

CIVILIAN OBSERVATION PATROLS

A proactive way to attack the crime problem in your garden and neighborhood is by forming citizen observation patrols. People who walk problem areas regularly are more apt to notice patterns in and details of illegal activity which they can report to the police. **Remember, these patrols are for observation only—DO NOT attempt to interrupt crimes in progress.**

DO NOT PUT YOURSELF IN DANGER

- ✓ Always let the police know when you go on patrol.
- ✓ Some groups have used these patrols to send a message. Putting on uniforms, they have marched around the neighborhood letting the drug dealers and other criminals know that they weren't going to take any more. While it can be effective, this kind of confrontational activity is dangerous and is not necessary for a civilian patrol to be a success.
- ✓ A low-key patrol that simply collects information and passes it on to the police and other authorities can also be effective, with much less risk.
- ✓ You may want to present a united front by wearing matching t-shirts or hats, though you should first assess your situation and decide whether this may put you at risk by making you a target.
- ✓ For safety's sake, you may want to communicate by radio.

START SMALL

- ✓ For a covert observation patrol, a huge group isn't necessary to make an impact. Start with a small group of committed individuals.
- ✓ You don't want to let the dealers know that you are reporting to the police on their activities. Small groups are important for confidentiality.

COMMUNICATE WITH THE POLICE

- ✓ Let your local precinct know that you want to start a citizen's patrol. Go to the precinct's Police Community Council and announce your intentions.
- ✓ Discuss with them the times and routes you will be walking. Coordinate your patrols with the regular police patrols. They may let you use their precinct house as your base station.
- ✓ The Community Affairs Division of the citywide Police Department will also run training programs for civilian patrols. Call **311** for more information.