

Ten Simple Ways to Improve Neighbourhood Safety

**Celebrate Thunder Bay's first Neighbour Day on June 20, 2020 by trying these ideas.
Neighborhood safety is a team effort, but it starts with you.**

1. Know your neighbours.

Getting to know your neighbours has tremendous benefits. Neighbours can help each other in many ways, and can provide support during challenging times. Knowing your neighbours also has mental health benefits; building relationships of trust can go a long way in helping people feel less isolated or lonely. Need a cup of sugar or access to some gardening tools? Ask a neighbour! Want to know about the history of your home or neighbourhood? Ask a neighbour! In the case of an emergency, it is much easier to reach out to someone you know than a stranger. Knowing more people in your neighbourhood also helps you be aware of who is in your neighbourhood and what could be suspicious.

2. Keep up your yard and encourage your neighbours to do the same

Yards that look well cared for, like mowed lawns, neat landscaping, and properties free of garbage and debris, help to deter crime. A well-kept yard also provides fewer places for unlawful or unsafe activity to occur. .

3. Have someone check on your home when you go out of town.

Summer is a perfect time to head out of town for an extended period. This also provides an opportunity for your home to become a target. Talk to your neighbours and arrange for someone to pick up your mail, mow your lawn, or shovel your walkway. Return the favour.

4. Close your windows and blinds at night.

Leaving your blinds open and lights on at night provides a free look into your home, its layout, and the habits of its occupants. Close your windows at night and when you're gone, or you're putting out an invitation for an intruder to come on in.

5. Improve the lighting on your street.

Streetlights are not the only way to improve lighting. Each household can turn on their porch lights in the evenings and install motion-sensor lights in the back or sides of their homes. This can eliminate dark areas that can hide intruders. Choose long lasting and affordable LED.

6. Encourage Outdoor Activity.

Stop and talk with your neighbours when you see them. Set up activities in your yard for your kids to play outside-and consider inviting other children to join them. Jane Jacobs advocated for "eyes on the street" to improve neighbourhood safety.

7. Take a Walk in your neighbourhood

In addition to the physical and mental health benefits walking provides, it provides an opportunity to meet others living in your neighbourhood, familiarize yourself with the area, and identify any potential safety and security issues near where you live. Studies show that feeling safe in your neighbourhood can increase confidence and willingness to be more physically active. Stay in well-lit areas and away from roads and back alleys, let others know where you're going and when you'll be back, and always walk facing traffic.

8. Know your local police department.

Let police know about concerns you may have in your neighbourhood. Consider participating in the Zone Watch Program, a community-based partnership between Thunder Bay Police Service and citizens. The program identifies neighbourhood crime and safety issues and allows for practical solutions.

9. Organize neighbourhood activities.

This is a great way to meet your neighbours! Create a neighbourhood Facebook Group to share information and events. Organize neighbourhood cookouts, clean-ups, walks to the park and celebrations. These activities make neighbourhoods a safer and more enjoyable.

10. Install a security system.

A home security system is a great way to help protect your home and the things you value. Studies show that burglars tend to skip homes with security systems. Also consider using timers on your lights or find a smart security system that will allow you to turn lights off and on remotely.