



MULTNOMAH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CITIZEN PATROL

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

A Volunteer's Guide for Crime Prevention

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Purpose of this Manual

- To support the training of Citizen Patrol members
- To consult when questions arise about the policies or procedures of a Citizen Patrol
- To train Citizen Patrol members in non-confrontational observation and reporting techniques for the purpose of reducing vehicle break-ins and/or other criminal activity in the Columbia River Gorge



What is a Citizen Patrol?

A Citizen 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. Citizen Patrol members are actively and directly involved in solving those problems in a community-based, non-confrontational manner. Citizen Patrols collaborate with their local law enforcement agency, neighborhood coalitions and associations, schools, parks personnel, and area businesses to help make sure that neighborhood problems receive a prompt and effective response. A Citizen Patrol is a great way to meet like-minded people, contribute to your community, and get some exercise too!

The Citizen Patrol in the Columbia River Gorge area will focus specifically on vehicle break-ins and other criminal activity in the state parks within Multnomah County, however other targeted missions may arise as well. The Citizen Patrols will wear civilian clothing void of logos or other designs that may promote a particular political stance, belief or other statement. Members must appear professional and well-groomed. A patrol vest or Citizen Patrol jacket and county issued ID card must be worn over the civilian clothing unless members are on an approved undercover mission. Members must commit to 6-hours per month to remain active within the group. Patrol time, parking assistance at community events or even programming Citizen Patrol radios counts towards the 6-hours.

Purpose of Citizen Patrols

• **To help reduce crime and the fear of crime** by providing a visible presence as a deterrent to criminal activity. When concerned patrol members actively watch their community, this sends a message 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 Citizen 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. Citizen Patrols provide an avenue for neighbors to get to know one another and build a sense of community.

- **To assist the community during a natural disaster.** Members are familiar with the community, its needs and vulnerabilities. Some of the Citizen Patrol members are also NERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team) members. Members are trained to assist in various manners to include setting up a radio network within the community even when no power is available.

Types of patrols

Citizen 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. On rare occasions, it may be appropriate to patrol on bike. 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.

Citizen 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. Vacation “home checks” are routinely performed by the volunteers.
- *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 cooperation with Oregon State Parks.



- *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. Due to recent school shooting incidents in our country, Citizen Patrol member are authorized to do patrols *outside* of the Corbett Schools. Members must report to the school secretary before doing a school patrol and Records must be notified per normal procedure. Since you are unarmed, you are simply asked to remain vigilant and report suspicious activities as necessary. On some occasions, the liaison deputy may ask you to watch for a specific person or vehicle driving around the campus.



Partnerships

Roles of partners

While community members are the people who do the actual patrolling, they partner with others to achieve the best results. Without exception, Citizen Patrols partner with and receive technical assistance from their local law enforcement agency. Depending on the location of the patrol and the specific issues at that location, other partners may also be appropriate.

Law Enforcement Liaison Officers

These are deputy sheriffs or police officers that actively work with the Citizen Patrol group. The officer administers the initial training of Citizen Patrol members and often provides follow-up training and advice and assistance to the patrol such as crime patterns or chronic problems. Training typically consists of non-confrontational observation and reporting practices, however training will include dealing with confrontational subjects as well.

Neighborhood Watch Organizers

These are community members who lead a Neighborhood Watch. A Neighborhood Watch is a way of organizing residents of a block to make the block more resistant to crime, and better able to respond to crime if it occurs. Often, people who are interested in Neighborhood Watch are interested in Citizen Patrol, and vice versa. Many times, people are involved in both. Some Citizen Patrols are outgrowths of a specific Neighborhood Watch. If Neighborhood Watches exist in the patrol area, for mutual safety and effectiveness the members of each group communicate with each other about any incidents or problems in the area.

Neighborhood Associations (NEMCCA- The N.E. Multnomah County Community Association)

Neighborhood associations are organizations which provide support and technical assistance to the local citizens. It may be appropriate to notify the neighborhood association of any problems that are witnessed on a patrol. These organizations have a certain amount of clout because they represent the residents of an area, and can sometimes direct resources or attention to a problem.



NEMCCA sponsored town hall meeting with the Sheriff

Business owners, Business Associations, and Business Watches

These can be very effective partners for a business district Citizen Patrol. Like the neighborhood associations and coalitions, business associations may be able to direct resources or attention to a problem. Business owners often give their emergency numbers for a patrol to call if they see any problems at their building. Some business owners are willing and able to make physical improvements on their building that may help deter crime, such as adding lighting. Business Watches are networks of businesses in a specific area organized to prevent and better respond to crime. They are obvious allies for a business area Citizen Patrol, in the same way that Neighborhood Watches are allies for a residential area Citizen Patrol.

Park Staff

A Citizen Patrol operating in a park would regularly communicate with the Park Rangers, managers, or other staff depending on the location and the problem. During the summer months, activity in parks increases substantially. Requests for services and the need for extra patrol also increase. The park employees may be authorized to write citations or park exclusions.

Donations

The Citizen Patrol acquired nearly all of its radios through donations. The Citizen Patrol has no operating budget. Even small purchases must be cleared through the Sheriff's Office. However, monetary donations are deposited into a NEMCCA account and can be easily accessed. If a citizen expresses their gratitude and asks to donate money or items, please have them contact the Citizen Patrol liaison deputy. Checks can be also be made to "NEMCCA" with "Citizen Patrol" in the information line. Please forward checks to the liaison deputy. If they wish to make a cash donation please write them a receipt for the amount and also have them sign your notebook with the donated amount and their name and phone number for verification purposes.