

Simple Steps To Make A Positive Impact In Your Community

- 1. Report crime promptly.** Some neighbors don't report certain types of criminal activity because either they don't want to bother the police, they assume police are too short-staffed to respond, or they believe that there isn't much a police officer can do about a given problem anyway. Whether the issue is graffiti, petty vandalism, or something much more serious, police cannot act without first hearing about the problem from you. Calling won't guarantee that police can fix the problem, but failing to call can guarantee that they won't be able to. Also, don't assume someone else has called. Make the call yourself.
- 2. Report nuisances and other non-criminal problems promptly.** Examples: Junked cars on front lawns, abandoned autos in the streets, old mattresses left to rot away in a backyard, garbage dumped illegally in a vacant lot. When you find yourself thinking, "someone ought to do something," **do something.** Call code enforcement, non-emergency numbers, landlords, residents, local business owners, or any other person or agency that may have influence on the issue. Then call your neighbors and ask those who are also concerned about the issue to call and report as well. Then keep calling until the issue is resolved.
- 3. Take away the opportunity for crime.** Think about your home, your car, and even your lifestyle and ask what you could change to take away the opportunity for crime. Lock your car and never leave valuables in the car where would-be thieves might see them, not even for a few minutes. Trim bushes or trees on your property that offer too-convenient hiding places. Also trim trees and bushes that block a clear view of your front door and address from the street or make it difficult for a person to see out of windows in your home. In short, make your front porch visible and make sure your home looks like it has its "eyes" (windows) open.
- 4. Meet the youth who live on your block and greet them by name.** This is one of the simplest steps an adult can take, yet it can make a profound difference to the type of interaction possible should there be a future need for adults and young people to speak to each other in the midst of a neighborhood crisis. Also, it is difficult to help form a safe and supportive community for children without the adults and children knowing each other. Even those without children should know to whom the various children in the neighborhood belong. In this way, each adult is better able to help in an emergency and is better prepared to discuss problems immediately as they arise.
- 5. Make a list of the names and phone numbers of your neighborhood on your block.** Not just two neighbors, set a goal of at least 10. Find almost any citizen who has turned around a problem block and you will find a citizen who really knows the people who live there. Did you grow up in a neighborhood where "everyone knew each other" and find that today your neighborhood isn't like that? The same is true for many people. That's not "society's" fault. That's your fault, and you can fix it. Unless you know neighbors' names and numbers, you can't call them about a concern or let them know about a neighborhood problem. Learn the names and phone numbers of your neighbors this weekend.

6. **Turn your porch light on...and leave it on!** Do this every night at dusk and leave it on until dawn. Crime tends to decline in neighborhoods that are well lit. Turning on porch lights is a good way to start this process. It also make neighbors feel more “welcome” who are out walking in the evening, or kids who may be out playing. Encourage your neighbors to do the same.
7. **Take a walk around the block.** Taking a walk in the evening opens the door to meeting new adults and children and getting a better feel for the larger neighborhood around your street. Take a moment to chat with neighbors, especially the youth, when the opportunity arises.
8. **Drive slowly down your streets.** It is legal to drive slightly under the speed limit. This encourages others to do the same and removes the feeling that your longer streets are ready to be used as a race-way.
9. **Pick up the litter you see, even if you didn't put it there.** Don't rely on your neighbor or your association to be “litter patrol”. Play an active role in setting a good example by keeping the surroundings pleasant and free of litter. Most people are less likely to litter in an area that is clean and kept up.
10. **Participate in the process!** Making complaints to the right agencies, calling your association for help or contacting the city/parish service line are necessary on occasion. Getting involved and becoming a part of the solution is even more rewarding than making a phone call! Become active in your association, even if it's for an hour a month. If leadership isn't your calling, then at least make sure one person in your household attends the meetings and participates in the process. You'll be better informed of the issues facing your community, you can share your experiences and expertise that will help shape and guide the future changes for your neighborhood and you will have a voice in those decisions.

LITTER COURT and THE BIG "5"

Although our City/Parish ordinances cover a wide variety of topics, the following represent edited versions of those that are the most frequently violated causing problems for neighborhood communities. For copies of the ordinances in their entirety please go to www.brgov.com.

- 1. Maintenance of Property (Title 12, Ch 6, Sec 12:405)-**
 - a. Addresses open, unsecured and or abandoned buildings;
 - b. Grass and overgrown weeds greater than 12" for more than a 2 week period.
- 2. Maintenance of Swimming Pools (Title 12, Ch 6, Sec 12:406)-**
 - a. Addresses above ground, temporary pools or built in structures with water depth greater than 18";
 - b. Must be enclosed by a fence at least 5' in height;
 - c. Must be secured by a self-latching locked, gate;
 - d. Water quality must meet standards set forth in the ordinance.
- 3. Accumulation of Junk, Trash and Debris (Title 6, Ch 4, Part I (City) and Part II (Parish))-**
 - a. Prohibits the accumulation of garbage, trash or debris including but not limited to, cans, bottles, boxes, shrubbery, miscellaneous junk and a variety of accumulated "hoarded" items;
 - b. Also includes junk vehicles.
- 4. Illegal Signs (UDC Ch 16; Title 6, Ch 4)-**
 - a. Portable message (changeable letter) signs, removable "stick-in-the-ground" signs, advertising banners or flags are illegal on public AND private property;
 - b. Campaign signs, civic association, school function, real estate and other "special event" signs are allowed with limitations;
 - c. Only permanent sign structures that have been legally permitted by the City/Parish are legal signs.
- 5. Garbage Cans (Title 6, various sections)-**
 - a. Garbage cans and correctly prepared refuse must only be placed on PRIVATE property (not in the servitude, r/w, street, on top of drainage covers, etc...);
 - b. Cans may be placed no earlier than 4:00 p.m. the night before pick up, and
 - c. Cans must be retrieved by 6:00 a.m. the day after pick-up, and
 - d. It is a violation for cans to remain out between 6:00 p.m. Saturday and 6:00 p.m. Sunday

HOW TO REPORT A PROBLEM?

1. Go directly to the government website at www.brgov.com ; select "Request for Service" from the left hand side on-line service options. Make a note of your service request number for future reference.
2. Call the 3-1-1 city/parish request for service line and give them the same details you would by going on-line.