

DRAPER CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

BLOCK LEADER MANUAL



DRAPER POLICE

BLOCK CLUB

Forming the Leadership Team

To begin, you only need a few dedicated people to get your block club off the ground. Though you may hope for 100% participation eventually, make decisions on where to start. Leverage the skills of your neighbors. Think about who has shown interest in community building or who has the time and/or energy to step up as a leader. The actual boundaries of the organization could be only half of a block, one side of the block, both sides of the street facing each other, or even a single apartment building. The boundaries will depend on factors like geographic size, the population density, available meeting places, and the nature of the problems in the neighborhood. The group should be large enough to tackle your problems with some assurance of success, but not so large that there is little chance for people to get to know one another and trade ideas.

Once you decide the boundaries, you should proceed to connect with everyone who lives within those boundaries, including owners, young adults, renters, newcomers, and seniors. Your group should be inclusive to everyone in the area, as everyone is impacted by quality-of-life issues in that area. The first contact you make should be in-person, so you can introduce yourself and the purpose of forming your group.

Keys to Success

Getting to know your neighbors is key to making Block Club successful. Be sure to organize an activity each year, such as a block party or area meeting, so participants can come together, get to know each other better, and discuss concerns they may have.

Communication is one of the keys to making Block Club a success. Stay in touch with your Crime Prevention Specialist throughout the year to updates on how your neighborhood is doing. If all is well in your neighborhood, just check in to say that all is well. Please do not hesitate to contact your Crime Prevention Specialist, at 801-576-6342.

The Draper City Police Department will host a Facebook page for Block Leaders only. This social media will be our method of relaying important information to Block Club Leaders. The Block Leaders will disseminate pertinent information to Block Club participants.

Block Club Leader Responsibilities

In order to keep Block Clubs effective and organized, guidelines are recommended for leadership roles and their accompanying responsibilities. The leader oversees Block Club and communicates with the Crime Prevention Specialist at the Draper Police Department.

Introductions: Plan on going door-to-door. First, introduce yourself as a neighbor and explain the purpose of the visit. Secondly, inform the individual you have been speaking with other neighbors who are interested in starting a block club, and explain their attendance is needed at the first meeting. In advance, prepare a small flyer or post-it note with the date, time, and location of the first meeting to hand out. Emphasize the benefits of having each neighbor know one another and working together to solve problems. Some individuals will want to socialize, others will only be interested in problem-solving. In fact, most successful block clubs include both kinds of programs. It is important to stress from the beginning the value of setting up a block club. The presence of a block club gives everyone a sense of being a part of a community and of sharing goals and ideas with neighbors. It empowers people and provides the machinery for working out immediate and long-term problems that arise.

The first meeting: After the leadership team has reached out to all the neighbors who may become block club members, there should be a decision on who will be the temporary president for the first meeting. An agenda should also be created. It can simply be a list of things to discuss or do. Since you have already talked to many neighbors, you should have a good idea about their concerns. You should plan to explain why your neighborhood should have a block club and lead a discussion of the problems group attention and action. Consider inviting a speaker from an already established and successful neighborhood organization to describe how their group got started and some of the possibilities for your group. If you don't know of any other groups in your area, call the Crime Prevention Specialist at the Draper Police Department.

Setting block standards: At the first meeting, you should open up a conversation about block standards. These should be expectations all neighbors follow. All residents will depend on each other for the enforcement of these standards. Even those who don't comply with such things as cutting their grass, putting trash in the proper storage containers or keeping up the exterior of their property, should be contacted to participate in this conversation. Only by getting everyone to cooperate can others be influenced and persuaded to conform to the wishes of the rest of the neighbors. Remember, though, that such people should never be invited to the meeting to be lectured about their undesirable behavior. It is only by including everyone in the decision-making regarding the block's best interest, which will ensure a better standard of living for all. Everyone will need to come to an agreement about what is reasonable and important for the community.

Vote on the future of the group: Hold a vote on whether or not the group should continue to exist from this point forward. Elect officers (usually a president, VP, secretary, and treasurer) for a temporary period such as three months. Consider creating committees such as a Member Outreach, Welcoming, or Event Planning committees. Settle on a time and place for the next meeting. Ensure that everyone shares an agreed-upon form of communication, whether that be email, phone numbers, etc. Be sure members are notified and reminded about subsequent meetings.

Submit registration form: Be sure to complete the registration form on the Draper City Police Department website. This will register you officially with the City and enable your group to receive communications from the police department such as newsletters, Crime Maps, trending crime alerts, police department sponsored events. [Click here for the registration form.](#)

Move past the first three months: Create goals and objectives: You now have a permanent organization meeting on a regular basis. There are still many unanswered questions. How are meetings conducted? How does your group determine and reach its goals? Where can you go for assistance? The answers to these questions will determine how well your organization works. The difference between the purpose of a block club and its goals is not always spelled out clearly. This can lead to conflict between members since they might not be able to agree on specific actions for the group. Determine what the overall purpose of the organization is to be: Should it be political, social, or deal only with neighbor problems? This is often articulated in a mission statement. Based on the purpose, goals should then be developed. The general objective of most neighborhood organizations should be to improve the living conditions for all neighbors in a given area, and this could be accomplished by many actions. For example, living conditions could be improved by hosting a block-wide clean-up day per year or by holding summer potlucks.

Keeping Your Block Club Area Active: The two fundamental principles for keeping your Block Club area active and keeping your participants interested are communication and cross-involvement.

Communication

Maintaining good communication is key to making your Block Club a success in your area. That means maintaining good communication between you and your Block Leaders, as well as good communication between you and your Crime Prevention Specialist. It also means making sure your Block Leaders have good communication with the participants on their blocks. And it means every participant of your Block Club area feels that they can approach and communicate with their Block Leader.

When it comes to Block Club, the adage, “out of sight, out of mind,” is certainly true. When Block Club participants in your area don’t receive consistent communication regarding the program, they will assume it is no longer relevant. If participants never hear about neighborhood events or news, they will not look to utilize Block Club as a resource.

Cross-involvement

A great way to get people involved or interested in Block Club is through cross-involvement. These activities should aim to bring the neighborhood closer together in a way not influenced by religion, race, political leaning, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Be creative. Once your group gets started, it will build momentum.

Examples:

- Participate in Draper Dog Walker Watch
- Neighborhood cleanup or service project
- Neighborhood book club
- Public safety discussion group
- Skills exchange day
- Neighborhood beautification project
- Holiday decoration contests

Organizing Block Club meetings and activities on a regular basis is an important part of maintaining an active and functioning Block Club in your area.

Meetings and activities do not need to be dry and boring. Some of the most successful get-togethers are those in which Block Club participants can come together and get to know each other. Block Club events should address neighborhood issues for several minutes at the beginning, leaving the rest of the time to socialize and become more familiar with each other. Building and strengthening traditional neighborhood values lies at the heart of an effective Block Club program.

What the block meeting should include

Welcome and Sign In: Welcome everyone and let them know how long the meeting will last. Use a sign-in sheet to keep track of who is present at the meeting. Read aloud the agenda and items to be covered and tell residents there will be time after the meeting to ask questions. Start the meeting on time and end on time by providing the opportunity for introductions at the start of the meeting and informal discussion periods after the meeting.

Introductions: Let residents introduce themselves by giving their names and addresses.

Discussion of Neighborhood Issues: Allow residents time to raise specific neighborhood concerns. At the first few meetings, residents might express anger and frustration over neighborhood problems and criticize law enforcement for not doing more to address their problems. As time goes on, residents will use this time to focus on specific issues and ways to address them.

Crime Prevention Presentation: During the first meeting, the crime prevention specialist or other police department representative will provide information on crime prevention topics and ways to maintain an active Block Club.

Selection of a Block Club Leader or Co-Leader: The basic structure of a Block Club involves a Leader or co-leaders and members. A leader can be elected by the members during the first meeting or can just be unofficially decided until a later meeting. It is recommended a leader and co-leader are assigned for a specific period of time, such as one year, which enables transition and sharing of responsibility.

Issues for the Next Meeting: Before the meeting adjourns, plan on the issues to be discussed at the next meeting.

Date, Time and Place for Next Meeting: Members usually meet once a month or, at the very least, every other month. Other members involved with planning, training and meeting activities usually meet more often.

Conclusion/Refreshments and Sharing: The time after the meeting can be as important as the meeting itself. During this time, members can have the opportunity to visit and build friendships and informally brainstorm on future goals and strategies.

Tips and best practices for staying in touch:

- Social media, including Facebook (groups or pages) and Twitter.
- Flyers and handouts — a half-sheet should suffice.
- Contact list collected during the door-to-door process includes phone number and email address. The email approach is possibly the best way to keep neighbors in the loop.
- A mass-mailing tool, such as Mail Chimp may make the process easier.
- Some ambitious Block Clubs have their own websites

Block Club Area Map

Your Block Club Area Map will be one of the most useful resources you will use. It will be used not only by participants in your area, but also by the police department, so it is vital it is kept up-to-date.

Use your Block Club Area Map

Your Block Club Area Map is a valuable tool to every participant in your area. Not only will it serve as a quick contact list, it will also be helpful for participants to glance at when reporting a crime or incident that is occurring in their neighborhood. Everyone will know where everyone lives and be able to provide exact addresses to the emergency personnel that need to respond.

Keep your area map up-to-date

As people move in and out of the neighborhood, or as things change, be sure to continually update this map. Distribute updated copies to Block Club participants often so they can be used when needed.

Be sure to keep your crime prevention specialist supplied with an updated copy of your area map. Your crime prevention specialist will make certain the police department has your updated map. Police officers working in your area will have access to Block Club information.