

USAonwatch

Planning and Conducting Effective Meetings

Community Training Instructor's Book



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Course Overview: Planning and Conducting Effective Meetings

Summary: Over the past thirty years, Neighborhood Watch has enhanced public safety by creating community-based partnerships to fight crime and improve the quality of neighborhood life. In a continuing effort to promote professionalism in law enforcement and to build positive policy/community relations, the National Sheriffs' Association, in cooperation with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, is producing and distributing Neighborhood Watch Toolkits to law enforcement agencies across the nation.

This training is designed to build the capacity of law enforcement officers assigned to work with Neighborhood Watch groups by providing specific instruction on each of the sixteen courses presented in the Neighborhood Watch Toolkit.

This course will increase participants' skill levels by teaching them the proper utilization of the tools and the most effective methods of maximizing the course's value for themselves and their communities.

Time Allocated: 1 hour

Method of Instruction: This presentation will utilize adult learning methodologies including standard lecture, facilitated discussion and participant-based activities. Interactive discussion is encouraged, and activities are an integral component of this course. The training is displayed by PowerPoint presentation found on the Neighborhood Watch Toolkit Community CD. Tools and handouts can be found on the CD or in the appendix of this Handbook.

Instructional Resources Required:

- Facility: sufficient seating and tables for all participants
- Equipment: Presentation, Computer, LCD Projector, Screen
- Materials: Guide and Participant Book; Flip Chart for instructor and for each table or small group; blank paper and writing utensils for each participant

Terminal Learning Objectives: Participants will learn how to plan an effective meeting, and how to conduct an efficient and successful meeting.

PARTNERS

This training is brought to you by the National Sheriffs' Association in cooperation with a grant provided by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U. S. Department of Justice.

The NW Toolkit was designed and produced by the Community Safety Institute.

Before we begin the course, let's take a few moments to introduce ourselves to one another. My name is _____.

Instructor's Note:

All participants should introduce themselves by providing their name, agency and level of expertise with Neighborhood Watch. Please limit each introduction to no more than two minutes. Throughout the course during interactive discussions and activities, we will learn more about the participants and their work with Neighborhood Watch groups and volunteers within their communities.

PLANNING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Thank you for attending this Neighborhood Watch meeting. The topic for today is "Planning and Conducting Effective Meetings."

COURSE OBJECTIVES

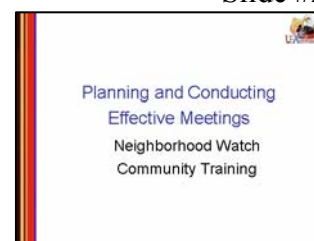
In this course, participants will learn:

- how to plan an effective meeting
- how to conduct a successful meeting

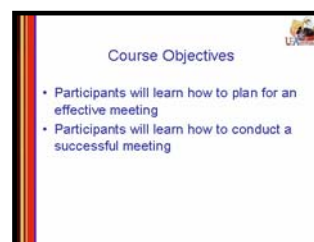
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WHY ARE WE MEETING?

Important meetings have a purpose that can only be achieved when people gather in person. By seeing people in person you are able to establish, build and maintain personal relationships with those with whom you are working.

By holding a meeting you are able to educate and share information with attendees that they will value. You will be able to “read” your audience in order to focus on things that are important to the group as a whole.

Meetings allow those in attendance to discuss ideas and make group discussions. By meeting in person and discussing together, new ideas can be generated and the group will focus on issues and information important to the group as a whole.

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ALTERNATIVES

If you can accomplish the same purpose without meeting in person, consider more time-efficient alternatives such as email, phone, or online chat. If you are simply relaying information to others and feel that the information is not important enough to call a meeting, a flyer or some other sort of publication can be mailed or distributed to group members.

Respect each group member's time. If you have a group of 10 people who each earns an average of \$10 per hour, you could consider the meeting to cost \$100 per hour. Is your meeting worth that?

If the information provided in person at the meeting is important and valued, then meet.

If the camaraderie, contacts, and relationships are important to establish in person, then meet.

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STAGES OF A MEETING

In order to accurately prepare for a meeting, we will discuss the three stages of the meeting: **before**, **during**, and **after** the meeting.

BEFORE THE MEETING: LOGISTICS

In preparing for a successful meeting, it's important to consider logistics. Therefore let's talk first about scheduling the meeting. It is important to select a date and a time that is convenient for most people invited to attend the meeting. It will not be possible to accommodate every person...but try to appeal to the majority.

For example: If your meeting consists of mostly businessmen and women, then you will not want to interfere with their business day. You should schedule the meeting in the evening just after work before they get home. If they make it all the way home, the chances of your getting them to leave again are lessened. However, you can probably get most people there by holding a short meeting that they can attend on their way home. Now if you are planning a meeting for a group that consists primarily of stay-at-home mothers, another time would probably be better...perhaps a time when their children are still in school.

Next, you should select a location that is convenient for the majority of the group. Neighborhood schools and churches often provide meeting space for groups such as Neighborhood Watch.

You should ensure that the location has the required and desired facilities – space, seating, public access, restrooms, climate control, meeting and technical equipment such as microphones and audio-visual support (if needed), perhaps even kitchen facilities. This of course all depends on the size of your group.

Finally, you should consider having the group determine a regularly-scheduled time and day to meet. You could meet once a week or once a month, or at an interval that best fits the needs and availability of the group.

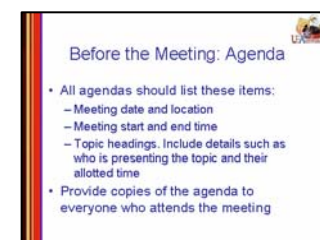
BEFORE THE MEETING: AGENDA

In order to conduct an efficient meeting, it is important to create an agenda and adhere to it. You can create an agenda using several computer programs that offer templates. Online resources are also available.

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All agendas should list the following:

- Meeting date and location
- Meeting start and end time
- Topics and presenters

Contact individuals who are expected to give a presentation, speech or report, and give them an estimate of their time allotted. If they have any special needs such as a microphone or projector, ensure that those needs will be met.

You should also provide a copy of the Agenda to meeting attendees either before the meeting or at the start of the meeting, depending on which is most appropriate.

BEFORE THE MEETING: INVITATIONS

The next step is to notify or invite persons to attend the meeting. Be careful not to accidentally omit someone. Their feelings may be hurt and that could impact communications and decision-making.

You should create a list of group members and guests. Keep this list updated constantly. The list should include: Correct spelling of their name, complete address, phone number, and Email address if available. A good way to obtain and maintain this list would be a sign-in sheet for each meeting.

You should select the most appropriate way to invite your group members or potential group members based on the effectiveness of the method and the resources available to you.

Consider mail, email, or telephone. You could post flyers around the neighborhood or use online invitations such as Evite.com.

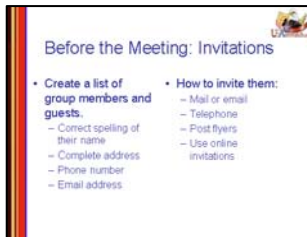
When creating your invitation, you should include:

The meeting date, time, and location. Be sure to ensure all information and paperwork about the meeting has the same information.

Include an agenda or the main subject, whichever is most appropriate. Give people a reason to attend.

You may want an RSVP from each person you invite. Asking them to contact you if they plan to attend or not will help you

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set up the location site with enough chairs, handouts, refreshments, etc.

THE MEETING

At the meeting, welcome people. Be warm and friendly, making a point to say hello to everyone.

Consider an informal social time before or after the meeting for those who want to visit outside of the more formal part of the meeting. This is a good time for you to introduce new people to others.

Consider name badges. Name badges will help with introductions as well as help the instructor to encourage participation by calling out names. If many people attend who do not know each other, consider an icebreaker exercise.

Begin and end on time. People expect it and it shows respect for their time. In addition, your credibility in controlling the meeting requires you to adhere to your time table. Attendance may taper off if meetings drag on long past the ending time.

Set ground rules. For example:

- Do not talk while others are speaking
- Personal attacks are not allowed
- Respect each other and their opinions
- Disagreement is expected, but decisions are made by majority vote

You may need to take Minutes if appropriate. The person taking Minutes should have a copy of the agenda with large blocks of white space available for notes. Be concise in the summary. Double check spelling and details.

THE FACILITATOR

The job of meeting facilitator is an important one. The facilitator is responsible for making the meeting productive and efficient, and must make sure that the meeting fulfills its purpose by staying focused on the task at hand.

Encouraging polite discussion allows everyone an opportunity to participate. This requires directing and redirecting individuals to stay focused, take turns, remain polite, and allow others to speak. Balance this with the need to stay on schedule,

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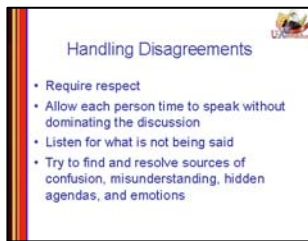


knowing when to begin and end discussions.

The Facilitator should clearly summarize decisions made and issues requiring voting.

As the meeting comes to a close, set the date, time and place of the next meeting. If the group meets on a regular basis, use this time to remind the group of the next meeting. If the topic and purpose of the next meeting are already known, this would be a good time to generate some excitement for that meeting.

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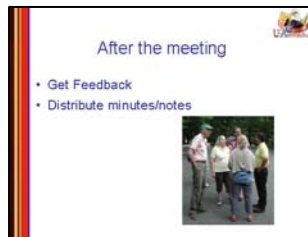
HANDLING DISAGREEMENTS

Meetings are for sharing ideas and making decisions. It is not uncommon for disagreements to occur. The Facilitator should control the discussion so that it does not spiral out of control.

Everyone attending should respect each other's time and opinions. Each person should be allowed time to speak without dominating the discussion. Remember to listen for what is not being said. Many times the quiet members of the group will go unheard even if they have a great idea.

Try to find and resolve sources of confusion, hidden agendas, and emotions.

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AFTER THE MEETING

After the meeting, review how the meeting went and how it could be improved. Meeting that are effective do not disappoint the attendees. Meetings that are efficient value the attendees' time.

As soon as possible after the meeting, distribute Minutes (or make them available) including details about action items and assignments, persons responsible, and timelines.

CONCLUSION

This is the conclusion of this course. We have covered the steps you must take in order to prepare for a meeting.

You have also been given tips on how to conduct an efficient meeting that will avoid conflict and will encourage participation and creativity.

REGISTER TODAY!

To take advantage of Neighborhood Watch on-line services such as Neighborhood Watch manuals, articles on current events and other Neighborhood Watch resources, register your Neighborhood Watch group at www.usaonwatch.org.

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