

barn, or out-building can further announce your knowledge of crime prevention.

6. Cooperate with your local law enforcement agency in promptly reporting suspicious activity and crime. Ask their support in training your group members in further crime prevention tips for home and property and how to recognize, describe, and report suspicious persons, conditions or activities.
7. Consider a Neighborhood Watch patrol where neighbors take turns making a random patrol through the community at high-risk times (week-end evenings may be a likely time for problems; ask your sheriff or chief when crime or vandalism most often takes place in your area.) Those patrolling simply watch for suspicious persons or activities and inform the law enforcement agency so that they can respond.

**MARK OR BRAND YOUR PROPERTY.** Studies have shown the use of recognizable, traceable markings on your personal property enhances the chances of recovering your lost, strayed, or stolen items; often discourages their theft; and increases the probability of apprehending and prosecuting the criminal. Most items are stolen for resale. Marking your property complicates this. Would-be thieves will usually seek easier targets.

1. Obtain a personal Operation Identification number from your sheriff or local law enforcement agency or use your driver's license number.
2. If available, obtain electric etching engravers and heavy-duty stamping tools from your sheriff or local law enforcement agency. If not available, citizens groups or civic associations may undertake to make these items available. Ask them. Carbon pencils are available at nominal cost and can be used to mark most items.
3. Apply your OI number to all your personal property (business and residence) that you have determined to be of value and a "probable" target of thieves. Your sheriff or law enforcement agency can help you determine this.
  - a) To identify your grain or soybeans, mix tabs of non-toxic paper confetti (3/8"x 3/4") bearing your OI number with these products as they are being augured into a bin. As a deterrent to theft, the confetti should be visible.
  - b) To identify baled commodities such as hay or cotton, insert non-toxic tabs (3/8"x4") into bales at random with a slotted dowel. Again, insure some tabs are visible.
  - c) To identify tobacco, tie small amounts of tobacco approved confetti into random hands

of tobacco and throw in each bale or sheet. Non-toxic, colored confetti is often available through local elevators and co-ops. It is easily removed by mills and has reduced thefts where it has been used.

- d) Brand your livestock and register the brand, or use your OI number followed by an individual inventory number to tattoo the ears of young livestock right after birth and to mark non-branded stock. Keep records of born-sold-butchered livestock.
  - e) Photograph each valuable item of property not lending itself to ordinary marking methods, due to surfaces, aesthetics, etc. Place a card with your OI number in the photograph.
4. When identifying your property, place a legible mark in a uniform location in accordance with instructions from your sheriff, local law enforcement agency, or farm bureau. In addition, it is advisable to place a second number in a hidden, less obvious place. In the event the thief removes the visible markings, there is still sufficient evidence for a prosecution and to verify your claim on the property.
  5. Whenever you sell a marked item, inform the buyer of the location of the markings and suggest he put an OI number below yours. Do not remove old OI numbers, serial numbers, etc.
  6. Maintain inventory sheets of all marked property, including: description, individual item inventory number, and the value and location of visible and hidden numbers. Include manufacturer numbers as well. Keep in a safe place with other valuable documents. Use **Neighborhood Watch Inventory Records** for this purpose.
  7. Post Operation Identification signs or decals at strategic locations around your property. These signs publicize the fact that your property is marked, traceable evidence.
  8. Report lost or stolen property immediately and provide all information as to markings, descriptions, etc. as maintained on your inventory forms. This information is enterable in the stolen articles file of the FBI's National Criminal Information Center computer which increases the chances of recovery.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

The crime prevention materials mentioned throughout this brochure (signs, decals, inventory records) are available through the National Sheriffs' Association's National Neighborhood Watch Program at 1450 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 or fax 703/519-8567.

NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

# NATIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM



# IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU

Crime is a serious problem in rural areas across the nation. Burglary and larceny theft continue at alarming rates in rural areas and smaller communities as well as cities. Add an ever-increasing vehicle theft rate, and it is clear that crime is a growing problem.

Remote and isolated areas have always faced a special vulnerability to crime — combined with relatively unprotected high-value equipment, livestock and produce at risk, and infrequent law enforcement patrols in many areas. The growing problem signals the need for positive crime prevention measures on our farms and ranches and in our rural communities.

For Additional Information Call: 703-836-7827



THE NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION  
IN COOPERATION WITH  
YOUR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

## WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

Criminals look for easy targets — where the risk of detection is slight and the profits are high. But some simple, common sense crime prevention practices can make your home and property less attractive and less available to the criminal.

### You can take steps to:

- Avoid some risks (removing some items to a safer location, such as a bank.)
- Spread and manage some risks. (Taking steps to delay and detect the criminal as he heads for your possessions will make a difference! Careful selection of locks, dusk-to-dawn lights or lights on timers — it isn't hard to reduce your vulnerability.)

When you cause the criminal to take more time, make more noise, and be more visible as he acts, you may prevent completion of a crime, and perhaps even discourage a contemplated attempt. Here are some steps to lessen the chances of becoming the target of a theft or burglary:

1. *Keep expensive machinery and all vehicles near the residence in a visible, well-lighted area. Lock all vehicles.*
2. *Keep valuable tools, chemicals, seed and portable machinery in sturdy outbuildings or bins within the barn and secure them with strong doors and deadbolt locks, or with case-hardened steel padlocks and hasps.*
3. *Maintain all fences in good repair and lock gates, loading chutes and grain bins with case-hardened steel padlocks and hasps. Use heavy-duty chains across roadways that are not gated. (Good fences and gates prevent straying stock.)*
4. *Keep fuel supplies in a well-lighted area under lock and visible from the house where possible. Install master switches to pumps inside the house and lock feed valves and pump handles.*
5. *Install an emergency generator and wide-area emergency lighting system to thwart undetected intrusion.*
6. *Avoid a regular schedule. Come and go on your property at varying times, and avoid predictable absences in case someone is observing your habits.*
7. *Place large size Neighborhood Watch and Operation Identification (OI) warning signs at strategic locations around your property where they are most apt to be seen by a potential criminal.*

8. *Check livestock frequently; make a daily count, watch over isolated pastures and feed lots, and report missing animals immediately. (It's impossible to identify butchered livestock.)*
9. *Don't create a market for thieves. Investigate "good deals" thoroughly. Buy from reputable dealers.*
10. *Keep all doors (barns, sheds, elevators, etc.) closed and locked when not in use. Close your garage doors when leaving — don't advertise your absence.*
11. *Make your home look and sound occupied. When you're away, leave your draperies and shades in their normal position. At night, leave on an inner light and use automatic timers to turn lights and radios on and off again a few hours later.*
12. *Install deadbolt locks on the doors of your residence; secure sliding glass doors with a "Charley Bar" and install good locks on all windows. See the Neighborhood Watch booklet **How to Protect Your Home** for more security tips.*
13. *Don't leave keys to your house or buildings hidden outside, and don't leave messages for visitors tacked on your door.*
14. *Report repeated wrong number telephone calls or silent calls to your law enforcement agency.*

### GET INVOLVED IN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

This community crime prevention program can dramatically lower the burglary and break-in rate in your area. Active Neighborhood Watch programs encourage cooperation in crime prevention and discourage the criminal interested in your possessions.

Successful Neighborhood Watch groups advise the following:

1. *Watch over your neighbors' property and report suspicious persons, vehicles or activity promptly to your law enforcement agency.*
2. *Notify neighbors when you will be away — but don't advertise your absence to the entire community. Know when your neighbors are away. See the Neighborhood Watch brochure **When You Are Away From Home** for specific recommendations.*
3. *Develop a system for recognizing legitimate neighborhood vehicles.*
4. *Establish a block parent or McGruff House program where feasible to provide a safe refuge for neighborhood children in distress.*
5. *Post large Neighborhood Watch signs in a visible location at the entrances to your community. Smaller signs strategically placed on a fence,*