NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GUIDE



CHARLES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INTRODUCTION

To help start your Neighborhood Watch Group, the Charles County Sheriff's Office Community Relations Unit has developed this guide. This guide was created using resources provided by the National Sheriff's Association. It explains how to start and sustain an effective Neighborhood Watch Program.

Community Relations Unit

The mission of the Charles County Sheriff's Office Community Relations Unit is to establish and maintain close relationships with leaders of the community, civic groups, religious groups, businesses, and the public, in regards to preventive measures to improve the quality of life and strengthen partnerships. The officers assigned perform specialized uniform duties, with an emphasis on preventing crime through proactive engagement and education within the community. The Community Relations Unit strives to reduce criminal activity, while fostering public relations within the communities it serves.

What is Neighborhood Watch?

Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program which enlists the active participation of citizens in cooperation with law enforcement to reduce crime in their communities.

The purpose of the Neighborhood Watch Program is to create an alert neighborhood by using simple crime prevention methods.

Neighborhood Watch groups are <u>not</u> vigilantes and <u>do not</u> assume the role of law enforcement. Neighborhood Watch is <u>not</u> a citizen's patrol. It does not ask anyone in the community to take personal risks. Safety of Neighborhood Watch members is of paramount importance.

Neighborhood Watch groups have regular meetings to plan how they will accomplish their specific goals.

Objectives:

- √ To prevent crime by improving security, increasing crime awareness, and creating and maintaining a caring community, in an effort to reduce the opportunities for crime.
- √ To assist the police in detecting crime by promoting effective two way
 communication, and the prompt reporting of suspicious and criminal
 activity
- ✓ Implementation of crime prevention techniques, such as home security, Operation Identification and more.
- ✓ To enhance the police/community partnership by providing effective communication



Neighbors working together, through Neighborhood Crime Watch can combat crime in their area the most effective way - BEFORE IT STARTS.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Recruit and Organize as many neighbors as possible.

Don't be discouraged by low participation and lack of interest. Not everyone will be interested in joining right away, or understand the need for the group. Continue to invite everyone, and update neighbors who aren't involved. As the group grows, more will want to participate.

- Get your neighborhood involved.
- Canvass your neighborhood for interest.
- Explain the importance of a Neighborhood Watch.

Contact your Law Enforcement Liaison and schedule your first meeting.

Your Law Enforcement Liaison will help in formally setting up your neighborhood Watch. Your liaison can help in training members in home security, reporting skills and information on local crime patterns.

- Pick a time and location that is convenient for the majority of the community.
- Send reminders prior to the meeting
- Figure out your neighborhoods best way to distribute the information to gain attraction; Management Company, HOA meetings, flyers, email chain, Facebook page, etc.

Discuss community concerns, and develop an action plan

Address and prioritize the concerns, issues, or problems of the community. As law enforcement officers learn the needs of their various watch groups, they can tailor activities and responses to meet the ever-changing needs of their citizens.

Throughout the years, neighborhood watch has grown from an "extra eyes and ears" approach to crime prevention to a much more proactive, community-oriented endeavor. Neighborhood Watch groups are incorporating activities that not only address crime prevention issues, but also restores pride and unity to a neighborhood. Some examples:

- Mobilize and conduct Neighborhood clean-ups
- Work with faith-based organizations and/or community resources to assist with the homeless and mentally ill.



Create a Communication Plan

Organize the structure of your Neighborhood Watch. Identify who will be your Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, Block Captains, and Neighborhood Watch members. Each role is vital to the success of the program.

- Design Neighborhood Maps
- Develop a telephone / e-mail / text / website network within your group, as an efficient way to exchange information.



Take Action: Hold Meetings and Events

Remember, this is *your* Neighborhood Watch group and Law Enforcement is there to support and assist you. It is your responsibility to maintain interest, and keep the group running smoothly.

Get the community involved! Have a kick-off event to encourage other members to join. Start a Neighborhood Watch newsletter. Continue training and educating the members of the watch. Most importantly, keep the group active and enthusiastic.

Neighborhood Watch programs can be fun. Remember people will most likely become involved and remain interested if the programs are fun, as well as meaningful.

LAW ENFORCEMENT LIAISON



A law enforcement liaison is the law enforcement officer / law enforcement representative specifically assigned the responsibility of establishing and supporting local Neighborhood Watch groups. The liaison will guide Neighborhood Watch leaders to make decisions that will be best for their group. The liaison will train Neighborhood Watch leaders, block captains, and members, in areas ranging from setting goals, to how to report suspicious activities.

In order for Neighborhood Watch to work effectively and efficiently, it is imperative to work in conjunction with your Law Enforcement Liaison. This is a **IOINT EFFORT** in keeping our communities safe.

Your Charles County Sheriff's Office Liaison is Community Organizer, Mr. Gus Proctor. Gus Proctor is a retired Charles County Sheriff's Office Sergeant. He worked for the department for 30 years before retiring and coming back as the civilian Community Organizer. Gus Proctor started his career as a Correctional Officer for 3 ½ years. He went through the Police Academy and was assigned to the patrol division for 5 years. He spent 4 years as a detective in the Narcotics Enforcement Section, 5 years as the Community Policing Unit Supervisor, 5 years as the Narcotics Enforcement Section Street Level Drug Unit Supervisor, and finished his remaining years as a patrol supervisor and administrative Sergeant. He is now currently employed through the Charles County Sheriff's Office as a civilian community organizer. His tenure of Law Enforcement and Community experience will help guide you and provide to be an essential asset to your Neighborhood Watch Program.

Mr. Gus Proctor will be the primary point of contact for the communities. He works in unison with the other members of the Community Relations Unit, to enhance the Agency's crime fighting efforts, by encouraging and enabling the community of Charles County residents in their efforts to discourage, prevent, and suppress criminal activities through their own efforts and cooperation with the Agency.

You can reach Charles County Sheriff's Office Community Organizer, Mr. Gus Proctor, at 301-932-3080 or proctora@ccso.us.

Meetings with your Law Enforcement Liaison

Your Law Enforcement Liaison, a member of the Community Relations Unit, will attend your first meeting and provide a presentation on the following topics:

- A brief introduction regarding his/her position in crime prevention.
- An explanation of what Neighborhood Watch is.
- The specific crime stats in your area and how to obtain this information.
- Effective crime prevention techniques for home and neighborhood safety.
- How to report crime: what to look for, how to describe a person, vehicle, or activity and what other information to provide the call-taker. (Location, name, etc.).

Your Law Enforcement Liaison will attend your Neighborhood Watch meetings **annually**, when requested. This can provide updated training and information to your Watch group, involving an open forum where the community will be able to ask questions and be provided with feedback. Take advantage of this opportunity to set up any training your watch is interested in.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH COORDINATOR



The Coordinator's job is crucial to the success of your program. This may be just the right job for a retiree or other individual who has extra time at home. The neighborhood watch coordinator is a liaison between the police department and the neighbors. The police department sends information to our Neighborhood Watch Coordinators and they, in turn, can disseminate this information throughout the neighborhood. The coordinator is in charge of maintaining the Neighborhood Watch program for their community.

Tasks for the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator

- Act as a liaison between Neighborhood Watch residents and the Law Enforcement Liaison
- Maintain a list of the names, addresses, emails and telephone numbers of your
 Neighborhood Watch members to provide to your Law Enforcement Liaison.
- Create and maintain a plot map of your street with names, addresses, and phone numbers of your group members. A sample map is enclosed. For each home, the color of the house, street numbers and family name/phone number will be included (if possible) "Vacant" and "Non-participating" homes should also be marked on the map.
- Develop a telephone / e-mail / text / website network within your group, as an efficient way to exchange information. This network can be used to notify members about recent crime trends in your area, and pass information from your Law Enforcement Liaison throughout the community.
- Plan and coordinate meetings. <u>Two meetings</u> are required per year.
 - Announces and advertises meetings, leads meetings, develops agendas and finds quest speakers for meetings.
 - Informal quarterly updates on member information and Neighborhood Watch status must be sent to your Law Enforcement Liaison.

Remember: If the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator resigns or passes on the responsibility, notify your Law Enforcement Liaison regarding any changes.

Strong leadership (and neighborhood participation) is essential to maintain the active involvement of the community in the Neighborhood Crime Watch Program.

BLOCK CAPTAIN / MEMBERS



Block captains are recommended for every 10-15 houses, and they should be directly involved with their immediate neighbors. Block captains work in unison with the Watch Coordinator to help disseminate information throughout the community.

Tasks for the Neighborhood Watch Block Captain

- Recruit Neighborhood residents into the Neighborhood Watch program, and encourage active participation.
- Distribute crime prevention materials to residents who were unable to attend the meetings.
- Promote and distribute a copy of all schedule Neighborhood Watch meetings, upcoming events, and special activities to everyone on their block.
- Maintain updated maps and phone trees of their assigned areas.



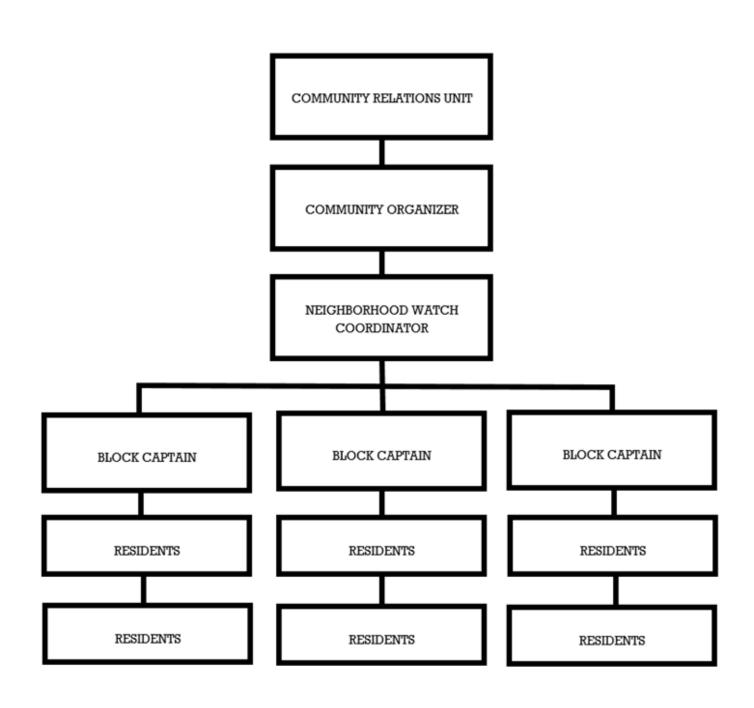
Neighborhood Watch Members have several responsibilities. One of the most important things a member can do is to remain active. An active member will help create and maintain a level of excitement about the program. This will help recruit more members, which will lead to a higher level of crime prevention. It is the responsibility of members to stay informed about issues in their neighborhood and community. This information should be shared with

others to keep members motivated, and to prevent the group from becoming stagnant.

Tasks for the Neighborhood Watch Block Members

- Acts as eyes and ears for their neighbors, and reports suspicious activities.
- Practices safety and security measures at home and work.
- Aids and assists the Block Captains and Watch Coordinator, in accomplishing goals and tasks.
- Attends meetings and remains active.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



MEETINGS

<u>Two meetings</u> are required per year to remain an active part of the Neighborhood Crime Watch, Community Policing program. The Annual National Night Out event can be included as one of these meetings.

Attendance sheets are required at the meetings, to be forwarded to your Law Enforcement Liaison.

Quarterly updates on member information and Neighborhood Watch status must be sent to your Law Enforcement Liaison. This is an informal update and can be sent via email or handled by phone call. This is just to maintain an open line of communication.

Planning Meetings

- Select a time and location that is convenient for most of your neighbors.
- Plan the meeting date far in advance to give the community adequate notice. (At least 30 days)
- Send a reminder to all interested parties just prior to the meeting. Invite your Law Enforcement Liaison to attend.
- Determine the most efficient way to disseminate information within your community.
 (Telephone, e-mail, text messages, Facebook, NextDoor App, website network, flyers, door-to-door, Management Company, etc.).

**Do not be disappointed if everyone cannot attend. 100% neighborhood participation is desired but it is not a requirement for the program to work.

Meetings

- Prepare an agenda, with a list of items that need to be discussed.
- Have everyone introduce themselves! The point of Neighborhood Watch is to come. together as a community to keep your neighborhood safe. (Consider having nametags).
- Provide a sign-in sheet for the members who attend. This sheet will be used to update the neighborhood maps and phone trees.
 - Do not be discouraged if everyone doesn't fill out the sheet completely. This is based off of each individuals comfort level.
- Gather feedback from the members in regards to what topics the participants are interested in hearing about, for future meetings.

- Consider having guest speakers to provide crime prevention tips. (Your Law Enforcement Liaison can help guide you in the right direction)
- Encourage members to get involved in Operation Identification, and to sign up for home security surveys.
- Keep the meetings brief, but engaging.
- Not every meeting has to be formal. Consider hosting community events: Block party, cook-outs, community yard sales, community clean-ups.
 - The purpose of these meetings is not only just for information, it's for the neighbors to get to know each other.

National Night Out

Each year on the evening of the first Tuesday in August, the Charles County Sheriff's Office and neighborhood residents take part in National Night Out (NNO), a celebration of crime- and drug-prevention efforts and of the alliance between police and citizens.

NNO is a national event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW). Each year, 10,000 communities from all 50 states, U.S. Territories, Canadian cities and military bases worldwide take part in celebrations. NNO heightens crime- and drug-prevention awareness; generates support for and participation in local anti-crime efforts; and strengthens neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships.



In Charles County, many neighborhoods host block parties with lots of food and family fun including parades, flashlight walks, contests, youth activities and pool parties. The Sheriff, his command staff, officers, McGruff the Crime Dog and McGruff's nephew Scruff visit the neighborhoods meet citizens in a fun, relaxed atmosphere and reaffirm their commitment to keeping the community safe. Some neighborhoods do not host block parties but still demonstrate their support for NNO by turning on their porch lights for the evening.

The CCSO also hosts an NNO coloring contest for children. Winners receive awards presented by the Sheriff, McGruff and Scruff at a ceremony held in the fall.

For more than a decade, Charles County has been recognized by the NATW for its ever-growing and enthusiastic participation in the event.

National Night Out qualifies as one of your two required meetings a year.

NEIGHBORHOOD MAP

For each home, provide the street numbers and family name/phone number will be included (if possible) "Vacant" and "Non-participating" homes should also be marked on the map. Indicate which houses have surveillance cameras and who would be willing to be contacted from the Sheriff's Office for evidence, in regards to any crimes occurring in the area.

Neighborhood maps are required to be maintained/updated and provided to your Law Enforcement Liaison.

For example:

2141 Safety Street VACANT

NW: No Cameras: No

2139 Safety Street Information not provided

NW: No Cameras: No

2137 Safety Street
Ms. Julia Smith
BLOCK CAPTAIN
(c) 123-456-7891

NW: Yes
Cameras: Yes

2143 Safety Street Mr. John Doe (c) 240-111-2222

NW: Yes Cameras: Yes 2142 Safety Street Mrs. Sally Brown (c) 240-111-2345

NW: No Cameras: Yes

2140 Safety Street Mr. Tyler Johnson (c) None

NW: Yes Cameras: Yes

2138 Safety Street VACANT

NW: No Cameras: No

REPORTING CRIME / SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY



How to Report Suspicious Activity or a Crime

Know what numbers to call.

9-1-1

<u>Emergencies</u> <u>Non-Emergency</u>

- Identify yourself by name and address.
- Provide the exact location of the crime or activity.
- Be as detailed as possible with pertinent information.
- Remain in contact with the call-taker, until all the necessary information has been obtained.

301-932-2222

Do not personally confront the situation. Await arrival from the Sheriff's Office.

SUSPECT DESCRIPTIONS

Gender	Race		
м 🗌	Caucasian	Hispanic	<u>Age</u> :
F	African American	Other:	
Characteristics Height: Weight:	5		Clothing Description Hat: Shirt: Jacket:
Hair Hair color: Hair Style: Facial Hair:	- //		Pants/Shorts: Shoes: Additional:
Tattoos: Scars / Marks:			Weapon Type: Color: Size:

VEHICLE DESCRIPTIONS

Vehicle Registration

State:

Registration:

(Partial registration is better than none)

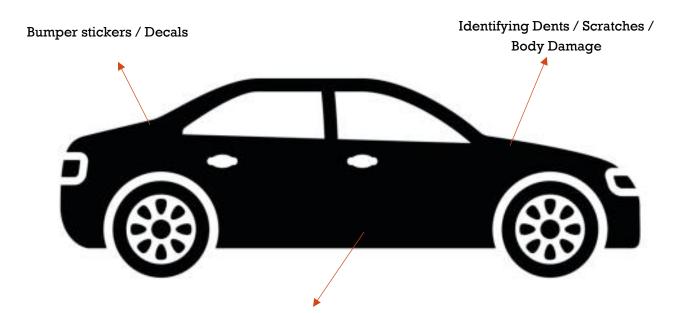
Vehicle Description

Make:

Model: _____

Year: _____

Color: _____



Body style: 2/4 door, convertible, etc.

Additional Descriptions:	 	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
	 		

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Operation Identification

Operation Identification is marking all your easily stolen valuables so that they can be identified as yours. Operation Identification makes it easy to record the description and serial numbers of all valuables you have marked, in case of a situation where your items are stolen or your residence is burglarized.



What makes Operation Identification so effective is that easily identified property is hard for a burglar to dispose of. It can be traced back to you. And, if the burglar is caught with it in his/her possession, it is solid evidence of possession of stolen goods.

- I. Marking your valuables
 - a. Use an electric engraver to mark your valuables. Mark your valuables by inscribing your driver's license number followed by your state abbreviation, "MD". A typical marking should look like this: A-000-000-000-000MD.
 - b. Even if the item has a manufacturer's serial number, including your driver's license number makes it possible for law enforcement agencies to quickly trace the rightful owner of the recovered property.

Home Security Survey

Crime Prevention begins at home, through improved home security. The Charles County Sheriff's Office will conduct a FREE home security survey upon request. An officer will come to your home and survey your

- Doors
- Windows
- Locks
- Landscaping & lighting

These items will be checked and suggestions will be made on how to better secure your home. This will identify any potential points of vulnerability, and provide you with how to correct those security weaknesses. Contact your Law Enforcement Liaison to schedule this survey.

Maryland "Watch Your Car" Program

The "Watch Your Car" Program is administered by the Maryland Vehicle Theft Prevention Council as is provided as a public service, free of charge, to owners of vehicles registered in the State of Maryland. It is a voluntary vehicle registration program designed to deter auto theft and assist in the apprehension of auto thieves.

How it works: The owner(s) sign an application form stating their vehicle is not normally used between the hours of 1:00am and 5:00am which gives permission for a police officer to stop the car between the hours of 1:00am and 5:00am to verify that the driver is actually the owner of the vehicle or an authorized driver, designated by the owner. Once registered, the vehicle owner will receive 2 window decals to be placed on the front and back windows of the vehicle.

To register your vehicle visit:

https://mdsp.maryland.gov/Organization/Pages/OfficeoftheSuperintendent/WatchYourCarProgram.aspx

CITY PROTECT

What is City Protect?

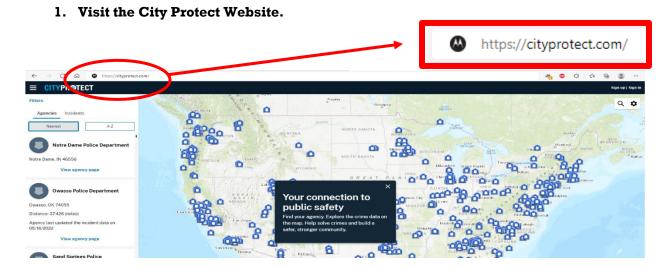
CityProtect is your connection to public safety. Being aware of crime that occurs in your community can help you better protect yourself, your family and your property. With this in mind, CCSO offers citizens near-instant access to information about crimes through the website CityProtect.com.

Citizens who visit the CityProtect website may search for crimes by city, address, zip code and neighborhood. The results will include crimes that occurred in and around the search area. It offers information about the type of crime and when and where it occurred.

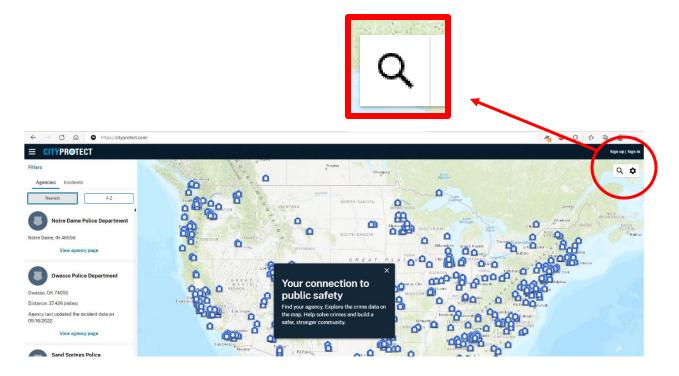
CityProtect is a third-party service offered in conjunction with Google Maps. CityProtect provides a list of calls for service and Google Maps provides a visual interpretation of the information by flagging the incident locations on a map of the searched area. CityProtect uses information provided directly from CCSO, thereby offering an accurate report of calls for service. CCSO cannot guarantee the accuracy of Google Maps.

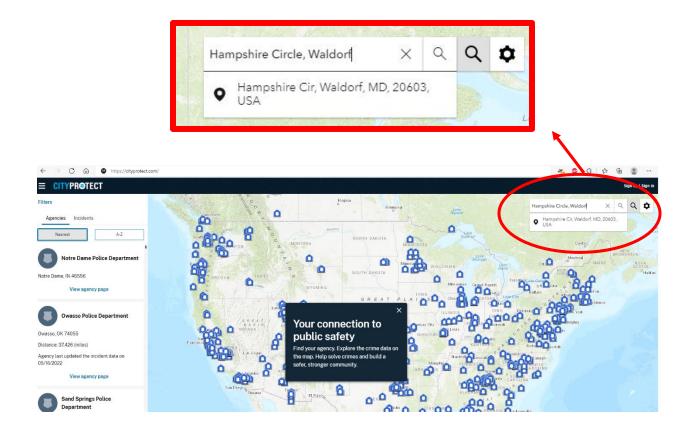
Previously the community officers would send crime stats to the neighborhoods monthly utilizing CityProtect. It is strongly encouraged that each community representative utilize this process to gather Intel or information for your communities. Communities that are active with the Neighborhood Watch are encouraged to send this information out monthly or quarterly.

How to locate your Communities Crime Data



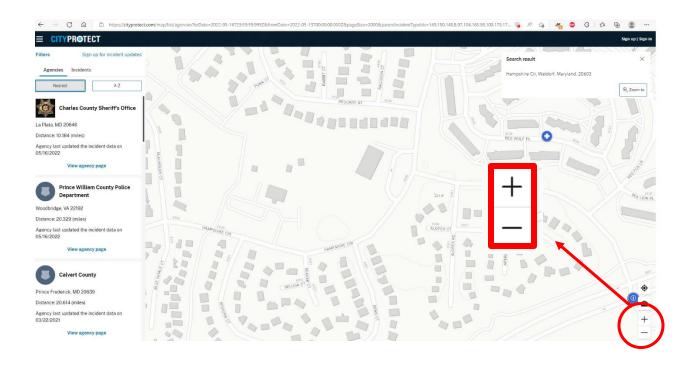
2. Search for your community.



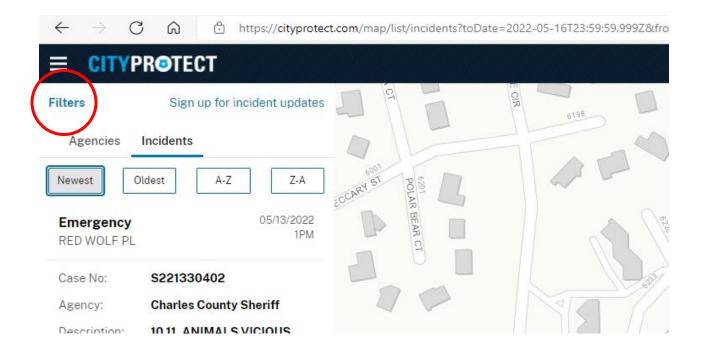


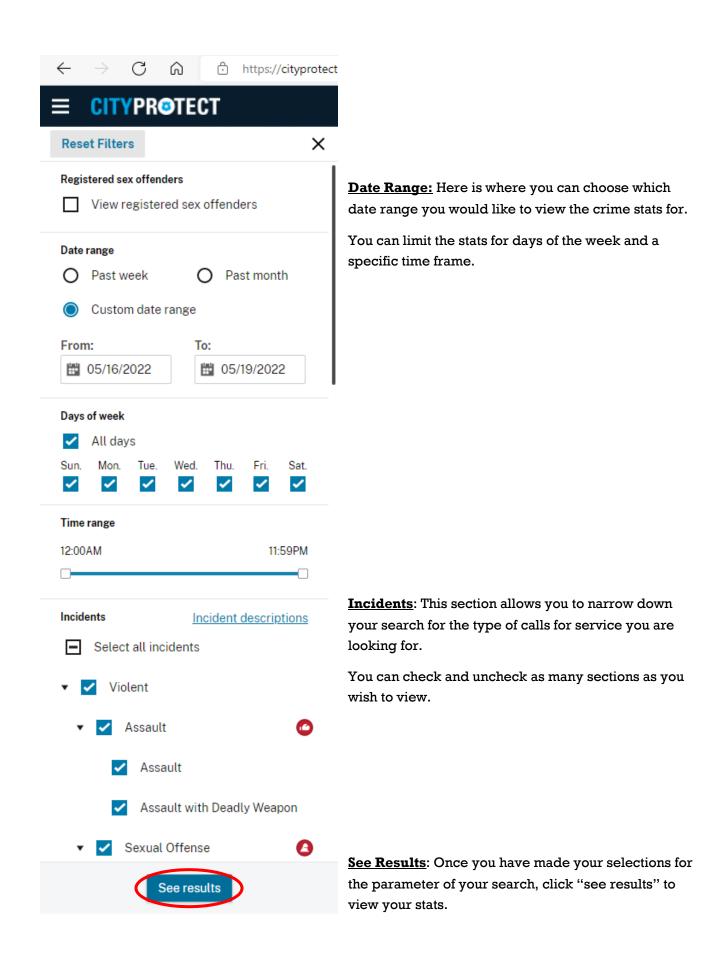
3. Zoom in and out to select the area you want to see Crime Stats.

(What you see on your screen is the area the crime stats will be provided.)

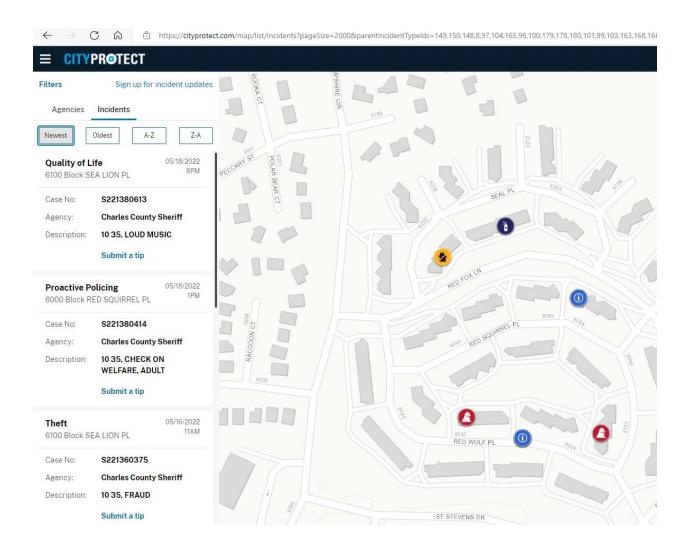


4. Set your filters





5. View your crime stats.



All calls for service which you selected will be shown on the left hand side of the screen. City Protect will provide you with the type of call for service, the date and time, the "100 block" the crime occurred in, the agency case number, and a brief description of the call.

On the map to the right you will see little icons which will show you where the call for service was located. If you click on the icon it will take you directly to that specific call for service, so you can see further information regarding that specific incident.

Requesting more information

More specific details about crimes are not available on the website but citizens who are concerned about a particular incident must submit a written request, "Multiple Request Form". to the Records Section. You can download the form on our website, obtain a form from a District Station or submit a letter on either plain paper or company letterhead. There is an \$8 processing fee per request. The payment must be made in the form of a money order or cashier's check made payable to the Charles County Sheriff's Office. Cash and personal checks are not accepted. The payment must be included with your request. Once your request is received, your report will be processed within 7-10 business days.

https://www.ccso.us/contact/request-a-police-report/

You can request information throughout a specific time range, this request does not only have to be related to one incident. This information could be useful to HOAs, Neighborhood Watch meetings, etc. This will include calls for service and reports taken for the date range requested. The request will be \$8.00 for first 10 pages and 50 cents for any page after. Businesses can also conduct a business check through the same process.

Mail your request and payment to:

Charles County Sheriff's Office Records Section PO Box 189 La Plata, MD 20646

Or visit the following Charles County Sheriff's Office District Stations:

District 1 Station	District 2 Station	District 3 Station
6855 Crain Highway	Bryans Road Shopping Center	3670 Leonardtown Road
La Plata, MD 20646	3099 Marshall Hall Road	Waldorf, MD 20601
	Bryans Road, MD 20616	

For more information on requesting information, you can contact our records section at (301)-609-6400.

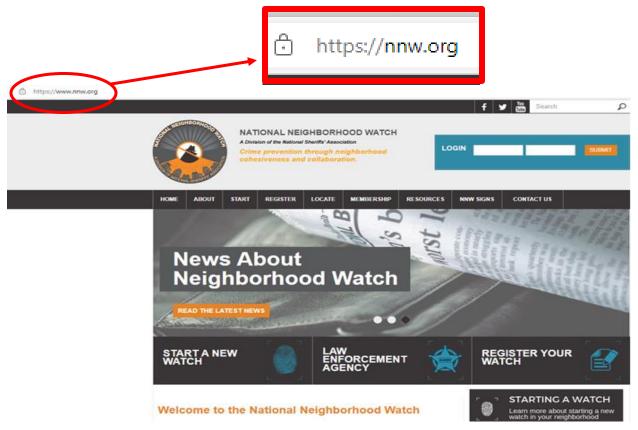
Charles County Sheriff's Office Press Releases

The Charles County Sheriff's Office Media Relations Office frequently releases press releases regarding arrests and crimes that have occurred.

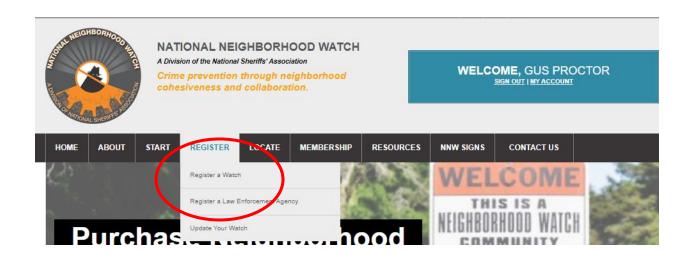
Please visit www.ccso.us/news to stay up-to-date on new information presented from the Sheriff's Office.

REGISTER YOUR WATCH

1. Visit The National Neighborhood Watch Website.



2. Select Register --- Register a Watch



3. Register to receive newsletters. These are newsletters sent by the National Neighborhood Watch National Sheriff's Association. This newsletter provides information on other watch groups, throughout the nation to better assist yours.



- Email nw@sheriffs.org with your Neighborhood Watch Groups information. Let them know your supporting Law Enforcement Agency is the Charles County Sheriff's Office located in La Plata, Maryland 20646.
- 5. **Explore the website!** There are a ton of resources to help build and keep your Neighborhood Watch Established. This is your main hub for all information Watch related.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS / WEBSITES

EMERGENCY: 9-1-1

Charles County Sheriff's Office Non-Emergency Number: 301-932-2222

Charles County Sheriff's Office Community Organizer: 301-932-3080



Charles County Sheriff's Office Website

Citizens will have direct access to information about the services provided by CCSO year round. www.ccso.us



National Neighborhood Watch

Your main source for all information and resources related to Neighborhood Watch.

www.nww.org



CityProtect

Are you curious about the criminal activity in your area? This website provides up-to-date crime statistics.

www.cityprotect.com



Charles County Crime Solvers

Crime Solvers offers rewards of **up to \$1,000** for information that leads to the arrest or indictment of a person involved in criminal activity.

www.charlescountycrimesolvers.com



Charles County Sheriff's Office Facebook

Stay up-to-date on important information.

https://m.facebook.com/ccsomd?_rdr

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH SIGN-IN

Neighborhood:		Date:				
Neighborhood Watch Coordinator:						
NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL			