



DORINGKLOOF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

INTRODUCTION

The Doringkloof Neighbourhood Watch (DNW) effectively started in 2006 when some of the residents who were tired of the high levels of crime, decided to band together and form a neighbourhood watch. They started by using simple walkie-talkie radios to alert each other to any actual or suspected crime occurring in their immediate vicinity. Today the DNW uses licensed radios, together with a repeater station that provides a good signal throughout the suburb.

From an initial group of three members, the DNW has grown rapidly to the extent that more than 400 radios are in circulation.

We regard DNW members as residents who a) have radios and b) actively participate in crime prevention activities.

AIM / OBJECTIVES

The aim of the DNW is to reduce crime within Doringkloof to below one serious crime incident per week.

Serious crime incidents have averaged about 2 per week. All crimes are regarded as serious and will therefore be any criminal act that takes place.

OPTIONS IN FIGHTING CRIME

The DNW considered three options in fighting crime:

Passive Defence, meaning the fencing of the suburb and erecting entrance controls. However, fencing the whole of Doringkloof would be beyond the financial means of the DNW even if approval was received from the local municipality.

Active Defence, meaning that the residents organise themselves to prevent crime.

Outsourcing, meaning the contracting out of the crime prevention operation to a security company. However, the success rate of a neighbourhood watch looking after their own security is often better than that maintained by a security company.

We selected Active Defence (with elements of the other two options included) because of the low start-up costs and the greater motivation by the residents to prevent crime. The preferred option is also more aligned with community policing, i.e. where the community acts with the police in combating crime.

BASIC STEPS TO CRIME PREVENTION

Step 1 involves residents taking responsibility for their own security. This can include fencing the property, installing outside lights, installing proper locks, installing an alarm system and/or detection beams and having suitable dogs.

Step 2 is where immediate neighbours support each other. Here neighbours initially contact each other, exchange contact details, etc. Thereafter, if a crime is suspected, neighbours are expected to come to the immediate support of each other. This level will often involve checking each other's properties, or helping to search the road outside for potential criminals/suspicious persons or vehicles.

Step 3 is where members of the DNW come to the aid of any resident who reports an actual crime-in-progress. At this point, the coordinator (see below) will get actively involved, calling on other residents to assist, and/or phoning the SAPS.

In support of this approach, the following pro-active actions are taken:

Monitoring and recording the movement of suspicious characters and vehicles. This allows residents to be made aware of any potential crime that may affect them and it sends out a message to possible criminals that the residents are aware of them. A suspicious vehicle list that is regularly distributed to coordinators, categorizes suspect vehicles as friendly, suspicious, highly



Doringkloof Inwonersvereniging (DIV)
(waarby die DBW ingelyf is)
Doringkloof Residents Association (DRA)
(Incorporating the DNW)



suspicious or involved in crime. This list allows the coordinator to determine our next step, i.e. whether to let it pass or to have it checked out by the SAPS.

Patrolling. One of the most effective means of preventing crime is to create a visible presence on the ground. The criminals must know that they may be observed and if caught in the act, they will be arrested by a resident (itō Criminal Procedures Act, Act 55 of 1977). The DNW conducts three types of patrols.

Mass Visible Patrols. Residents are advised in advance, as to when and where these patrols will take place. The idea is to have many residents out on patrol to create mass visibility. Patrollers are required (by law) to wear the official DNW reflective vest and place the DNW signage on their vehicle (if driving around). All suspicious activities are reported to the coordinator, who logs all reports for later analysis. SAPS personnel occasionally participate and a de-briefing is conducted.

Individual Patrols. These patrols are conducted on a more individual or small group basis. DNW members do so of their own accord and may patrol at any time, for example, when returning home from work or going for a walk. Patrollers must 'report in' to the duty coordinator when commencing on patrol and when standing down. (Note: It is advisable that such patrols are conducted by more than one person at any one time.)

Garden Patrols. Garden patrols refer to DNW members who observe and report from their garden gates whenever an organised patrol takes place or when they hear reports of suspicious persons or vehicles in their area.

Observing and Reporting

The primary activity of all DNW members is to alert other residents to the presence of suspicious characters wandering the streets and or suspicious vehicles driving through the suburb. When a suspicious person or vehicle is spotted, the details are 'called' on the radio to warn and alert everyone else. Once the alert has been transmitted, other residents are expected to observe and report further movement.

At times it may be necessary to ask suspicious persons if they are 'lost', or if they need help to locate the address they are looking for. If an unsatisfactory answer is provided, the DNW member will request that the persons leave the area. A person could be identified as suspicious if he or she is walking around staring into properties, is not really dressed as a labourer, has smart shoes out of keeping with the rest of his dress, seems to change an article of clothing every time he is spotted.

Coordination of Effort

The DNW operates for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with a duty 'coordinator' to ensure maximum effectiveness of effort. The coordinator monitors the radio channel at all times and is normally the first person to respond to any call made over the radio network.

Coordinators are residents who volunteer to do duty from their homes and are a virtual 'operations room'. A DNW committee member usually publishes a monthly roster indicating who is on duty. All these volunteers will have received basic training. After the training session, they are issued with a folder containing all the important data necessary to successfully execute their function. The DNW has about 30 coordinators who do about five duties a month. More coordinators are always needed!

Our experience is that there is a greater chance of preventing crime or minimizing its' effect if one person controls or coordinates the initial report of potential or actual crime taking place. Good coordination also increases the possibility of apprehending criminals.

The coordinators are not "problem solvers" but rather the facilitators who coordinate actions to prevent crime.

Action against Suspected Criminals

The DNW has a specific standard operating procedure (SOP) to deal with each case where an actual 'crime-in-progress' is reported.

If, for example, an intruder is seen on a private property or someone is observed actually attempting to break into a home, many DNW members will go out to support efforts to stop the criminal(s). The first reservist/volunteer on the scene then takes charge (he becomes the on-site coordinator) and



Doringkloof Inwonersvereniging (DIV)
(waarby die DBW ingelyf is)
Doringkloof Residents Association (DRA)
(Incorporating the DNW)



places a cordon around the block. Once this is in place, the on-site coordinator then initiates a systematic property search until the suspects are caught. The SAPS would also be summoned to arrest the suspects and open a docket. The resident on whose property the suspects were found is expected to lay an appropriated charge at SAPS.

DNW members, who have not undergone the prescribed training, are requested to position themselves at the nearest street intersection, thus forming a perimeter guard around the scene of the reported crime. Their primary tasks are to keep a constant look out and to observe whether there is any surreptitious movement along the street, especially up against the side of the properties. The objective is to prevent the suspects from escaping by jumping over walls into adjoining properties and then over a street into another property. DNW members must adhere to this procedure as all such operations are carried out strictly according to the SOP.

Similarly, if a hijacking is reported, the responding DNW members are requested to go to the entrances/exits of Doringkloof to observe whether the hijacker and/or stolen vehicle is moving out along that route. DNW members are advised not to attempt to interfere with hijackers but to report any movement via the radio network.

If a resident reports a stolen vehicle, DNW members may fan out to search for the vehicle (in likely cooling off spots), etc. Residents who have not received the appropriate training may participate but are not permitted to approach any suspect or vehicle (due to legal constraints).

SUCCESS FACTORS

Participation.

Any neighbourhood watch is a volunteer organisation and it depends on membership and participation for success. We request each and every resident to play their part, whether it is just observing and reporting suspicious movement in the street or participating in an organised patrol.

Unfortunately, experience has shown that a serious crime incident is the best motivation. Conversely, the biggest “switch-off” is the lack of crime. Whenever the crime rate dips, people stop reacting to calls for support and crime rises again. DNW members are therefore requested not to withdraw from active participation.

Over the years, many DNW members have shown a willingness to react to calls for support. While their willingness is appreciated, Doringkloof residents are to take note that the DNW is not a “private police force” that goes out to check on potential crime whenever a resident feels insecure.

Residents are not expected to ask others to come to their location to check out a suspicious person or vehicle when they are perfectly able to do so themselves. If such a resident, when going out to check on a potential crime, feels insecure, it is acceptable to call for support before confronting the situation.

Radios, Licences and Training

Over time, the radio network has proven itself and has, in fact, become a community radio network, with non-crime related issues, such as water and electricity problems, being announced. However, such calls must be kept to a minimum and from 20h00 until 06h00 only crime-related transmissions are permitted.

The radios keep all of us as Doringkloof residents “on-line” with what is going on, all in actual time. It is thus vital that we keep our radios switched on at all times, within audible range and with the batteries charged.

In order not to frustrate other residents with idle chatter over the radio (leading to people switching their radios off), residents are requested to keep all transmissions to vital information only and to refrain from passing opinions on what is being transmitted. DNW members are requested not use the radio for private conversations, especially where a telephone call could be used.

Because our radios are licensed radios linked to a repeater, the DNW must comply with the ICASA regulations which require that all members must register their radios with the DNW, obtain a radio call sign and pay an annual licence fee. (Currently R50 per annum). Residents who contribute R50 or more per month to the DRA have their licences paid by the DRA.

A training course consisting of three phases, namely radio voice procedure, operating the radio and crime awareness, is presented whenever there is a need.



Doringkloof Inwonersvereniging (DIV)
(waarby die DBW ingelyf is)
Doringkloof Residents Association (DRA)
(Incorporating the DNW)



Communication.

The heart of the DNW is effective communication. In order to enhance effective communication, the following forms of communication are also used.

Email. The DNW makes use of the following email addresses:

Crime email address – (crime@doringkloof.net) to which anyone can send an email to report on a crime that took place – the email goes to all coordinators and volunteers. One person then collates this information to build up an intelligence profile. It is vitally important that all crimes are reported.

Data email address – (data@doringkloof.net) is where residents who want to be included in the DNW can send their details. The recipient then puts the details on the DNW's data list.

Suggestions may be forwarded to div@doringkloof.net.

The DNW also periodically sends out a **News Bulletin** via email providing the latest crime incidents as well as any relevant news and advice that residents should note.

Website. The website www.doringkloof.net provides relevant information and it includes the abovementioned News Bulletin.

Post Office Box. Our postal address is P.O. Box 15206, Lyttelton, 0140. Note that the post box is not cleared every day.

Management. The DNW has a few committees that meet regularly (and not so regularly):

Doringkloof Residents Association (DRA) which acts as the umbrella organisation, with the DNW as an important and integral part. The DRA holds an annual general meeting (AGM) every year during April where residents get feedback, can make recommendations, ask questions and vote in a committee. This committee sees to the strategic direction of the DNW, finances, purchase of items necessary for the DNW, liaison with the SAPS and the local municipality. The DRA committee meets every three months as the "DRA Board".

DNW (Crime Prevention Committee) which meets monthly to consider tactics necessary to prevent crime.

Coordinator's Workshops which are where mutual problems are solved and some SOPs are established.

Finance Funds are provided via voluntary contributions, either once off or monthly, either by stop order or debit order. There is no minimum (or maximum!) amount. The funds are used to purchase physical items such as medical kits, bulletproof vests and torches, as well as for other costs such as printing, training and banking charges.

The DRA's banking details are:

Bank/Branch: ABSA, Centurion. Branch Code: 630445. Account Number: 4069026417

Co-operation with SAPS. The DNW accepts that fighting crime can only be done with and/or on behalf of the SAPS. Cordial relations with the local SAPS station are therefore necessary. It must also be kept in mind that it is the SAPS' responsibility (and not the DKW) to arrest criminals. For this reason, all anti-crime operations where an arrest is possible will be with the involvement of the SAPS.

CONCLUSION

Welcome to one of the most effective neighbourhood watches in our area. The above information has been compiled to give you a brief overview as to how the DNW operates.

If we are to remain the most effective neighbourhood watch in our area, we need your active support. We thank you in advance for this support.

DNW Team