
3. Determine what would be the most convenient day and time for your neighbors to attend a start-up meeting. In order to have maximum attendance, the most convenient day and time for the majority must be taken into consideration. The best location to have the meeting is at one of the homes in the neighborhood, if that home were large enough to comfortably accommodate the number of people expected to attend. Other options for large groups are: local community centers, business meeting rooms, or a nearby fire department. Most meetings are usually held Monday through Thursday evenings.
4. Contact Public Safety Education Specialist Sara Cwayna (763-509-5198) to schedule a start-up meeting. It is very important to contact the CPU at least two weeks prior to the meeting to ensure a CPU member is available for your meeting.
5. Once a date and time has been coordinated with the CPU, develop a meeting announcement flier and distribute them to neighbors. The CPU can provide fliers for your Neighborhood Watch meeting upon request. It will be your responsibility to deliver the fliers to your neighborhood. Please stress the importance of having at least one adult from each household attend the meeting.
6. Have your start-up meeting.

**TAKE A BITE OUT OF
CRIME®**

Managing the Neighborhood Watch Start-Up Meeting

The first meeting is extremely important for your group. The officer will provide your group with valuable information about crimes that affect your neighborhood. The officer will educate your group in basic crime prevention and will explain how to make your neighborhood a difficult target for the prowling criminal. Because of the amount of information being covered at the first meeting, expect the meeting to last 1 to 2 hours. The length will vary depending upon the amount of questions asked by your group. The more involved your group members become in the meeting the more you will learn. The following is a list of recommendations for managing the first meeting.

1. Allow time prior to the actual meeting for neighbors to meet and socialize.
2. Start the meeting on time.
3. Introduce yourself and thank everyone for coming.
4. Introduce the Police Department representative.
5. The representative will present a wealth of information to your group including:
 - Expectations of Neighborhood Watch
 - Importance of participation
 - Requirements of program
 - Crime trends and prevention
 - Reporting Suspicious Activity and Calling 9-1-1
 - Home Security
 - Operation ID
 - Email Alerts
 - Posting Neighborhood Watch signs
 - Other topics as requested
6. Closing remarks.



Requirements for Maintaining Your Watch Group

In order for your group to be recognized by the department, you must meet the following criteria:

1. Your group must meet at least **twice a year**.
2. You must keep your Watch Leader contact information up to date. Notify the CPU of any changes in contact information of Watch Leaders.
3. After meeting the criteria, your group may purchase two Neighborhood Watch signs for \$20. Public Works will post your signs where requested. Any sign placed on the bike trail is a complementary sign. If your group requires more signs, contact the CPU.



Meetings:

Once your group has been started, your group needs to continue to meet at least twice a year. These meetings can be as formal or informal as you like. An officer does not need to attend every meeting. An option that satisfies one of your yearly meeting requirements is to participate in **Night to Unite (NTU)**. NTU occurs the first Tuesday of every August. It is a unique, statewide crime prevention event. Its purpose is to heighten crime prevention awareness; generate support for local anti-crime programs; strengthen neighborhood spirit and police/community relations. Every NTU, groups across the city gather in block parties, BBQs, ice cream socials, fun and games to give crime a going away party. This event does count as a one of your yearly meetings, so we encourage you to participate in whatever manner you choose.

Watch Leader Reception:

The Plymouth Police Department will host periodic Neighborhood Watch Leader Receptions. The reception is a thank you to the Leaders to acknowledge all your hard work and participation in the program. This is an opportunity to meet the Chief of Police, the CPU staff, and receive updates and reminders about Crime Prevention programs and services. It is also a chance for Neighborhood Watch Groups to update changes in leadership. Attendance at the reception is not mandatory, but it is highly encouraged, to maintain unity and communication within the Neighborhood Watch program. If a group's leader is unable to attend the reception, please send someone else from your Neighborhood Watch Group.

Neighborhood Watch Participant Responsibilities

Watch Leader and Co-Leader Responsibilities:

1. Ensure your group meets at least twice a year by coordinating the meetings, BBQs, block parties, etc.
2. Have one person from your Group attend periodic Neighborhood Watch Leader Receptions. E-mail, letters, or newsletters will announce the reception.
3. Keep your Watch Leader contact information current with the CPU. Notify the CPU of any changes in your Neighborhood Watch leadership or group status.
4. Develop a block map, roster/email distribution group, and alert plan for your group that includes names, addresses, phone numbers or emails for each group member. Do not include unlisted numbers without permission. (See Appendix 3.)
5. Identify a plan for notifying neighbors of suspicious activity and other incidents.
6. Greet new neighbors and invite them to join the program.
7. Inform and distribute to group members any crime related information received from the police department representative.
8. Be the liaison between your Neighborhood Watch group and the CPU.

Group Members Responsibilities:

1. Be alert to suspicious activities in your neighborhood. Report suspicious activity immediately by calling 911.
2. Learn neighbors' names and be able to identify their vehicles and other vehicles usually in your neighborhood.
3. Keep an up to date block map, roster, and other important group information in an accessible *and secure* location.
4. Implement security measures suggested by the CPU.
5. DO NOT TAKE ANY PERSONAL RISK to prevent a crime or make an arrest. It is more important to have a healthy, injury free witness whose recollection of the incident is not tainted by fear, anxiety, or pain. The safety and well being of every person in the group is most important.

Reporting Suspicious Activity

Neighborhood Watch is founded on the principle that group members know what activity is normal in their neighborhoods. A police officer occasionally patrolling the area is not going to be able to identify a strange person or car as quickly as a resident is. To have a successful Neighborhood Watch, the participants must learn to recognize what activities and behaviors are normal within their own neighborhoods in order to identify what is abnormal.

The police department is often asked what kind of behavior is suspicious. Suspicious activity is anything that seems unusual or out-of-place. In order to know what is unusual, you first have to be aware of what is normal in your neighborhood. You can do this by getting to know your neighbors. The more neighbors know about each other, the easier it will be to spot people or cars that are out-of-place.

If you see something unusual, it is important to **report suspicious activity immediately by calling 911**. Try to get a description of the activity and who is committing the activity. Give as much information as possible, including:

- What the activity is and why it is unusual
- The suspect's gender, age, race, clothing, hair, build, distinguishing features (glasses, facial hair, tattoos, accents, etc.), and name (if known)
- Any weapons (screw driver, knife, guns, etc.)
- The suspect's vehicle (make model, color, license plate number, distinguishing features)
- Mode (foot, bike, car) and direction of travel, if the suspect has left the area

Information can be made anonymously. However, police are limited on the action they can legally take on anonymous tips. Police request that you do leave your name and phone number for the officer to contact you back, if more information is needed.

You may also call 911 to report suspicious activity that occurred previously (hours or days ago). However, please know we are limited in acting on past information. We encourage you to call when the activity is occurring whenever possible.

TIPS FOR CALLING POLICE

Call **911** anytime you need police, fire, or emergency medical service response. If your call is not an emergency, you may be put on hold, if a higher priority call comes in. Be prepared to give your name, location of the incident, and a complete description of what happened. Stay on the line with the 911 operator until they direct you to hang-up.

If no police officer is needed (you would like to make a phone report or you have a question about a law or ordinance), you may call the non-emergency line **763-525-6210**. The police department also has desk officers available Monday-Friday during normal business hours to take phone reports. Reports can be made via phone by calling **763-509-5192**.

Home Security

Officers are trained in the practice of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED.) The concept of CPTED is that the environment can be manipulated to reduce the fear and incidence of crime. For example, how your yard is maintained and whether your lights are on or off may reduce the fear or incidence of crime. When you conduct your first Neighborhood Watch meeting, the Officer will be educating your group in the basic concepts of crime prevention, CPTED, and home security. General security recommendations will be made. (See Appendix 4.) It is important to remember that one of the easiest crime prevention techniques is free: KEEPING YOUR DOORS AND WINDOWS LOCKED, AND YOUR OVERHEAD GARAGE DOOR CLOSED (EVEN WHEN HOME), CAN REDUCE HOME BURGLARIES BY 60% OR MORE!

If members of your Neighborhood Watch Group would like an individual security assessment of their home, they may make an appointment with the CPU. After conducting the home survey and upgrading your home security, contact your homeowners' insurance company. Some companies provide discounts to Neighborhood Watch participants.

Operation ID

How would you be able to identify your property if it was stolen? Do you know the serial numbers of all your property? What if your property does not have a serial number? If you do not have a unique way to identify your property, there is a good chance it would never get returned to you, even if it is recovered.

Operation Identification (Op ID) is a means by which citizens mark their property with a unique identification number issued by the Plymouth Police Department. This number can assist law enforcement officers with recovering and returning stolen property. The CPU does have electric engravers and UV pens available for free to participants while supplies last. Participation in Operation ID is not mandatory for a Neighborhood Watch group, however participation is **highly** recommended. Operation ID is a nationwide program, so no matter where your property is found, it can be returned to you. In addition, some insurance companies offer discounts for home security steps. Contact your homeowners' insurance company and ask if they provide discounts for Operation ID participation!

VACATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Stop deliveries or have a trusted neighbor or relative pick-up mail and newspapers.
- ✓ Have a trusted neighbor or relative continue with lawn upkeep or snow removal.
- ✓ Have a trusted neighbor or relative put out trash on normal delivery days; do not leave trash out overnight.
- ✓ Double check that doors and windows are locked; overhead garage doors can be secured with a padlock in the track.
- ✓ Keep shades in a "normal" position, not tightly closed.
- ✓ Put TVs, radios, interior and exterior lights on timers and vary the times.
- ✓ Do not "advertise" you will be gone.
- ✓ Leave contact numbers in case of an emergency.

Common Neighborhood Concerns

Car Break-Ins:

Car break-ins are the most common crime in Plymouth. Car break-ins can happen anywhere you park your car: at work, the gym, a restaurant, school-even at home. Reduce the chance of becoming a victim:

- ☛ **Do not leave valuables in plain view in your car!** Commonly stolen items from vehicles are GPS units, cell phones, purses, wallets, bags, laptops, tools, and electronics.
- ☛ If you must leave valuables in your car, lock them in the trunk *before* you reach your destination.
- ☛ Lock your car.

Traffic Violations:

One of the top concerns voiced by the citizens of Plymouth is neighborhood traffic complaints. The Police Department consistently finds that most violators are your neighbors. Neighborhood Watch encourages group members to be responsible for their neighborhoods. With that in mind, the Police Department has initiated several programs so community members can have an impact on traffic problems such as speeding, reckless driving, and stop light violators.

SMART Trailer – The SMART trailer is a self-contained radar unit that displays the vehicle speed to the driver. The unit does not take pictures, so driver information is not available. The unit does record the average and high speeds, and counts the number of vehicles. Officers use the data from the trailer to evaluate the need for future traffic enforcement. The purpose of the trailer is to encourage voluntary -compliance of traffic laws.



Police Traffic Unit – The Plymouth Police Department has three officers dedicated to work traffic issues within the City. The traffic unit enforces traffic laws, investigates crashes, and responds to complaints from citizens regarding specific traffic problems. To refer problems to the Traffic Unit, call **763-509-5130**.

Graffiti:

Graffiti is defined as any writing, marks, symbols, figures, designs, or other drawings which are scratched, painted, drawn, or otherwise placed on any surface such as buildings, walls, fences, sidewalks, curbs, trees, rocks, or other permanent structures or objects on public or private property or the interior surfaces of those parts of buildings which have the effect of defacing the property. Property owners need to remove graffiti from their property within *30 days* after notice of the graffiti's existence. A property owner may ask the City to remove graffiti from the owner's property. Costs for City removal of graffiti will be assessed to property owners per ordinance requirements. **Call 911 to report graffiti**, whether you see it on private or public property.

Juvenile Curfew Ordinance:

The City of Plymouth does have a curfew for all minors under the age of 18. Children are required to be home during the following times:

Under 12: 9:00 PM to 5:00 AM (Sun -Thurs), 10:00 PM to 5:00 AM (Fri and Sat)

12-14: 10:00 PM to 5:00 AM (Sun -Thurs), 11:00 PM to 5:00 AM (Fri and Sat)

15-17: 11:00 PM to 5:00 PM (Sun – Thurs), Midnight to 5:00 AM (Fri and Sat)

It is not a violation if the person under the age of 18 is accompanied by a parent, guardian or other adult person who is authorized by a parent or guardian of such juvenile to take the parent's place for a designated period of time and purpose. Moreover, this ordinance does not prohibit juveniles from participating in legitimate activities, such as school sporting events and activities. It does prohibit them from aimlessly wandering and hanging around at night. If you are concerned about a group of juveniles hanging around your neighborhood during the above hours, call 911.

Narcotic Complaints:

If you suspect narcotics activity in your neighborhood, you have two options for reporting the information:

1. If the narcotics activity is in-progress, call **911** and an officer will be dispatched based on priority and availability.
2. If you have information on on-going narcotics activity, call the Desk Officer line **763-509-5192** during normal business hours. Make sure to provide as much information as possible: the location of the narcotics activity, the names or descriptions of those involved, time the activity occurs, vehicles involved, what specific activity is occurring, etc.

If you know the identity of suspects that have committed a crime you may also report the information anonymously to Crime Stoppers. (see below)

CRIME STOPPERS:

Crime Stoppers of Minnesota is a *separate and independent organization from law enforcement* for the purpose of gathering information that may not otherwise be available to police, but can help solve crimes. If you have information about a crime, please contact Crime Stoppers. No matter how small or insignificant the information may seem, it may be the one piece of the puzzle that police need to solve a crime. *If the tip leads to the arrest and prosecution of the suspect, then you may be eligible to receive a cash reward **up to \$1,000**.* Crime Stoppers is *completely anonymous*, so no one can know who submitted the tip, not even police. ***Crime Stoppers is for additional information only! For crimes in progress, call 911.***

To submit a tip by phone: Call 1-800-222-TIPS (8477). The call is free and calls are answered 24/7.

To submit a tip by computer: Go to crimestoppersmn.org. Click on the "Submit a Tip" button on the main page.

To submit a tip by text message: Text TIP674 plus your message to 274637 (CRIMES). Standard text messaging rates may apply.

Registered Predatory Offender Information:

In Minnesota, public access to information about predatory offenders (commonly referred to as sex offenders) is limited. The Police Department *will* make a community notification of any Level 3 offenders who move into the City, as required by law. Information about lower level offenders is not public information, except in certain circumstances. Citizens can obtain Level 3 sex offender information in Minnesota by visiting the Department of Corrections website: www.doc.state.mn.us. National sex offender registration information can be obtained by visiting the US Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Registration web site: www.nsopr.gov.

Motor Vehicle Theft:

Motor vehicle thefts do occur in Plymouth. Unfortunately, many of these thefts occur because keys are left in the car. Remember to always pocket your keys and lock your car doors even if it is “just for a minute,” such as warming your car in the winter or paying for gas while the car is running.

Street Parking Restrictions:

General: Vehicles cannot be parked on any public city street between the hours of **2-5 AM**. If you have overnight guests, driveway construction, or other need to park in the street overnight, you will need to request a parking waiver to park in the street. To request a waiver, contact the Police Department at **763-509-5160** between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. or at **763-525-6210** after hours.

Snow Emergency: When there is a snowfall of **2 ½ inches or more**, vehicles cannot be parked in the street until the road has been plowed curb-to-curb. Vehicles left in the street can be ticketed or towed, depending on safety and the needs of street maintenance workers. *No waivers are granted for snow emergencies.*

Residential Alarm Policy:

Home Owners who have monitored alarm systems are required to obtain a permit through the Police Department. Permits are free for new alarm systems. The Plymouth Police Department will respond to **two false alarms at the same residence each calendar year without penalty to the owner**. After the two false alarms, the licensed alarm company is required to investigate and determine the nature of the problem, and take steps to alleviate further false alarms. On the third and subsequent false alarms within the year, the Police will assess a response fee of **\$50.00** per alarm to the owner of the premise.

Other Community Partnership Programs

The following list is only a small number of partnership programs available to the community. If you have any questions about these or other community programs, contact the CPU.

Plymouth Police Explorer Post 905

Affiliated with Learning for Life, a division of the Boy Scouts of America, the Plymouth Police Explorer Program is open to youth (both male and female) between the ages of 14 and 21. Explorers meet weekly with officers and learn “behind-the-scenes” aspects of law enforcement. Explorers age 16 and older also have an opportunity to ride with officers on patrol each month. The program is an ideal way for young people to explore the career of law enforcement.

Plymouth Police Reserves

Reserves are trained volunteers who assist police officers with a variety of duties. Each reserve volunteers a minimum of twelve (12) hours a month. Reserves work at special events, assist with traffic control, and patrol neighborhoods and parks. For more information, call Volunteer Services at **763-509-5207**.

Citizens Public Safety Academy

The public safety academy is designed to provide community members with an inside look at the police department and professional career of policing. Academy participants attend class one night a week for 12 weeks. Training includes patrol operation, tactics, legal issues, communications, and other topics. Participants are also eligible for a ride along with a patrol officer. *Note: this academy does not qualify you for employment as a police officer.*

Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH)

The Crime Free Multi-Housing program provides a partnership between the Plymouth Police, property owners/managers, and residents to foster safe, healthy rental housing communities. The program uses a three-phase approach: Manager/owner training, a security assessment of the property, and resident training. All three phases of the program must be met before the rental housing community can be certified as a CFMH property.



Ride Along Program

Qualified community members may apply for a ride with a police officer for half a shift. Approval is based on scheduling, staffing, and emergencies. Call **763-509-5160** for more information.

Senior Corps

This team is a group of senior volunteers who provide volunteer services to the Police Department. Senior Corps members assist at Neighborhood Watch meetings and community events, edit and direct the Police Department TV show, *Along For The Ride*, and more.

Along For the Ride TV Show

Join the Plymouth Police Department on a monthly virtual ride along. Tune in to our TV show, *Along for the Ride*. The show will air on local cable Channel 20 Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m. The program can also be viewed through the City of Plymouth website. Each program highlights different police activities, services, programs, and safety topics. Get to know the Plymouth Police in a whole new way!

We welcome your input! If you would like to see a topic covered on “Along for the Ride” or have a question you would like answered, call **763-509-5139**.

Thank you for participating in the Neighborhood Watch program. The Plymouth Police Department cannot thank enough the volunteers that help make this agency run more efficiently.



Working together, we make a difference!

Appendix 1 – Who to Contact

Crime Prevention Unit

Public Safety Education Specialist **Sara Cwayna**

763-509-5198

scwayna@plymouthmn.gov

Contact for: Neighborhood Watch
Night to Unite!
Bike Helmet Program
Car Seats and Child Passenger Safety Checks
File of Life cards
Operation ID

Community Relations Officer **Jim Long**

763-509-5135

jlong@plymouthmn.gov

Contact for: Public Education Presentations
Public Safety Citizens Academy
Crime Free Multi-Housing
Home/Business Premise Security Surveys

Plymouth Police Department Main Office 763-509-5160

(Office hours: Weekdays 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and until 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays)

Other Important Numbers

Emergency (24 hours)	911
Non-emergency (24 hours)	763-525-6210
Plymouth Desk Officers	763-509-5192
Along for the Ride TV show	763-509-5139
Traffic Unit	763-509-5130
City of Plymouth Website	www.plymouthmn.gov

Appendix 2 – General Resource List*

Adult Protection Services	612-348-8526
The Bridge for Youth	612-377-8800
Child Protection	612-348-3552
City of Plymouth (www.plymouthmn.gov)	763-509-5000
Crisis Intervention	612-347-3161
Driver and Vehicle Services	651-296-6911
Driver License Exam Station (Plymouth)	763-476-3042
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)	612-376-3200
Health Department (Environmental Health)	952-351-5200
Hennepin County General Information	612-348-3000
Civil Division	612-348-3800
District Court	612-348-6000
Family Court	612-348-6734
Juvenile Court	612-348-4822
Emergency Social Services	612-348-8166
Jail	612-348-5112
Home Free Battered Women's Shelter	763-559-4945
Interfaith Outreach	763-473-2436
Mission Detox	763-559-1402
Community Mediation Services	763-561-0033
Plymouth Creek Center, 14800 34 th Ave.	763-509-5280
Poison Control	612-347-3141
State of Minnesota General Information	651-296-6013

** Note: This resource list is provided as a public service. The Plymouth Police Department makes no claim as to the accuracy of the numbers or the services provided.*

Appendix 4 – Basic Home CPTED

Improving Residential Safety and Security Through Lighting and Landscaping



Incorporating some easy crime prevention ideas to your home can help increase the safety and enjoyment of your home and your neighborhood.

Crime Prevention is the anticipation, recognition, and appraisal of a crime risk and the initiation of some action to remove or reduce it. Several basic crime prevention ideas are:

1. Criminals are less likely to target areas where they feel their actions will be seen, recognized, and reported.
2. Good landscaping and lighting can be used to minimize hiding spots for criminals and maximize the ability of property owners, surrounding neighbors, and passers-by to observe activity on the property.
3. Properties that are well cared for and have clearly defined boundaries are less desirable to criminals because property owners appear more likely to take action to protect their property and strangers (including criminals) are more easily recognized as being out-of-place.
4. Areas with positive activity increase the reporting of criminal activity, sometimes before the crime can be committed.

Three steps you can take for improving the safety of your property are:

Step One: Identify features on your property which increase opportunities for criminal activity. Take a walk around your own property. Note anything in the physical environment that can give criminals the edge (dark areas, hiding places, etc.). The Plymouth Police Department offers premise security surveys free of charge to aid you in this step.

Step Two: Decide on ways to decrease criminal opportunities. Choose specific ways to address specific landscaping and lighting problems.

Step Three: Implement your ideas! This is the most important step. Many people don't take action until after they have been the victim of a crime.

Lighting: Identifying and lighting dark spots

Problems/What to look for:

1. Look for dark areas around the property, especially near vulnerable spots.
2. Identify what the reasons for dark areas are:
 - * lack of public lighting
 - * lack of house or walkway lights
 - * damaged and/or non-working lights
 - * existing lighting being blocked by tree branches, fencing, or buildings



Once problem lighting areas are identified, steps can be taken to address specific problems.

Recommendations for lighting:

1. Lights should be protected from being easily unscrewed or broken.
2. Consider photoelectric “eyes” for lights where constant lighting is needed or desired, such as the front entry.
3. Consider motion sensor lighting for areas where constant lighting is unnecessary or not desired, but where light would be beneficial when activity (either positive or negative) is occurring, such as back and side yards, patios/decks, or driveways.

*Note: It is possible to have too much lighting. The idea is to detect and deter criminal activity. Your lighting should not be directed towards neighbors’ windows or produce glare which would cause neighbors to close their blinds, thereby reducing critical natural surveillance to the property. **Be sure all lighting conforms to city code.***



Landscaping:

Identifying and eliminating hiding spots and areas of poor visibility

Problems/What to look for:

1. Bushes, shrubs, trees, fences, or other items which prevent you or neighbors from observing people on your property or allow criminals a place to hide or commit crimes out of sight.
Think: “Could a criminal break-in through a door or window to my home without being easily seen by neighbors or passing street traffic?”
2. Property lines between public use areas (streets, sidewalks, or neighboring parks) and semi-private area (your lawn, driveway, front steps), or private areas (porch, backyard, garage) are not clearly defined.
Think: “How easily can neighbors see if someone is on my property intentionally?” or “Can strangers easily tell where the boundaries to my property are?”
3. Poorly maintained or unused areas, such as behind garages, in alleys, etc.

Once problem landscaping areas are identified, steps can be taken to address specific problems.

Recommendations for landscaping:

1. Shrubs, bushes, and hedges should be kept pruned to a maximum height of 3 feet or less. In addition, landscaping near windows should be pruned 6 inches below the window.
2. Trees should be pruned to remove most or all branches less than 6 feet from the ground.
3. Fences should ideally be “see through” (ex: chain link). If you have a tall privacy fence, make sure gates are securely locked.
4. Property lines can be more clearly defined by using one or more of the following along the edge of your property:
 - * Hedges, shrubs, or bushes pruned to 3 feet or less.
 - * Flower or vegetable gardens
 - * Ground cover not intended for walking on, including landscape rock
 - * Fencing
5. Activity in specific areas, such as below windows, can be deterred by the use of thorny bushes.
6. Create uses for unused or neglected parts of your property, such as planting gardens or creating play spaces.



Ideas for Lower Growing Shrubs-Under 3 feet

Note: Pruning may still be required to keep full grown shrubs below 3 feet in height.

1. Crimson Pygmy Barberry
2. Korean Littleleaf Boxwood
3. Globe Peashrub
4. New Jersey Tea
5. Cranberry Cotoneaster
6. Alpine Currant
7. Dwarf Bush Honeysuckle
8. Turkestan Euonymus
9. Hughes Juniper
10. Sargent's Juniper
11. Japgarden Juniper
12. Arcadia Juniper
13. Skandia Juniper
14. Genista
15. Annabelle Hydrangea
16. Kalm St. John's Wort
17. Japanese Dwarf Yew
18. Canby's Pachistima
19. Dwarf Forsythia
20. Katherine Dykes Bush Potentilla
21. Golden Drop Potentilla
22. Japanese White Spirea
23. Anthony Waterer Spirea
24. Alpine Spires
25. Hetz Midget Arborvitae
26. Globe Arborvitae
27. Dwarf European Cranberry
28. Gooseberry
29. Raspberry
30. Roses