

South Pasadena Police Department

Neighborhood Watch

Handbook



Brian Solinsky
Chief of Police

“Help Take a Bite Out of Crime!”

What is Neighborhood Watch



Neighborhood Watch is a proactive crime prevention program that works in conjunction with the South Pasadena Police Department, where neighbors “look out for each other” and report suspicious activity to the police department.

Neighborhood Watch is one of the most effective ways to help reduce crime in the community. Neighborhood Watch relies on the most effective tool in fighting crime, a good neighbor reporting suspicious activity. Professional burglars can get around alarm systems, dogs and locked doors and windows. However, they cannot get around a neighbor watching them.

Participants are encouraged to get to know each other so they may be better at reporting unusual activity. Participants also learn how to keep their homes secure and properly identify their property.

By taking an active approach in neighborhood watch, you can help make a difference in lowering crime in your community.

By working with the police department, you help make a difference in your community.

Ultimately, the key to success in the neighborhood watch program are the participants. Without a neighbor willing to report suspicious activity, crime will occur undetected.

Neighborhood Watch is often called the “eyes and ears” of the police department. A Neighborhood Watch group can consist of more than 20 neighbors; this is 20 extra pair of eyes to report suspicious activity.

Neighborhood Watch groups are **NOT** vigilantes and do **NOT** assume the role of the police. We only ask you to be alert and observant, and report suspicious activity.

The goals of the Neighborhood Watch program are to:

- Develop strong neighbor relations so each neighbor can look out for each other.
- Educate neighbors in recognizing suspicious activity and encourage to reporting of it.
- Educate neighbors in securing their home and vehicles.
- Become aware of what crimes are occurring in your neighborhood through the police department’s Weekly Crime Summary.



How to Start a Neighborhood Watch Group

Do not wait for a crime to occur in your neighborhood before starting a neighborhood watch group. Neighborhood Watch is a proactive way in preventing crimes.

Neighborhood Watch groups do not have geographic boundaries. It can be one short block, a condominium association, or an apartment complex.

One of the major steps in having an effective neighborhood watch group is getting to know your neighbors.

Starting a neighborhood watch group is as easy as following these few simple steps:

Step One – Talk to Your Neighbors about Crime and How You Can Help

- Obtain crime information in your neighborhood. This can be easily obtained through the police department website (www.southpasadenaca.gov).
- Ask your neighbors if they are as concerned about crime as you are.
- Arrange a date and time with your neighbors when you can all meet with the Crime Prevention Officer. Try to schedule a date far in advance so your neighbors have sufficient notice.
- Select a location for the meeting. Meetings are best held in your neighborhood in a private residence, school or other community facility.

Step Two – Contact the Crime Prevention Unit

- Contact the Crime Prevention Unit at 626-403-7285, or rllee@southpasadenaca.gov to see if there is an existing neighborhood watch group in your area, or to schedule a neighborhood watch meeting.

Step Three – Hosting the First Meeting

- The Crime Prevention Officer will come to your neighborhood and explain how neighborhood watch is an effective tool in reporting crime. The Crime Prevention Officer will also hear about your neighborhood concerns so we can help remedy them.
- Have a sign-in sheet with names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses available. Nametags would also be a great idea for neighbors to know each other's names.
- Most meetings last one hour to one and half-hours, depending on questions and answers.
- A Block Captain is selected from your neighborhood to act as a liaison between your neighborhood and the police department.



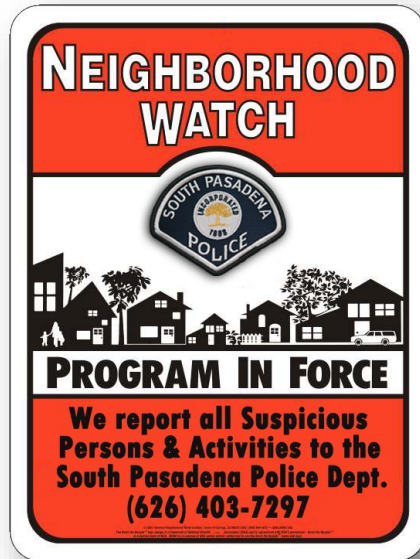
Block Captain's Responsibility

- Maintains a list of members within the neighborhood watch group and shares the list with the group.
- Forwards crime bulletins, monthly newsletters, weekly crime summaries and other crime information from the police department to the neighborhood watch group. With email addresses, this is simply a click of a button.
- Plans at least one neighborhood watch meeting each year. This is a great way for neighbors to meet and speak of any new concerns. This is also a great time to welcome new families into the neighborhood.
- Contacts the Crime Prevention Officer with any concerns the group may have.
- The Block Captain is a volunteer position and can change from person-to-person. There is no term limit; Block Captains can serve as long or short as they would like. Also, two people can act as Block Captains for a neighborhood watch group, called "Co-Block Captains"

Step Four - Maintaining the Neighborhood Watch Group

- Keep the neighborhood watch group active. Just because crime may stop in the neighborhood does not mean your group has to stop. Continue to have neighborhood watch meetings to keep in touch with other, and new, neighbors. The Crime Prevention Unit can suggest other important crime prevention topics: Auto Theft, Identity Theft, Fraud, Emergency Preparedness and many others.
- A Block Party is a great way to strengthen neighbors together. Closing your street and having all the neighbors together for a "pot-luck" meal is always, a fun way to keep the neighbors motivated.

Neighborhood Watch Signs



Neighborhood Watch signs tell criminals that you have banded together with your neighbors and have taken a stance against crime. It means that you have taken precautions to keep your home secure by locking doors and windows and that neighbors are keeping a watchful eye out, reporting suspicious activity.

Neighborhood Watch signs can be installed on any existing city-owned pole. However, if a new pole must be installed on private property, a written release will be required for the city to install the sign pole.

Your Block Captain and the Crime Prevention Officer will decide the best locations for the Neighborhood Watch signs on your block.

How Are Neighborhood Watch Signs Obtained?

Contact the Crime Prevention Unit at 626-403-7285 to find out how to obtain Neighborhood Watch signs.

Block Party Street Closures



Block parties are a great way to meet the neighbors and to have an enjoyable time with everyone on your block. Adults and children will get a chance to relax, talk about local issues, have a barbecue/potluck and play games.

Being able to close the street will make a Block Party more enjoyable as the street can be utilized as the location. Traffic will detour around your street and children can safely play together. Some

restrictions apply and not all streets are eligible to be closed, i.e., Fair Oaks, Fremont, Huntington Drive, etc.

To help encourage Neighborhood Watch Block Parties, street closure fees are waived.

To request a street closure a letter must be written to the *Public Works Department, 1414 Mission Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030*. Your letter should include the following information:

- What street needs to be closed, typically streets cannot be blocked off at the middle of the block.
- Date and time of closure. Streets cannot be closed during nighttime hours.
- A petition of acceptance (signature) from all residents of the closed street.
- Your request should be mailed at least 30 days in advance.
- Reason for closure, please state "Neighborhood Watch Block Party" to have permit fees waived.
- As of 2022, the city now requires Special Event Insurance of \$125.00.
- Barricades are no longer supplied by the city but can be rented through private businesses.

Remember, even with a street closure, there must be sufficient room for emergency vehicles to get through.



Neighborhood Watch Participant's Duties


As a member of a Neighborhood Watch Group you now have the responsibility to do the following:

- Know your neighbors. This includes all members living in the home and what vehicles they have. This makes it easy to know suspicious persons or vehicles.
- Attend future Neighborhood Watch Meetings.
- List all-important items you have and include photos and replacement costs.
- Lock all doors and windows when you are away, including detached garages.
- Keep an eye out for suspicious activity and report it to the police department.
- If you see graffiti around the neighborhood, report to the city's Graffiti Hotline (626-403-7249). The city will remove graffiti from public and private property (although a release must be signed before removal from private property).
- If you plan to leave for a vacation, or extended amount of time, stop your mail and newspaper and let your neighbors know you will be away to help keep an eye on your house. Be a good neighbor and help pick-up flyers left on your neighbor's front porches while they are away. Place lights and radios on timers to make your home appear occupied and fill out a Vacation Check Request form at the police department. This alerts officers to give extra patrol around your residence while you are away. The form is available at the police department or submitted online from the police website (<https://www.southpasadenaca.gov/Your-Government/Department-Service-Areas/Police/Resources-Forms>).
- Get involved in your neighborhood by looking out for each other. Remember that Neighborhood Watch is a partnership and will only be as good as you and your neighbors help make it. By being a good neighbor and an active participant in Neighborhood Watch you can make a difference in your community.

Know Your Neighbors

Write you immediate neighbor's contact information on this sheet and keep it in a safe place.

Neighbor Behind You	Neighbor Behind You	Neighbor Behind You
Name:	Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:	Address:
(H) Phone:	(H) Phone:	(H) Phone:
(C) Phone:	(C) Phone:	(C) Phone:
Email:	Email:	Email:
Pets:	Pets:	Pets:
Notes:	Notes:	Notes:

Next Door Neighbor	<p>You Are Here</p> 	Next Door Neighbor
Name:		Name:
Address:		Address:
(H) Phone:		(H) Phone:
(C) Phone:		(C) Phone:
Email:		Email:
Pets:		Pets:
Notes:		Notes:

Neighbor Across the Street	Neighbor Across the Street	Neighbor Across the Street
Name:	Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:	Address:
(H) Phone:	(H) Phone:	(H) Phone:
(C) Phone:	(C) Phone:	(C) Phone:
Email:	Email:	Email:
Pets:	Pets:	Pets:
Notes:	Notes:	Notes:

Calling the Police



When should you call the police and what number should you call? First, determine if the problem is an emergency that requires immediate medical or police assistance. If it does, then immediately call 9-1-1.

If the problem does not require an immediate police or medical response, then call the non-emergency line at 626-403-7297. This will also connect you with the police dispatcher.

The 9-1-1 line is linked to your home telephone number so that the dispatcher immediately knows your address, phone number and subscriber name. So, in an emergency if you cannot speak, we will still know where to send emergency personnel.

Dialing 9-1-1 from your cell phone may connect you to the California Highway Patrol, or bordering agency depending on cell tower location. It is best to store the non-emergency line (626-403-7297) into your cell phone.

When calling the police it is important to give the dispatcher the following information quickly:

- **Your name and number.** In case the phone gets disconnected, we can call you back.
- **What happened?** A burglar breaking into your home? A house fire?
- **When did it occur?** Is the problem in progress, or did it occur overnight?
- **Where?** Where is this occurring at, your home? Neighbors home? Street?
- **Is anyone injured?** This allows the dispatcher to notify the fire dept.
- **How many people involved?** Is there one or two burglars? Number of injured persons.
- **Description?** What does the person look like?

The dispatcher may ask additional questions, as they respond emergency services.

When to Call 9-1-1
Any life-threatening emergency
Any fire
If you see someone breaking into a house or car
Any traffic injury
If you hear an alarm, or gunfire
If you hear screams for help

When to Call 626-403-7297
Any non-emergency
Car driving around your neighborhood continuously
See a juvenile out during curfew times
A vehicle parked on the street for an extended period of time
A suspicious person on the street for no apparent reason



Reporting Suspicious Activity

You have joined a Neighborhood Watch Group, secured your home and vehicle, and have an emergency contact list of your neighbors. Now, what do you do as a participant?

As a participant in Neighborhood Watch, you are now the “eyes and ears” of the police department. By keeping an active watch and reporting suspicious activity, you help prevent crimes from happening. By knowing your neighbors, you learn what cars they drive and who lives there, making it easy to spot an out of place vehicle.

What is suspicious activity? Anything that seems out of place or out of the ordinary in your neighborhood can be considered suspicious activity. Examples of suspicious activity include, but not limited to:

Suspicious Activity	Possible Crime
A person looking through windows of parked vehicles.	A burglar looking for items to steal.
A person offering to sell you an item at a very low price.	A thief selling stolen items.
Excessive foot traffic to and from a residence occurring on a daily or regular basis.	A person selling drugs from the residence.
A person you never seen before walking down your neighbor's driveway, or side yard.	A burglar looking for a way into your neighbor's house.
A person knocking on doors asking if someone lives there.	A burglar casing for a home to burglarized.
A person claiming to be a city, or utility worker and needs entry into your home, and you did not initiate a call for service.	A burglar attempting to distract you in one part of the house, while a second burglar takes items from another part of the house.
A person sitting in a parked vehicle in front your neighbor's house constantly looking around and talking on a cell phone.	A “lookout” for burglars who may already be inside your neighbor's house.
An abandoned vehicle parked on the street.	Possible stolen vehicle.
Sounds of broken glass.	A burglar smashing a window to a house or vehicle.

The above activities are examples of suspicious activities and what they may lead to. Do **NOT** attempt to investigate suspicious activity yourself! Remember as a member of Neighborhood Watch report the activity. Do not worry about bothering the police or being embarrassed if your suspicions prove to be unfounded.

To report suspicious activity, call the non-emergency number at 626-403-7297.

Suspect Identification

Since Neighborhood Watch is based upon looking out for each other and reporting suspicious activity, it is vital that members are good witnesses and provide good descriptions of suspects.

We recommend starting with the head and looking down, remembering the obvious details, such as was the person wearing a hat, long/short hair, color of hair, sex, race, approximate age, mustache, color of shirt, pants, backpacks, etc.

While trying to remember all the details of a person and calling the police can be stressful, the chart below is provided for your convenience of writing down the description; however, you don't have to wait to complete this chart before you call the police.

Sex _____ Race _____ Height _____ Weight _____

Hair _____

Eyes _____

Facial Hair _____

Glasses _____

Shirt _____

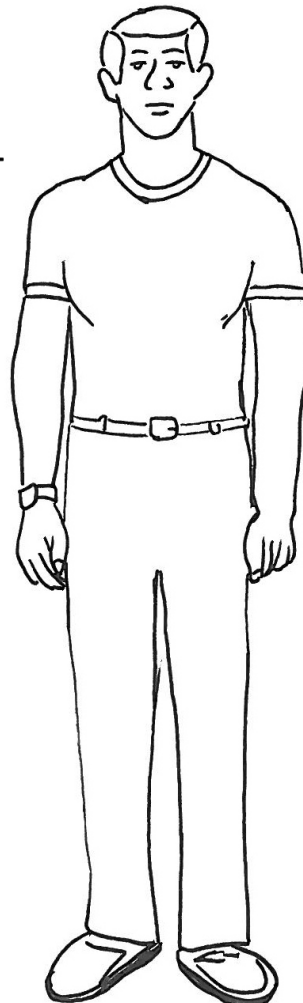
Jacket _____

Pants _____

Age _____

Shoes _____

Additional Notes _____



Vehicle Identification

Reporting suspicious activity not only includes the importance of describing the person, but also their vehicle. It may take officers a few minutes to respond, but the suspicious person may have driven away in that time. Giving an accurate description of the vehicle will allow officers to look for the vehicle while enroute to your location.

Make _____ Model _____ Color _____

2-door _____ 4-door _____

Types of Vehicle:

Sedan



Station Wagon



SUV



Pick-up



License Plates

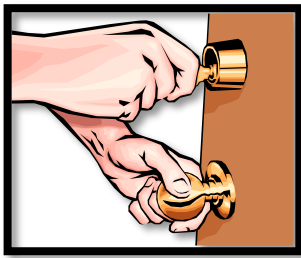
License plates are great in identifying persons, as they show who the registered owner is. However, only obtain the license plate if you can safely do so. A vehicle parked on your street with no license plate and no temporary registration attached to it, should raise suspicion. In this case, an accurate description of the vehicle is helpful.

If you are out, consider inputting the license plate on your cell phone. Most cell phones allow you to take photos quickly, but do not rely on cell phone cameras to capture license plates at long distances. A photo of the car is helpful, but a license plate can provide valuable information (can identify if the vehicle is stolen while officers are responding).

It is almost impossible to know all the different styles of license plates (California alone has eight different styles) so attempt to concentrate on the numbers and letters. If you are unable to read the state, attempt to remember the license plate colors and design.



Crime Prevention



By participating in Neighborhood Watch, you are taking the initiative in seeking safety for your family. The success of the program depends on your active participation.

Besides looking out for your neighbors and reporting suspicious activity, you can help prevent crimes by starting with your own home security.

Locking the doors and windows to your home can alone reduce your chances of being burglarized. Always make your home appear occupied by have timers on lights and radios if you are away. Make sure to check your front porch for any flyers, newspapers or packages that may have been left. A stack of old newspapers and flyers left on your porch indicate that no one is home.

If you have a detached garage, secure it as if it was your home. Many burglars enter garages through an unlocked or opened door.

Make sure your house address is clearly visible from the street day and night. This not only helps officers find your house, but also paramedics. If your residence has an alley behind it, be sure to have your address visible from the alley as well.

At night, have lights around the perimeter of your house, especially the front, side and rear doors. Lights are the best deterrent against burglars at nighttime. This prevents burglars from hiding in the dark. Motion light detectors are great around the sides of the house.

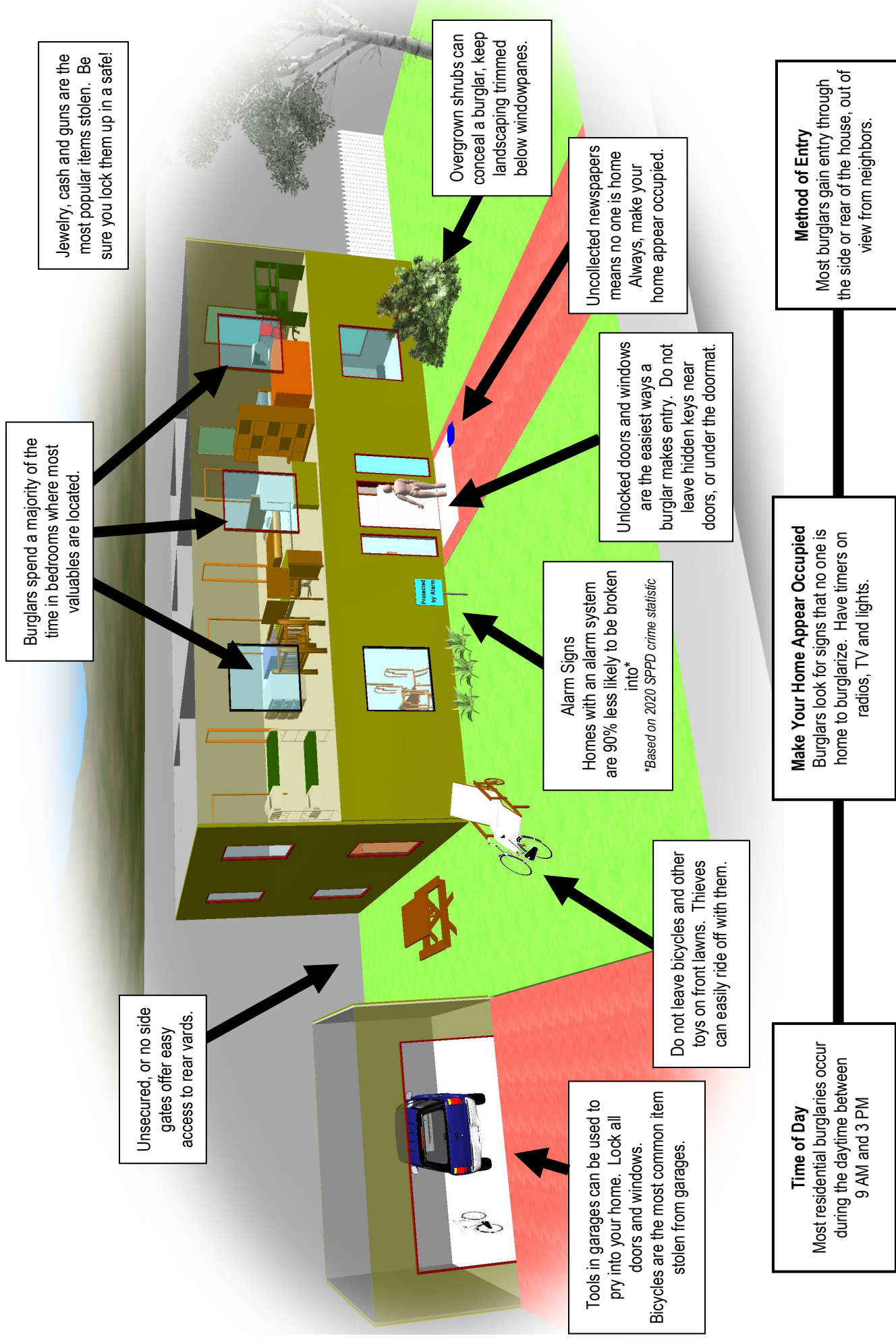
Do not leave bicycles or wheeled toys on the front lawn, or front porch. A thief can easily ride off with them.

Jewelry and cash are the most sought after items in a burglary. Both should be kept in a safe that is bolted to the floor. Make a list of valuables with photos, serial numbers and value. This is especially important for jewelry. Family heirlooms that are passed down should be appraised since they are impossible to replace. This list should be kept in a safe and secure place.

The South Pasadena Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit offers free home security inspections. An officer will walk your property and make recommendations on how to better secure your home.

Your vehicle should receive the same burglary prevention as your home. Always lock your car doors and windows, and never leave anything in plain view. It only takes a few seconds for a burglar to smash a glass window. A theft from an unlocked vehicle is **NOT** a burglary. Depending on the value of the stolen item, the crime could only be a misdemeanor. Portable GPS, wallets, cell phones and purses are common items left inside vehicles.

How Does Your Home Measure Up?





Purchased/ Appraised Value	Serial Number	Color	Model	Make	Description



Neighborhood Watch Meeting Topics

Having Neighborhood Watch Meetings with the police department are important to keep up to date with current crime trends. Whether your neighborhood has any new concerns to address, or to meet new families moving into the neighborhood, you should have at least one meeting a year.

Future Neighborhood Watch Meeting topics can include any of the following recommended topics:

- **Personal Safety** – An awareness presentation on NOT putting yourself in the position of being an easy victim. Includes personal safety in shopping areas, parking lots, ATM, robbery prevention, street safety, etc.
- **Residential Security** – Discusses ways to make your home less vulnerable to burglars.
- **Emergency Preparedness** – Designed to inform the public on how to prepare for a natural disaster, which includes the city's Community Emergency Response Team program. Guest speakers include the South Pasadena Police and Fire Department, and a member of the South Pasadena Public Safety Commission.
- **Vehicle Security** – Did you know that over 50% of all cars stolen in South Pasadena are Hondas? This presentation will discuss vehicle security for both auto theft and auto burglary.
- **Identity Theft** – Identity theft continues to be the fastest growing crime in the nation! Criminals steal your identity to create new credit cards and other accounts using your good name. Most people will not know they are victims of identity theft until days, months and even years later. This presentation will focus on how not to be a victim and what to do if you are a victim of identity theft.
- **Child Safety** – Primarily focuses on safety for elementary aged children. From street safety to internet safety that all parents should know about for their children.
- **Internet Safety** – Internet crimes are a growing problem. Everything from spam emails, phishing, scams and a number of internet crimes are discussed and ways to prevent from being a victim.
- **Senior Safety** – Seniors are often targeted by scammers and con artists. Whether at home or out on the street, criminals will attempt to swindle seniors of their hard-earned money. The latest scams will be discussed as well as prevention topics.

These are just a few recommended topics, but any meeting can be tailored to meet your neighborhood concern. This includes topics that are non-police related like fire prevention. A meeting can be arranged with the fire department to come to discuss fire safety.



Emergency Preparedness

While we all may not be a victim of a crime, we will all become a victim of a natural disaster, e.g., earthquake. The windstorm during the winter of 2011 was an example of how city resources were strained. Many residents were without power for days and fallen trees were blocking streets limiting access to certain neighborhoods.

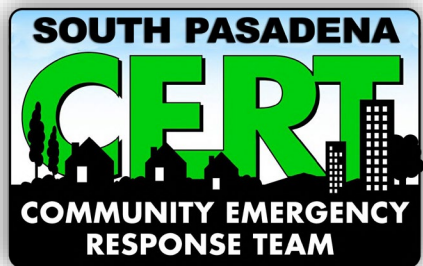
Some neighborhoods were prepared utilizing their own chainsaws and generators, while others were left with no power, or transportation for days.

Neighbors helping neighbors not only applies to looking out for each other reporting crime, but also applies in case of a natural disaster. City resources may not be available for up to 72 hours, so the importance of relying on your neighbors for assistance will be critical.

The City of South Pasadena participates in the "Community Emergency Response Team" (CERT) program. Developed in 1985 by the Los Angeles Fire Department CERT involves the community to help each other in case of a natural disaster.



Windstorm damage 2011



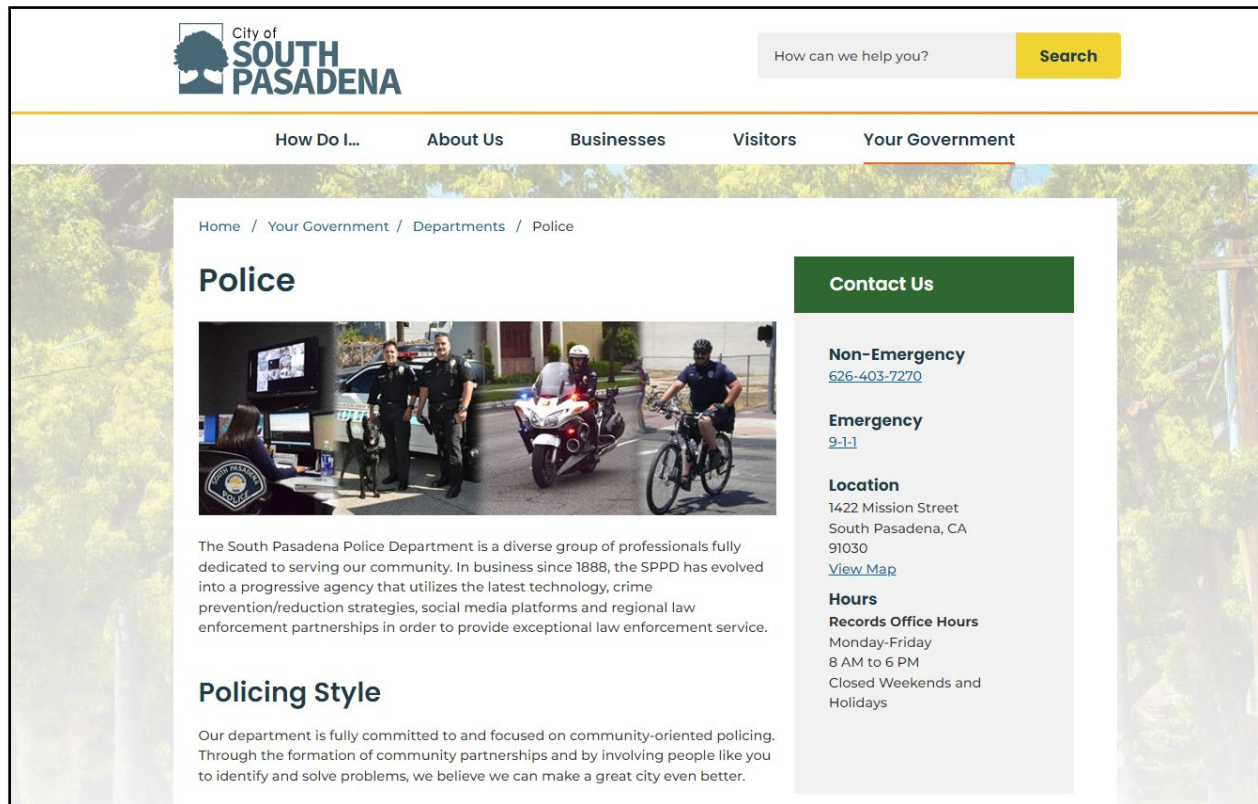
CERT has now become an extension of the Neighborhood Watch program. Like Neighborhood Watch where neighbors are watching each other, CERT involves neighbors helping each other as city services will be overwhelmed after a disaster.

The goal of CERT is to prepare and train neighbors into teams in different areas of emergency preparedness: Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Medical Operations, Disaster Fire Suppression, Light Search and Rescue, Disaster Psychology and Terrorism.

This training is offered through the city several times a year and is **FREE** to all residents. Classes run three consecutive weekends and attendance is required in all three classes.

For more information on the CERT program, or to view the training schedule visit the city website at www.southpasadenaca.gov.

Visit us on the web!



The screenshot shows the official website of the City of South Pasadena. The header includes the city logo and a search bar. The main navigation menu lists: How Do I..., About Us, Businesses, Visitors, and Your Government. The 'Your Government' section is active, leading to a page for the Police Department. The page features a large image of police officers and a motorcycle. To the right, a 'Contact Us' sidebar provides contact information for non-emergency (626-403-7270), emergency (9-1-1), and the department's location (1422 Mission Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030). It also lists hours of operation: Monday-Friday 8 AM to 6 PM, closed weekends and holidays.

www.southpasadenaca.gov

You can access a number of police services online through our website. Many different crimes can be reported online at your convenience, without having to wait for an officer. Crimes such as lost property, vandalism, vehicle tampering, thefts, hit-and-run traffic collisions, harassing phone calls and child custody violations.

Reports will still be assigned and investigated and you can even download a copy of your report. Emergency calls for service, or crimes that are occurring in progress should **NOT** be reported online.

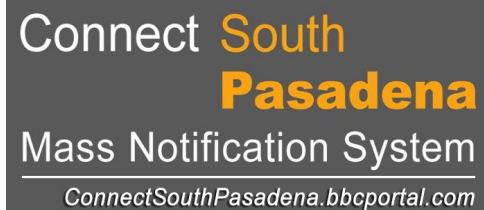
Going on vacation? Be sure to sign up for a Vacation Check request before leaving. Officers will drive by your house while you are away.

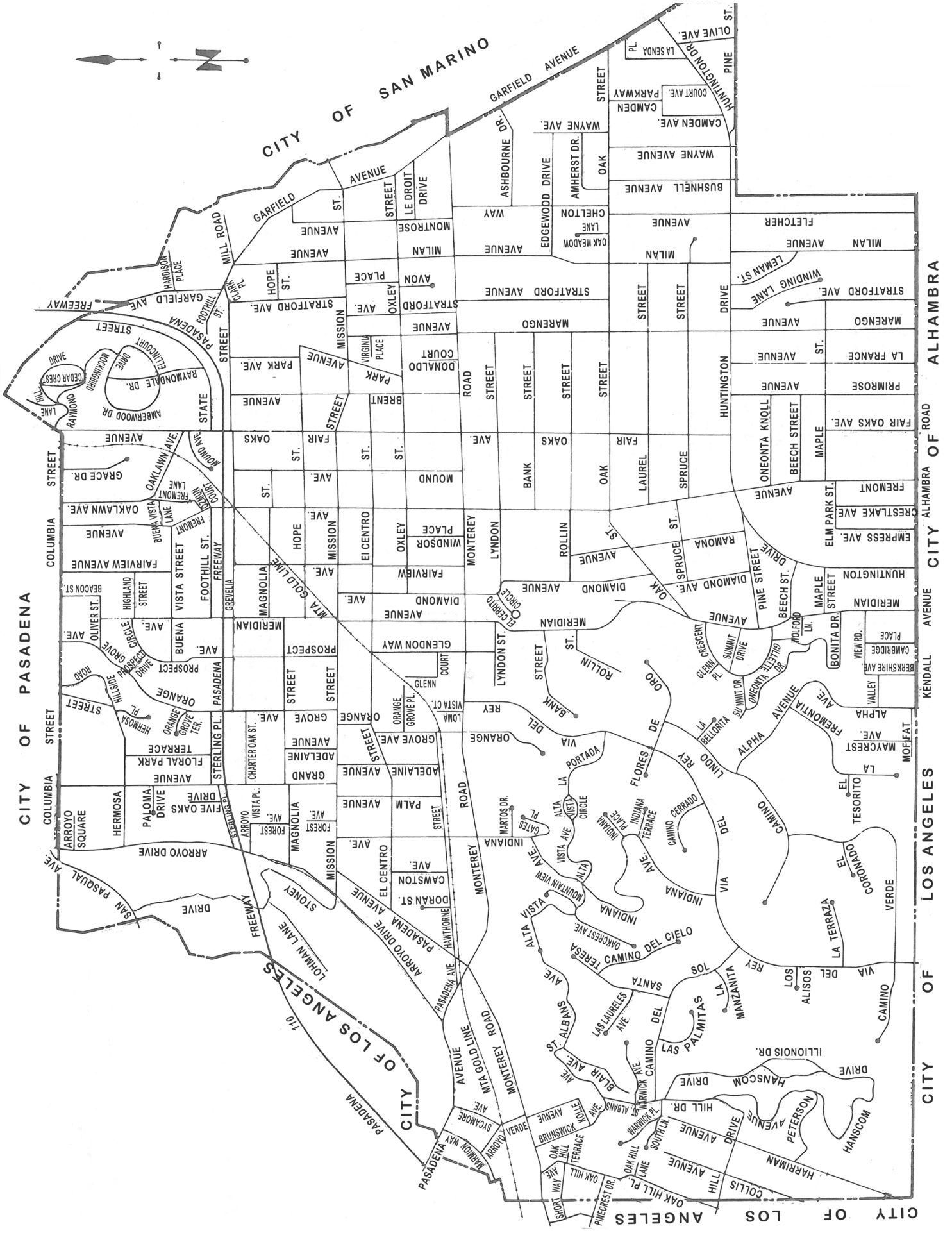
Overnight Parking Permits can also be purchased online as well as contesting a parking citation.

Social Media



@southpasadenapd







This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Important Telephone Numbers

EMERGENCY 9-1-1

Non-Emergency 626-403-7297

Athens Disposal	888-336-6100
Building and Planning	626-403-7220
City Hall	626-403-7210
Code Enforcement	626-403-7225
Fire Department (business)	626-403-7300
Filming/Movie Permits	626-403-7263
Graffiti Hotline (24 hour recording)	626-403-7249
Huntington Memorial Hospital	626-397-5000
Library	626-403-7330
Parks and Recreation	626-403-7380
Pasadena Humane Society	626-792-7151
Police Department:	
Crime Prevention	626-403-7285
Detectives	626-403-7280
Dispatch/non-emergency	626-403-7297
FAX	626-403-7271
Records	626-403-7290
Watch Commander	626-403-7265
Public Works	626-403-7240
School District	626-441-5810
Southern California Gas	800-325-4070
Water Department	626-403-7370
Website	www.southpasadenaca.gov



This booklet is published by the
South Pasadena Police Department
Crime Prevention Unit
1422 Mission Street
South Pasadena, CA 91030
626-403-7270

www.southpasadenaca.gov