

# Neighborhood Watch **Handbook**



Golden Valley Police Department



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## Crime Prevention Goals

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*Reduce crime or the fear of crime through communication and education.*

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*Enhance the knowledge of citizens and police officers in respect to community proactive crime prevention strategies.*

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*Develop tactics and strategies that will create and maintain successful community crime prevention programs.*

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*Enhance the safety and quality of life for Golden Valley Citizens.*

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# Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program enlisting the active participation of citizens in cooperation with law enforcement to reduce incidents of crime. Participants become an extension of the Golden Valley Police Department's (GVPD) eyes and ears and may include neighbors who live on the same block(s) or multi-housing complex.

These extra eyes and ears report crime by being alert for suspicious activity. Members meet their neighbors, learn how to make their homes and families more safe and secure, and stay informed about current crime trends in the area.

Neighborhood Watch is neighbors helping neighbors, and it works. Over the last few decades, we have experienced dramatic decreases in residential crime that can be directly correlated to Neighborhood Watch. The program assists in building pride and ownership and serves as a springboard for efforts that address other community concerns or livability issues.

In short, Neighborhood Watch involves:

- neighbors getting to know each other and working together in a program of mutual assistance
- citizens being trained to recognize and report suspicious activity in their neighborhoods
- people reducing the opportunity to become crime victims by practicing basic crime prevention techniques

## Benefits

**Prevention of Residential Crime**—Over the last few decades, Neighborhood Watch programs have contributed to declines in thefts, burglaries, vandalism, and much more.

**Greater Awareness of Crime**—The GVPD keeps Neighborhood Watch members updated on crime trends and exposes members to crime prevention techniques that enhance the ability to remove and reduce opportunities for crime.

**Serves as a Warning to Criminals**—Neighborhood Watch signs alert potential criminals that residents are concerned about crime and will call the police when suspicious activity is observed. We have arrested residential burglars in the

past few years that admit to looking for neighborhoods where there are no Neighborhood Watch signs posted and, more importantly, residents are not paying attention.

**Zone-Based Crime Alerts**—Crime moves from one area to another easily, so it's important to be informed about crime trends that may affect your neighborhood. We email crime alerts to residents who sign up to receive them. You can choose to receive crime alerts for just your area (zone) of the city or for multiple zones. Sign up at <http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov/news/subscribe/index.php>.

**Neighborhood WatchBlog**—Because it's important to regularly communicate crime information to residents, we publish the Neighborhood WatchBlog, an online newsletter featuring police-related stories and crime prevention information. The Watchblog replaces the former Neighborhood Watchdog quarterly newsletter, which was discontinued to save printing and postage costs. Sign up at [www.goldenvalleymn.gov/news/subscribe/index.php](http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov/news/subscribe/index.php).

**Interactive Crime Map**—The City's new online interactive crime map displays more information than before and provides search by neighborhood for current reported crimes as well as basic information about each event. To see the map, go to [www.goldenvalleymn.gov/police/maps/index.php](http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov/police/maps/index.php).

**Night to Unite**—Night to Unite (formerly National Night Out) is held the first Tuesday of August. Golden Valley neighborhoods are invited to join cities throughout Minnesota in having potluck dinners, ice cream socials, barbecues, bike parades, etc. Use your imagination and plan something fun! Planning kits are mailed to block captains in mid-June and are also available online at [www.goldenvalleymn.gov/events/nighttounite/index.php](http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov/events/nighttounite/index.php).

## Starting A Neighborhood Watch Group

All it takes are a few motivated and concerned residents! Organize a start-up meeting with neighbors and the GVPD. At this meeting, we will discuss the purpose of the program, explain how to report suspicious behavior and criminal activity, assist in identifying issues for the neighborhood, and share resources that are available from the GVPD.

Once a Neighborhood Watch group is formed, we ask that

you have at least one meeting or social event each year to maintain contact, meet new neighbors, and address any issues facing your neighborhood. This event may be a Night to Unite party (first Tuesday of August), a spring social, a winter potluck, or a neighborhood clean-up.

We encourage Neighborhood Watch groups to meet more often if crime and livability issues arise. And don't forget to invite us! One of the best parts of our job is meeting with the public and spending time with our residents.

## Member Responsibilities

- Learn your neighbor's names, including all occupants of their residences. Be able to recognize them and their vehicles without hesitation.
- Keep an eye on your neighbor's homes and report any suspicious activities to the police immediately.
- Remember that it is your responsibility to report crime and to be a good witness. Never take the law into your own hands or risk injury to yourself or others by trying to stop a crime in progress.
- Get an accurate description of the suspect or a vehicle. By being a good witness and an active participant in Neighborhood Watch, you will truly make a difference in your community.

## Block Captain Responsibilities

We ask for one or two volunteers from each neighborhood to represent their group as the block captain(s). The block captain is the a spokesperson for your neighborhood and responsible for:

- keeping an up-to-date block map and/or a neighborhood roster (the GVPD can provide an electronic image of your neighborhood—just contact Community Outreach). The block map/roster can include neighbors' names (and children or other persons living in the household), phone numbers, emergency contact information, pets, vehicles, e-mails, whatever information you wish to share! Just remember to keep the list in a safe place!
- distributing meeting information (see below) and encouraging neighbors to attend. Block captains can also schedule individual neighborhood meetings with the GVPD if desired.
- welcoming new residents to your neighborhood and

serving as a resource

- organizing Night to Unite or your neighborhood's annual social gathering.
- attending the annual block captains' meetings (new in 2014)

## GVPD Responsibilities

The GVPD's role in Neighborhood Watch is to:

- assist in coordinating the development of the Neighborhood Watch group
- work as a team with the participants to inform them of criminal activity and trends through crime alerts and block captain notifications
- attend neighborhood meetings if requested by the block captain(s)
- assist neighbors in coordinating Night to Unite or other social gatherings

The GVPD does not "run" the Neighborhood Watch program; it helps promote the program to residents. Each neighborhood coordinates its own neighborhood crime prevention activities. We provide information, guidance, encouragement, and any other assistance necessary. Ultimately, the success of the program is dependent on neighborhood residents.

## Neighborhood Watch Meetings

The GVPD hosts two general meetings each year (spring and fall) for anyone to attend. Each meeting will cover recent crime trends. We will continue to offer Neighborhood Watch meetings for new groups and individual neighborhoods upon request.

*Historical note: For the first few decades of the City's Neighborhood Watch program, we were able to meet with each neighborhood group once a year. As the program grew and staff did not, the City was unable to keep up with the demand. We then began hosting "zone" meetings for all the Watch groups in each zone and continued to offer individual neighborhood meetings for anyone interested. Although it took some of the personal touch away from the program, it allowed the GVPD to honor its commitment to have an open line of communication with the community.*

# All About 911

Dial 911 anytime you need the assistance of the police/fire/paramedics, including:

- to report a crime (in progress or past action)
- for emergency medical assistance
- to report suspicious activity
- to report a motor vehicle crash
- to report an audible alarm
- to report a fire

When you call 911, your name and address appears on a computer screen as you speak to the dispatcher. If you call from a public building or pay phone, that location also appears. If you call from a cellular phone, the call is free and is answered by the closest agency to your location, which then transfers you to the appropriate public safety dispatch center.

All 911 calls are answered by trained emergency dispatchers. Let the dispatcher take control of the conversation, stay on the line, and briefly answer the dispatcher's questions. These questions are necessary to ensure that the appropriate public safety units arrive with the needed equipment.

Remember to speak slowly and clearly. Explain the problem to the dispatcher and give the address where the help is needed.

Do not hang up until the dispatcher tells you to, and follow

## Suspicious Activity

The GVPD cannot function effectively without the assistance of responsible citizens. We need your help in reporting suspicious activity. Some people fail to call because they are not aware of what is considered suspicious. Others notice suspicious activity and assume someone else will call.

We encourage everyone to call the police immediately if a situation or circumstance seems suspicious. DO NOT be concerned about bothering the police. DO NOT worry about being embarrassed if your suspicions prove unfounded. If you are in doubt, call.

the dispatcher's instructions.

## Not Just For Emergencies

The most obvious benefit to 911 is the timely response of emergency personnel, but it is also designed to make it easier for you to call the police or fire department in other situations where their response is needed but not necessarily for an emergency. The general rule in Golden Valley—any time you need a response from a police officer, firefighter, or EMS—call 911. It does not have to be an emergency. If the 911 dispatchers are busy and you do not have an emergency, they may ask you to hold for a few moments, but be assured that they will get to you as soon as possible and address your needs.

## I Just Have A General Question

If you have a general question, please contact the police department at [police@goldenvalleymn.gov](mailto:police@goldenvalleymn.gov) or 763-593-8079. If you have a question about why the police were in your neighborhood or want to invite an officer to your neighborhood gathering, please contact the Crime Prevention Unit at 763-593-8058 or [police@goldenvalleymn.gov](mailto:police@goldenvalleymn.gov).

As a member of Neighborhood Watch, you are the eyes and ears of the GVPD in your community or neighborhood. By making the effort to report criminal activity correctly, you are making your community or neighborhood a safer place.

The following is a short list of sample activities that should be reported to the police. This list is not intended to be complete. Use your own judgment when reporting. Always call 911 when:

- someone needs the police, fire, or medical assistance
- you hear alarms sounding or windows being broken
- an unknown person is walking around your neighbor's home
- you see someone with a weapon
- you see someone entering or leaving a business before

- or after hours
- you see occupied vehicles parked in an area for an extended period of time
- you see apparent business transactions being conducted from a vehicle
- someone is forcing entrance or entering an unoccupied house
- there is heavy traffic from a residence on a daily basis

While some, if not all, of the above situations could have innocent explanations, we would rather investigate a crime-prone situation than be called after it's too late.

## Reporting A Crime Or Suspicious Activity

- Remain calm and call the police by dialing 911.
- When you first dial 911, be prepared to give the operator your name, the address of occurrence, and your phone number should the line be disconnected. Remember that the dispatcher is using a computer, so even though they continue talking to you on the phone, help is being sent simultaneously.
- Describe what is happening or what you saw happen.

- Describe the suspect or suspects and any vehicles. Make sure to describe one thing at a time, simply and clearly. This will make your report much clearer to the dispatcher.
- Be patient. Help may be sent even before you answer all the questions from the dispatcher.
- Stay on the line until all the dispatcher's questions have been answered.
- If you know that a crime is occurring, or suspect that something suspicious or dangerous is going on, if potential trouble exists, or if someone has been hurt, call 911 immediately.
- What, when, where, and who are the most important items that you will need to relay to the dispatcher.
  - **What is happening?** Be as specific as possible. Try to answer the dispatcher's questions as best you can. If you don't know the answer, tell the dispatcher you just don't know.
  - **When did it happen?** Is the situation occurring now? Is something about to happen? How long ago did it occur?
  - **Where is it happening?** Give a specific address or directions.

### Suspect Description

Gender: Male Female Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Build: Small Average Large Heavy

Complexion: Light Medium Dark Ruddy Fair Wrinkled

Hair: Short Medium Long Bald Hair Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Facial Hair: Mustache/Beard/Goatee

Glasses: Yes No Sunglasses

Identifying Marks/Tattoos: \_\_\_\_\_

Clothing description: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Vehicle Description

Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle Style: \_\_\_\_\_

Make: \_\_\_\_\_

Model: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

License # (include state): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Direction of Travel: \_\_\_\_\_

How many suspect(s) in vehicle? \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying marks: \_\_\_\_\_

- **Who is involved?** Give directions of the victims and suspects as accurately as you can. Try to write down and remember as many details as you can. Remember to be patient with the dispatcher as best you can, even if you do not understand the relevance of the question at the time.

## Describing The Suspect/Vehicle

As a Neighborhood Watch member, it is imperative that you become a good witness. Being able to provide police with

an accurate description of a suspect is often times one of the most crucial things a witness can do. A good suspect description will be valuable information throughout any police investigation, from helping police capture the criminal initially to ultimately getting a conviction in court.

If you see or are confronted by a suspicious person, take note of everything you can—the suspect’s size, weight, build, dress, speech, any abnormalities, and the direction of travel. Use the guidelines below to record information from an incident.

# Crime Prevention

## Record your Valuables

A home inventory is an excellent way to expedite the insurance claims process after theft, damage, or loss. This record of your insurable assets will not only help you settle a covered loss or claim, but will also help verify tax-deductible property losses and determine the right amount of insurance coverage you need. It also helps the police identify your property if it is recovered. Here are a few steps to make creating a home inventory as easy as 1-2-3:

### 1. Choose A Method

While a home inventory can be as simple as a list or a visual record, an effective home inventory should include both for added security.

**Home Inventory List:** A comprehensive home inventory list catalogs your belongings and should include the item description (make, model, and serial number, if applicable), value, and purchase date. You can create your own list using a spreadsheet or fill out a home inventory checklist that’s ready to go. Your insurance company may have an inventory template available. There is also one in the Resources section of this handbook.

**Visual Record:** A visual record of your possessions shows proof of ownership. This can be accomplished with a video walk-through of your home or through a series of photographs.

### 2. Document Thoroughly

Your home inventory should support the claims process

for events ranging from the total loss of your home by fire to the theft of a few items. That’s why it’s important to thoroughly document your belongings to ensure proper coverage.

A good way to start is to move from room to room, listing items as you go. Don’t forget to include the items in your basement, attic, garage, and any detached structures, such as tool sheds. Also, pay special attention to your most valuable possessions, such as antiques, art, jewelry, collectibles, and electronic equipment. If you have any questions about which items are covered by your policy, contact your insurance agent.

Keeping proper documentation will also help to facilitate the claims process. This documentation, which can be scanned for digital storage, includes:

- receipts
- credit card statements
- other transaction documents
- appraisals (include the appraiser’s name and address)

Once you’ve created your home inventory, make sure to update it as you acquire or get rid of items over time.

### 3. Keep Your Home Inventory Safe

Don’t let your home inventory become part of a property loss. Whichever inventory method you choose, it’s important to keep a copy in a bank safe deposit box or other secure location away from your home.

## Things to Do RIGHT NOW

You've taken the first step by becoming a part of an organized Neighborhood Watch group. The success of your Neighborhood Watch group will depend on your involvement and continued support. Below is a list of things that you can do right now.

### Secure Your Home

Look around the outside of your home, paying close attention to windows and doors. Where would you break in if you were a criminal? Strengthen weak areas first. Make sure the locks on all the doors and windows work properly.

### Turn On Outside Lights From Dusk Until Dawn

Lighting is one of the most effective deterrents to crime. By using energy efficient bulbs you won't have a dramatic increase in your electric bill, but you will increase the security of your neighborhood. Criminals hate to be seen. See the Resources section at the back of this handbook for tip on lighting up your home.

### Remove Valuables From Your Car

It only takes a few seconds for a thief to steal from your car. But most thieves are opportunists. If there is nothing to steal, the bad guy moves on. This applies to when you park at work or a store or in your own driveway. Take anything of value with you or, at the very least, secure any valuables in the trunk.

### Secure Your Garage

Remember to close your garage door anytime when you are not in the immediate area. This means at night as well as when you are in the backyard.

### Make Sure Your House Numbers Are Visible

Police and emergency personnel will need to find your address quickly in the event of an emergency. Make house numbers visible on your home.

## Vacation Security

During vacations or other trips, follow these suggestions to help make your home appear occupied. This will hopefully discourage burglars and thieves. Some of these recommendations may require the help of a trusted neighbor, but alert neighbors are your best protection against crime.

Make sure you have adequate locks on all your doors and windows. Most burglaries occur because the opportunity existed. The more difficult you make it for someone to enter your home, the more likely they will move on to a less secure home.

Automatic timers can be used to turn lights on and off at staggered intervals. It is also a good idea to have a radio or television set turned on occasionally so noise is heard coming from the house. Don't let your travel plans be widely known, but do ask a trusted neighbor to:

- pick up your mail, newspapers and other deliveries.
- remove the snow from your driveway/sidewalk
- mow your lawn if you will be gone for a noticeable amount of time
- bring your trash can down on garbage day, and return it by the house when empty

Try to load your vehicle in an attached garage to avoid advertising to a passerby that you are leaving soon. Never pack your car the night before if it has to be left outside. It is not only a motivation for thieves, but also a sign that you are going away.

Contact the Police Department (763-593-8079 or [police@goldenvalleymn.gov](mailto:police@goldenvalleymn.gov)) a few days before leaving on vacation to inform them of emergency information and the name of a responsible key holder for your home. This does not guarantee that GVPD will be watching your house while you are away, but we will have means of contacting you should an emergency arise in your absence. Please have the following information ready when calling:

- name and address
- phone number
- departure and return date
- key holder information
- lights that will be left on
- alarm system information
- list of cars that will be parked in the driveway (include make, model, year, and plates)
- whether any people will be stopping by

### Request a Vacation Home Check Online!

[www.goldenvalleymn.gov/police/index.php](http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov/police/index.php)



# Common Questions/Concerns

## Alarm Systems

Golden Valley does not require residents or businesses to obtain a permit for their alarm systems; however, please be aware a false alarm response fee is imposed if more than three false alarms to the same address are received each year. Please see the City website or contact the GVPD for the current false alarm response fees.

## Animal Control

The City of Golden Valley does not require licenses for dogs or cats. Cat and dog owners are required to have their cat(s) vaccinated for rabies and to affix the rabies tag to the pet's collar. City Code prohibits Golden Valley residents from keeping more than three cats and three dogs.

## Pick Up After Your Pet

Owners shall not allow their pets (dogs or cats) to foul any lawn, garden, or other property and are required to carry supplies for excrement removal when walking their pets. Any mess made by a pet must be cleaned up (including in public parks).

## Pet Noise

Every dog barks and makes noise. However, no one likes a nuisance barker. The City has an ordinance that prohibits excessive barking, which is defined as "repeatedly occurring over at least a five-minute period of time, with less than 30 seconds between each animal noise."

## Leash Law

Whenever a dog is off its owner's property, it must be restrained by a leash no longer than six feet. Dogs restrained by voice commands as effectively as a leash are exempt from the leash rule except in public parks, where all dogs must be leashed at all times.

## Animal Bites

You are required to report any animal bite to the police department.

## Lost Pets

If you would like to list your pet as being lost, contact the Golden Valley Police Department at 763-593-8079 or [police@goldenvalleymn.gov](mailto:police@goldenvalleymn.gov). Found pets are kept at the

City's animal impound facility. If not claimed in seven days, they are transferred to the Golden Valley Humane Society.

## Parking

Unless posted otherwise, you may park on residential streets for up to 72 hours before you must move your vehicle.

During snow emergencies (when it snows more than 2 inches), you may not park on the street until it has been plowed curb-to-curb.

## Peddlers/Solicitors

Anyone wishing to do door-to-door sales or fundraising must obtain the Peddlers & Solicitors License from the City, carry the license with them, and show it on request. Residents are encouraged to ask solicitors to see the appropriate license. Please note that those organization that are just wishing to share information and are not selling a product/service or fundraising are not required to have a permit.

## Repeat Nuisance Calls For Service

Many nuisance calls we receive involve issues that can affect the quality of life in our neighborhoods and break down neighborhood camaraderie. To help diminish the number of nuisance calls to the GVPD, the Golden Valley City Council enacted the repeat nuisance call service fee ordinance. Its purpose is to protect public safety, health, and welfare and to prevent and abate repeat police service response for nuisance violations.

Nuisance violations are any activity, conduct, or condition occurring on private property that unreasonably annoys, injures, or endangers the safety, health, morals, or comfort of any member of the public. This may include but is not limited to loud parties or noise disturbances, barking dogs or dogs at large, disorderly conduct or public nuisance, prostitution, gambling, firearms or dangerous weapons, controlled substance and drug paraphernalia, curfew violations (allowed by the property owner or occupant), or junk vehicles (allowed by the property owner or occupant)

after the 14-day grace period has passed).

If the City has responded to three or more nuisance

violations of the same or similar nature within a 365-day period, it may impose a \$250 service fee on the owner or occupant of the property.

## Golden Valley Crime Prevention Fund

The Golden Valley Crime Prevention Fund is a vital component in successfully keeping crime low in our community. Run by volunteers, this private, nonprofit, community-based group raises funds to help support GVPD programs that educate citizens about their role in forging the safest community possible.

The Crime Prevention Fund is comprised of donations from city residents and businesses and is administered by a board of citizens who determine how to allocate the money to best encourage crime reduction in Golden Valley.

Contributions have supported **GVPD University, Citizen's Police Academy, Neighborhood Watch, Minnesota's Night To Unite, Public Safety Open House, community education, and safety and prevention programs in schools.** The Crime Prevention Fund also posts rewards for information leading to arrests.

To learn more about the Golden Valley Crime Prevention Fund, go to [www.goldenvalleymn.gov/police/fund/index.php](http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov/police/fund/index.php).

# Resources

## Terminology

When calling 911 it is important to be as clear and accurate as possible about what you are observing.

**Assault**—causing injury or attempting to cause injury to another person

**Burglary**—entry into a building (home, garage, business), without the consent of the owner, with the intent to commit a crime

**Vehicle Theft**—taking or attempting to take a motor vehicle without consent of the owner

**Theft**—the unlawful taking of property

**Robbery**—taking or attempting to take anything of value from a person by force or threat of force

**Vandalism/Damage to Property**—willful destruction of any public or private property without consent of the owner

## GVPD Contact Information

### GVPD

police@goldenvalleymn.gov  
763-593-8079

### Community Outreach

jpaul@goldenvalleymn.gov  
763-593-8058

### Investigation Lieutenant

jjohnson@goldenvalleymn.gov  
763-593-8070

### TTY

763-593-3968

## Online Resources

**National Citizen's Crime Prevention Campaign**  
[www.weprevent.org](http://www.weprevent.org)

**National Crime Prevention Council**  
[www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org)

**USA on Watch**  
[www.usaonwatch.org/](http://www.usaonwatch.org/)

**Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design**  
[www.cpted.net](http://www.cpted.net)

**FBI – Preventing Scams**  
[www.fbi.gov/scams-safety](http://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety)

**Identity Theft Prevention**  
[www.idtheftcenter.org/](http://www.idtheftcenter.org/)

**National White Collar Crime Center**  
[www.nw3c.org/](http://www.nw3c.org/)

**MN Attorney Generals office**  
[www.ag.state.mn.us/](http://www.ag.state.mn.us/)

## Home Security Checklist

### Do You Lock Up?

- Are your doors locked while you are in the house?
- Is your front door locked while you are in the backyard (and vice versa)?
- Do you lock your doors when you leave the house even for a few minutes?
- Do you pin your windows when you leave your house?
- Are your basement windows locked or permanently secured with screws or bars?
- Do you keep your garage doors closed and locked at all times?

### Does Your Home Look Occupied?

- When you are gone for the evening, do you leave an outdoor and indoor light on?
- Do you leave a radio, TV, etc., on while your home is not occupied at night or during the day?
- When you go on vacation do you:
  - Have a neighbor watch your house?
  - Move drapes, shades, and blinds?
  - Mow the lawn/shovel snow?
  - Collect mail, newspapers?
- Do you practice yard security?
- Do you keep valuables such as bicycles and lawn equipment locked up and out of sight?
- Do you lock up tools and ladders after you use them?
- Do you keep shrubbery and bushes well trimmed?
- If you have a fence, can your neighbors see through it or over it?
- If you have exterior lights, do they prevent shadows where burglars could hide at night?

### Do You Practice Overall Security?

- Is the emergency number 911 by the phone?
- Do you have a block map listing neighbors' names, phone numbers, and addresses by your phone? You can request a block map from the crime prevention analyst.
- Do you know how to report suspicious activity or crimes to the police? Do your children know how to report?
- Do you ask strangers at your door for proper identification before talking to them?
- Do you tell your children to tell strangers "Mommy (or Daddy)" is busy rather than "Mommy (or Daddy) is not home?"
- If someone came to the door needing help, would you make the phone call to the police (or other necessary calls) rather than letting the person come in?

For more information about home security, or to schedule a free home security assessment, contact the GVPD at 763-593-8079.





# Dusk To Dawn Light Up The Neighborhood

**Lighting is an effective crime deterrent and certainly provides better visibility for you and your neighbors.**

During your Night To Unite gathering, talk to your neighbors and encourage them to use their existing outdoor lighting (front doors, front porches, garages, etc) every night, dusk to dawn. When people use their own lights, it complements large-scale block and neighborhood projects to increase the number of streetlights.

**Remember: Lights, like locks, must be used to be effective crime prevention tools.**

## Cost-Effective Lighting Solutions

- ☆ Consider using compact fluorescents (CFL), light emitting diodes (LED), or other energy-efficient solutions.
- ☆ Install landscape lighting, such as solar lights.
- ☆ Light strings with non-blinking white lights are an inexpensive way of providing a great, non-intrusive glow at night. They can be strung in trees or wherever you feel is best for your home.

## Lighting Is A Bright Idea

☆ Lighting increases **pedestrian visibility**, makes people feel safer when out walking in their neighborhood, and deters crime—all for pennies a day! It also assists emergency vehicles in locating your home at night.

☆ Lighting a 100-watt bulb every night (average of 10 hours/night) costs about seven cents a night (**less than \$26 a year**).

☆ Remember that **multiple points of low-level light** are better than one very bright, large-scale light. The goal is ambient lighting that allows you to identify a person from 20 feet away. When we recommend adding lighting, we want to stress that you should not feel like you need to light up your yard in the middle of the night as if it were day time.



# Basic Lighting Recommendations

☆ Have a **dawn-to-dusk (photo-sensor) light** on all the main entrance points of your home. This is for your safety as well as to help light the streets and alleys. At night, a lit door is more welcoming than a dark hole. This is a safety concern for crime reasons (so someone cannot lurk there unseen or so neighbors can see if someone is trying to break in your door) as well as for more mundane reasons (for instance, in the middle of winter if there are ice slicks near your entrance, it is best if you know and can accommodate your stride).

☆ **Use covered lights.** Bare light bulbs cause glare. It takes 20 minutes for the human eye to adjust between light and dark. Glare or going from dark to bright spots can make it harder to see. In addition, uncovered lights are easy to compromise by unscrewing the bulb, rendering the light an ineffective crime prevention tool.

☆ Consider **motion detectors** for areas of your yard that do not need to be lit all night. They can deter criminal behavior and, depending on your use, can also alert you or neighbors to activity in an area that shouldn't be in use at that time of night.

☆ Look at your home at night to **eliminate dark spots.** The best way to get an idea of where there may be dark spots in your landscaping and what level of surrounding light is available via streetlights, etc, is to go outside at night and look at your home. Identify areas that may be hidden or dark and consider what solutions you feel work for you.

☆ **Equalize lighting inside and out.** The “fishbowl effect” is common in residential neighborhoods. Often at night it's light inside the home and dark outside. This makes it very easy for anyone outside to look in your home and see exactly where your valuables are or what you are doing. At the same time, the reflective quality of glass makes it difficult for you to see outside. From the inside on a dark night, windows can be like mirrors. To remedy that, use low-level lighting outside to equalize the lighting inside. Think of commercial areas at night. Pedestrians on the sidewalks can see inside and patrons in restaurants, for example, can easily look out. This is due to ambient lighting inside and out.



**For more information about energy efficient lighting solutions and improving your safety and security through lighting, contact the Crime Prevention Unit at 763-593-8058 or [police@goldenvalleymn.gov](mailto:police@goldenvalleymn.gov).**



# Golden Valley Police Department

7800 Golden Valley Rd, Golden Valley, MN 55427  
763-593-8079