

While nothing can totally guarantee that your church will never be victimized by crime, there are some simple measures you and your congregation can employ to reduce the likelihood of criminal activity from occurring.

**Provided by:**

And  
North Carolina Department of  
Crime Control and Public Safety  
Governor's Crime Commission  
Raleigh, NC  
919-733-4564  
[www.ncgccd.org](http://www.ncgccd.org)

# *Community Watch & Worship*



**Working Together to  
Keep Your Community  
And Congregation Safe!**

**Let's protect one of our  
most precious liberties.**



# What is Church Watch?

Church Watch is a crime prevention program designed to reduce or eliminate the opportunity for crime, including arson, involving houses of worship.

Employing the principles of “Community Watch,” church members are encouraged to join with local law enforcement agencies, fire officials, and the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety to learn and practice simple crime prevention techniques.

The concept of “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)” is the primary technique applied in protecting churches and church property by making them less attractive targets for criminal activity.

# Starting a Church Watch

- Select a “crime prevention coordinator.”
- Contact your local law enforcement agency or [www.ncgccd.org](http://www.ncgccd.org) to schedule a presentation for your governing board.
- Conduct a Church Watch meeting at which basic crime prevention and CPTED techniques will be presented.
- Deliver Church Watch signs and schedule.
- Announce your enrollment in Church Watch to your congregation and solicit their support.
- Make your congregation aware of subsequent crime prevention training and urge them to attend.
- Use Operation Identification to protect church property.
- Network with other churches to enlist them in the program and provide a forum for mutual exchange. As a network, contact local law enforcement and fire officials for additional information and training.

## Vehicle Description

**The following information is needed by the police when you see suspicious vehicle.**

LICENSE PLATE

plate number?  
Is it out of state?

COLOR OF VEHICLE

(What on What?)  
Blue on White, etc.



SPECIAL DESIGNS OR UNUSUAL FEATURES

vinyl top  
rims  
dents

2 door  
4 door



FOR A VAN, are there:

side windows  
pinstrips  
mag wheels  
murals

MAKE OF VEHICLE

dodge  
ford  
datson  
chevrolet, etc.



## How to Give a Vehicle Description

### The Vehicle

- A. **Color, Make, and Year** If unknown, give your best guess, such as “reddish”, late 90’s, “Ford”
- B. **Body Type** Pickup truck, sports car, van, sedan, hatch back, convertible, SUV, etc. How many doors?
- C. **License Number and State** If you cannot get the whole number, two or three numbers will be helpful.
- D. **Distinguishing Features** Damage (dents, bumps, paint not matching, etc.), Exterior Accessories (antennas, spoilers, rack, etc.)
- E. **Number and Description of Occupants**

### METHOD, DIRECTION, AND TIME OF TRAVEL

**Example:** Medium-sized, reddish Ford, early 90”s 2 door, sports car  
NC license DT-3???  
Broken right (passenger side) tail light  
Headed north on Cedar toward Interstate 40  
White male driver, black male passenger

Add further details if necessary

## Overview of Programs

### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Many elements that make your church attractive to members can either encourage or discourage crime. Churches, whose appearance is obviously well maintained, show a potential criminal that you care and may be watchful of trouble. Restricted visibility or convenient hiding places, however, can facilitate a criminal’s entry onto church property and should be eliminated by appropriated outdoor lighting and other physical barriers. During times when churches are not traditionally occupied, the flow of traffic to and through your church should be closely controlled.

### Community Watch/Crime Prevention Training

Citizens are affected by crime in so many facets of their lives—in their workplace, home, in transit, and now, at worship. Only continuous crime prevention training, available from the Crime Prevention Division and local law enforcement, and its application can offer hope for crime reduction.

### Church Watch Signs

Upon registration of your church with your local law enforcement agency, you will receive Church Watch signs. Only local law enforcement can obtain the signs from the Governor’s Crime Commission. This sign will be mounted by your local city public works division in a well-lit, conspicuous place to serve as a warning to those seeking an opportunity to commit a criminal act. Your local public works reserves the right to remove the sign if there is no active participation in Church Watch.

### Operation ID

Churches create an inventory of their property and engrave the church name and identification number of each item, making it easier to identify and recover if stolen.

## How to Give a Physical Description

Practice organizing and giving descriptions in the following order:

### A. Personal Description

1. Sex
2. Race
3. Age— estimate as close as possible
4. Height—estimate in 2 inch increments
5. Weight—estimate in 10 pound increments. Also note type of build (heavy, thin, stocky, etc.)
6. Hair (color, style, quantity, facial hair)
7. Distinguishing Features: note features a suspect can not easily disguise or dispose of, i.e. missing teeth (white, stained, straight, crooked, missing, gold or silver fillings?), complexion, glasses, scars or tattoos, speech dialect or stutter, limp or nervous twitch, right or left handed.

B. **Clothing Description (Head to Toe)** Type, color, style, newness, special identifying marks (tears, burns), hat or cap, coat, shirt, trousers, and shoes.

C. **Directional Information** Where was the suspect headed? Is he/she on foot or in a vehicle? (If a vehicle is used in the escape, see next page) What direction was he/she headed and at what time. (Only use north, east, south, and west when you are certain; otherwise use common physical landmarks.)

**Example:** White, male, about 30 years old, 5'6" - 5'8", 140-150 pounds, medium build, reddish-brown hair and moustache, scar on left cheek. Wearing blue baseball cap, white tee shirt, red plaid trousers and sneakers. Exited the south parking lot door, got into a red sports car and drove east on Elm Street toward the highway.

## How to Describe a Suspect

Fill in all the blanks and give to the first Law Enforcement officer on the scene.

SEX	RACE	AGE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	TYPE OF WEAPON		
						GLASSES (TYPE)	HAT
						HAIR/FACIAL HAIR	TIE
						TATTOOS	COAT
						COMPLEXION	SHIRT
						SCARS/MARKS	PANTS/SHOES
AUTO MAKE MODEL COLOR	LICENSE NUMBER	DIRECTION OF ESCAPE	TIME OF DEPARTURE				