

# COMMUNICATION TOOLS FOR NEIGHBORS



*Advice from the City of Portland Crime Prevention Program*

There are many different kinds of communication resources available to neighbors who want to set up a way to share information, including public safety notices. Many are free or low-cost.

Issues to consider when setting up a communication network include geography (wide vs. narrow), privacy (anyone vs. curated list), and timeliness (now vs. later).

Geography and privacy are a matter of preference, and the nature and sensitivity of the information. As for timeliness, we recommend selecting *a method that allows immediate communication*, and *a method that allows longer messages and conversation*.

Basic categories of tools include:

- In-person: face-to-face visits. Although time-consuming if you are trying to reach more than just a few people, an in-person visit is usually the best option for a neighbor who is not digitally connected.
- Telephone-based: phone calls, text messaging, Celly. Neighbors can set up phone trees or phone circles, use the text messaging program on their cell phone, or set up a texting group like Celly which texts everyone in the group at once. The advantage to these options is the ability to reach people quickly.
- Social online networks: Facebook, NextDoor. These options don't allow for immediate communication, since people periodically check them, but they do allow for conversations and longer messages. Facebook is widely used and familiar to many, but not especially private. NextDoor is a more private option, but requires more set up time.
- Email-based: Email, Yahoo! Groups, Google Groups. Neighbors can use their own list of emails, or use an email distribution service, also known as a listserv, that automatically emails all the members at once. Email options are great for broad distribution of messages of any length, but don't allow for immediate communication.

Tool	Quick for message sender to reach a wide geography	Allows immediate communication	Allows conversation and longer messages	Where to get tool
In-person visits			x	
Phone calls		x	x	
Text messaging		x		
Celly	x	x		<a href="http://www.cel.ly">www.cel.ly</a>
Facebook	x		x	<a href="http://www.facebook.com">www.facebook.com</a>
Next Door	x		x	<a href="http://www.nextdoor.com">www.nextdoor.com</a>
Email	x		x	
Yahoo! Groups	x		x	<a href="http://groups.yahoo.com">groups.yahoo.com</a>
Google Groups	x		x	<a href="http://groups.google.com">groups.google.com</a>