



office of
neighborhood
involvement

Promoting a culture of civic engagement by connecting and supporting all Portlanders working together and with government to build inclusive, safe and livable neighborhoods and communities.

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This document is available at the
ONI website:

www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/cp

Establishing Your Community Foot Patrol

Office of Neighborhood Involvement Crime Prevention Program
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What is a Community Foot Patrol?

A Foot Patrol is a trained group of volunteers organized to increase the safety and livability of their neighborhood. They walk their neighborhood streets, parks, or schools to deter crime and report incidents and problems, rather than sit back and hope that someone else will take care of any crime or livability problems. Foot Patrol members are actively and directly involved in solving those problems in a community-based, non-confrontational manner. Foot Patrols collaborate with the City's Crime Prevention Coordinators, police, neighborhood coalitions and associations, schools, parks personnel, and area businesses to help make sure that neighborhood problems receive a prompt and effective response. A Foot Patrol is a great way to meet like-minded people, contribute to your community, and get some exercise too!

Purpose of Foot Patrols

Community Foot Patrols have several purposes:

- **To help reduce crime and the fear of crime** by providing a visible presence as a deterrent to criminal activity. Having concerned patrol members actively watching sends a message in the neighborhood that crime will not be tolerated. Criminals don't wish to be observed, so the presence of alert, trained volunteers can deter and prevent some crimes. Additionally, residents begin to feel a sense of safety knowing that neighbors care and are concerned about the safety and security of the area.
- **To report suspicious or illegal activities.** The police and crime prevention staff rely on patrols to tell them about crime incidents and suspects. These patrols can provide timely information which can prevent crime from occurring or help apprehend criminals.
- **To report livability problems.** A Foot Patrol is in a good position to notice and report graffiti and other vandalism, abandoned vehicles, illegal dump sites, camping, evidence of drug dealing or manufacturing, street drinking, and other liquor violations.
- **To promote positive communication and relationships** within a neighborhood. Community Foot Patrols provide an avenue for neighbors to get to know one another and build a sense of community.



Types of patrols

Community Foot Patrols are, by their nature, walking patrols. Being on foot makes it much easier to notice detailed information about the environment or an event than one could notice driving in a car. For this reason, and others, the City does not encourage or support driving patrols. On rare occasions, it may be appropriate to start a bike patrol. For example, if a patrol is desired in an area that is mostly traveled by bicycle, such as a bike path, it would make sense to patrol it by bicycle. However, these situations are rare. It is almost always most appropriate to patrol on foot.

Foot Patrols typically operate in one of four different environments: residential areas, business districts, parks, or school grounds. Sometimes these areas overlap and a patrol may operate in two environments; the most common combination is residential and business. Different patrol settings may call for some differences in organization and operation due to the different crime and livability issues that may be present and the agencies that might respond to these problems.



- *Residential area patrols* usually work on reducing drug dealing, burglaries, thefts, and vandalism.
- *Business district patrols* are often oriented toward reducing drug dealing, prostitution, and alcohol-related problems.
- *Park patrols* are focused on reducing criminal activity in parks, such as vandalism, camping, speeding, sexual activity, drug sales or use, alcohol violations, and other misuse of park facilities. In establishing park patrols, additional steps need to be taken in co-operation with Portland Parks & Recreation.
- *School patrols* are organized to patrol the school grounds and immediate surrounding area to eliminate vandalism, drug dealing, speeding, or the presence of adults who may endanger children. In establishing school patrols, additional steps need to be taken in co-operation with the school district.

Starting a Foot Patrol

Talk to your Crime Prevention Coordinator (CPC) about your interest in starting a Foot Patrol. He or she can give you some pointers on the first steps, which include:

Recruiting volunteers

People with a vested interest in the potential patrol area (stakeholders) are your best resource for potential volunteers. Your CPC can assist in publicizing and marketing the effort to the public. Places to recruit potential members include: Neighborhood or Business Watches; neighborhood or business associations; congregations; and civic organizations. Effective recruitment techniques might include press releases, newsletters, posters, and announcements at meetings. Think about the stakeholders in your area, where they gather, and how they communicate. It's a good idea to gather as many interested people as possible before holding the first training. Potential members of a Foot Patrol must understand and accept that Foot Patrol is a non-confrontational activity. Twelve is a good target number for starting a new Foot Patrol. If you have fewer people, but they are very dedicated, it can work out just fine too.

Selecting a patrol area & time

In choosing a patrol area and the time the patrol will occur, consider the following: residents' complaints or concerns; crime patterns in the area; existence of Neighborhood Watches or Business Watches; identified problem locations; safety of patrol members; and natural borders.

Making arrangements with partners

If you have decided to have a Foot Patrol that is focused on a park, you will need to make a connection with Portland Parks & Recreation. They have their own criteria for volunteers that need to be met. Since parks attract young children, Portland Parks & Recreation requires a basic background check for those doing volunteer work in the parks.

Similarly, Foot Patrols that are focused on schools will need to make a connection with the school district and the principal of the school. If the Foot Patrol will operate in an area with an active Neighborhood Watch or Business Association, it makes sense to connect with these groups. Your CPC can help you with any of this.

Arranging training for patrol members

Once you have recruited a group of volunteers, the CPC will provide the initial training for the group. An outline of the initial training can be found in the addenda of this manual. Talk to your CPC about a date, time, and location for this first training.



Outline of Foot Patrol training

Crime prevention staff will train Foot Patrol members with assistance from the police and other resources as appropriate.

1. Classroom training

- Discussion of specific neighborhood problems that have led to the desire for a patrol
- Overview of purpose of Community Foot Patrol
- Patrol procedures
- Identifying suspicious activities
- Calling 911, non-emergency, and other resources
- Reporting livability problems
- Patrol logistics: scheduling, record keeping, equipment
- Personal safety while on patrol
- Selection of patrol leadership
- Filling out volunteer agreement, and if needed, background check forms for Portland Parks & Recreation or the school district

2. Initial patrol with crime prevention staff and/or police officer

- The CPC or a police officer (or both) can accompany the group for an initial patrol of the area, pointing out problem spots and answering questions.

The CPC will provide the Foot Patrol with manuals. The manual is also on the Office of Neighborhood Involvement website and can be downloaded by anyone who would like a copy. The website is located at www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/cp.

Follow-up training and meetings

An active Foot Patrol often has members join after the initial training that happens when the patrol forms. The Crime Prevention Coordinator (CPC) will be happy to train new members of the Foot Patrol and do refresher trainings for people who are already members. Or, when a Foot Patrol is experienced and established, the Foot Patrol organizer may do these trainings. The CPC can provide the Foot Patrol organizer with materials to conduct the training.

It's a good idea for active Foot Patrols to set up regular meetings for members to discuss what they are seeing on patrol. The CPC or a police officer will be able to attend some of these meetings. Meetings are a good time to discuss how more members might be recruited, or any procedural decisions that need to be made. They are also a good time to have a short training on a topic of interest to members of your Foot Patrol that would help them better understand trends in crime in their neighborhood. For example, additional training in liquor violations, gang activity, or domestic violence may be helpful. Talk to your CPC about additional training you would like to have. He or she may be able to provide the training, or help you find a trainer on the topic.

The full Community Foot Patrol manual is available on the Office of Neighborhood Involvement website at www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/cp. The manual contains more details about the tools and procedures of Community Foot Patrol.

El Programa de la Prevención del Crimen tiene un miembro que habla español. Llame por favor al número principal 503-823-4000 si usted necesita los servicios en español.

Crime Prevention Program Numbers

All numbers are area code 503

Main Line	823-4064
Central Precinct area.....	823-5852, 823-4257, 823-0540
East Precinct area	823-3432, 823-5532, 823-3505
North Precinct area.....	823-4098, 823-4094, 823-4764
Neighborhood Watch and Foot Patrol	823-2781
Enhanced Safety Properties.....	823-4763
Training and Education.....	823-3131
Program Manager.....	823-2030

Related services

Liquor license notification	823-4520
Graffiti abatement.....	823-4824
Noise control.....	823-7350
Code enforcement hotline (<i>nuisances, zoning, etc.</i>)	823-2633
City/County information & referral	823-4000
Neighborhood mediation	595-4890