

# 1 Organize

■ Identify the problem. Is it criminal activity, noise, trash issues or unruly animals? Is it occurring at a specific address? Is the home owner-occupied or a rental? If a multiple-unit residence, is it restricted to a specific unit/tenant?

It is important to assess the situation and take safety precautions. If you feel the situation could be a threat or danger, please have the proper authorities take on the fight.

■ **Call the police** - 235-9361 - or proper department\* with **each** occurrence and encourage your neighbors to do the same. You can request anonymity. Records of calls to the police can help to serve as the basis for legal action against the troublemakers and/or property owner, and can prioritize focused patrols.

■ **Document** the date and time of each disruptive event and the people involved; try to get names and addresses if they live in the neighborhood; if not, then get detailed descriptions of the persons involved. Get license plates and descriptions of any vehicles involved. Documentation adds credence to your cause. Remember; do not do anything that could jeopardize anyone's safety.

■ Identify all the neighbors affected by the problem. The problem could affect neighbors that you may not know. Check with neighbors on all sides of the problem. The more people involved, the stronger your collective voice will be.

■ Once you have neighbors willing to work to resolve the problems, have them start a log as well, recording the same type of information. Your case is strengthened when a group is reporting on the same types of issues.

■ Identify the property owner or manager – the county assessor's office (235-9557) can provide information about a specific address. If there is a phone number on a rental sign use that to determine who owns or operates the property.

■ Once you have a team of neighbors committed to resolving the issue, meet and swap information about the problem and people involved – then everyone can be on the look-out for the same people and problems. Establish clear goals and time line that you want to address with the parties involved.

\* see directory on back page

# 2 Take Action

■ Try to speak directly to the neighbors. Does anyone have a rapport with the people causing the problem? The best approach is to have a small group of neighbors talk calmly and rationally with the neighbors about the concern rather than going to city officials or the police. One person is not as effective as a small group of two or three; too many people take on a mob mentality and the person might feel threatened. Appoint one person to do most of the talking that is calm, positive, and rational. If the meeting becomes confrontational, end it and walk away.

■ If the people causing the problems are not the primary homeowners, and speaking to them directly is ineffective, contact the landlord or property manager. If the landlord is responsive, ask for a direct phone number so that you can contact him/her if there are other issues. It is also good practice to meet with landlords on a regular basis – remind them it protects their investment.

If the above steps fail, you need to contact the proper authorities.

■ Determine which city service can best help resolve your issues. Is it Code Enforcement? Animal Control? The South Bend Police Department? See department listing on back panel.

■ Ask the proper officials to meet with you and your neighbors either in a home or at the NNN offices. Explain the nature of the problem and who will attend.

■ Prepare for the meeting. Designate one person to lead it who can make sure everyone is heard but keeps the discussion on track. Provide copies of your logs and all the information you and your neighbors have collected. Remember, while you may want to vent and tell your story, facts are what help get the situation resolved. State the expectations, goals and timeline that you and neighbors have.

■ Listen to the city representative to find out what they can do, or are doing, about the problem. Come to consensus about what the goals and timelines can be for improvements.

# 3 Be a Squeaky Wheel

■ Keep in contact with the officials – sometimes this will require additional meetings and follow-ups from neighbors.

■ Don't give up. You can be a positive and polite squeaky wheel. Squeaky wheels don't have to be rude, loud or a negative complainer. Keep reporting and logging the problems, keep calling city services and keep meeting with authorities until the problem is resolved. **KEEP CALLING.** Have all your neighbors call as well- every time! The City must follow legal/constitutional guidelines that may mean a lengthy process, and undercover investigations may be underway that cannot be made public to *anyone*.

If you do not have a **Neighborhood Watch** program, consider organizing one. South Bend Police Department will help. Call 235-9406. This is a great tool to empower neighbors and share information of criminal activity in your immediate neighborhood.

The NNN can provide another resource—copies of the booklet "**Our Neighborhood, Keeping it Friendly, Safe & Clean,**" a how-to manual for all residents on living successfully in our neighborhood. Filled with useful info on everything from Animals to Zoning, it makes a nice welcome offering to new neighbors, or suggested reading in a non-confrontational manner to negligent neighbors. Stop by the office (1007 Portage Avenue) to pick some up.

***While this process takes some effort, time and commitment, remember it will empower you and your neighbors to protect your investment and quality of life. The City cannot solve nuisance issues without the help of the neighbors around the problem. You will succeed if you work together, gather accurate information and present it in a calm manner. Take pride in your neighborhood and take care of those around you.***

call... call... call... call... call... call... call... call... call... **235-9361**  
the South Bend Police  
non-emergency number  
EVERY TIME there is a disturbance.

**Together  
we are  
an ocean.**

Individually

we

are

one

drop.

### **South Bend's Disorderly House Ordinance**

Under this ordinance, certain activities are defined as public nuisances, including: state alcohol violations, gambling, battery, resisting law enforcement, disorderly conduct, criminal recklessness, discharge of firearms, loud and raucous noise, and failure to keep vacant property secured.

If City officials find these activities at a property, the City can issue to the owner a notice to abate activity. A violation that takes place after this notice is sent can result in the City filing suit for an injunction (Court order to stop) and fines of \$2,500 for each day the activity occurs after the notice is sent.

A history of the problems—records of police calls, code violations/citations, etc. help to establish the case. Again, this is why your calls are important.

### **South Bend City Services Contacts**

Abandoned vehicles - 235-9486

Animal Control: 235-9303

Code Enforcement: 235-5915

Police:

Emergency: 911

Non-emergency - 235-9361

Ongoing problem:

Day shift commander - 235-9283

Afternoon shift commander - 235-9587

Midnight shift commander - 235-5970

Suspected drug activity: 235-9406- (you may remain anonymous)

Noise ordinance violation- 235-9361

Open Drug dealing or prostitution - 235-9388

Traffic/parking related - 235-9306

Mayor's Office - 235-9261

Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. - 232-9182

Street Light Outages: 235-5938

Trash Service - 277-8823

Trash Violations: 235-9386

Zoning Issues - 235-9554

## **Resolving nuisance problems in your neighborhood**

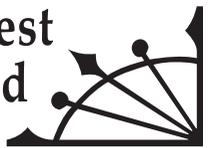


***Neighbors driving you  
(and everyone else) nuts?***

***This guide is intended to help you  
and your neighbors deal with problem  
properties within the confines of the  
law, city ordinances, and neighborly  
common sense.***

**Near Northwest  
Neighborhood**

INCORPORATED



1007 Portage Avenue  
South Bend, IN 46616  
(574) 232-9182  
[www.northwest.org](http://www.northwest.org)