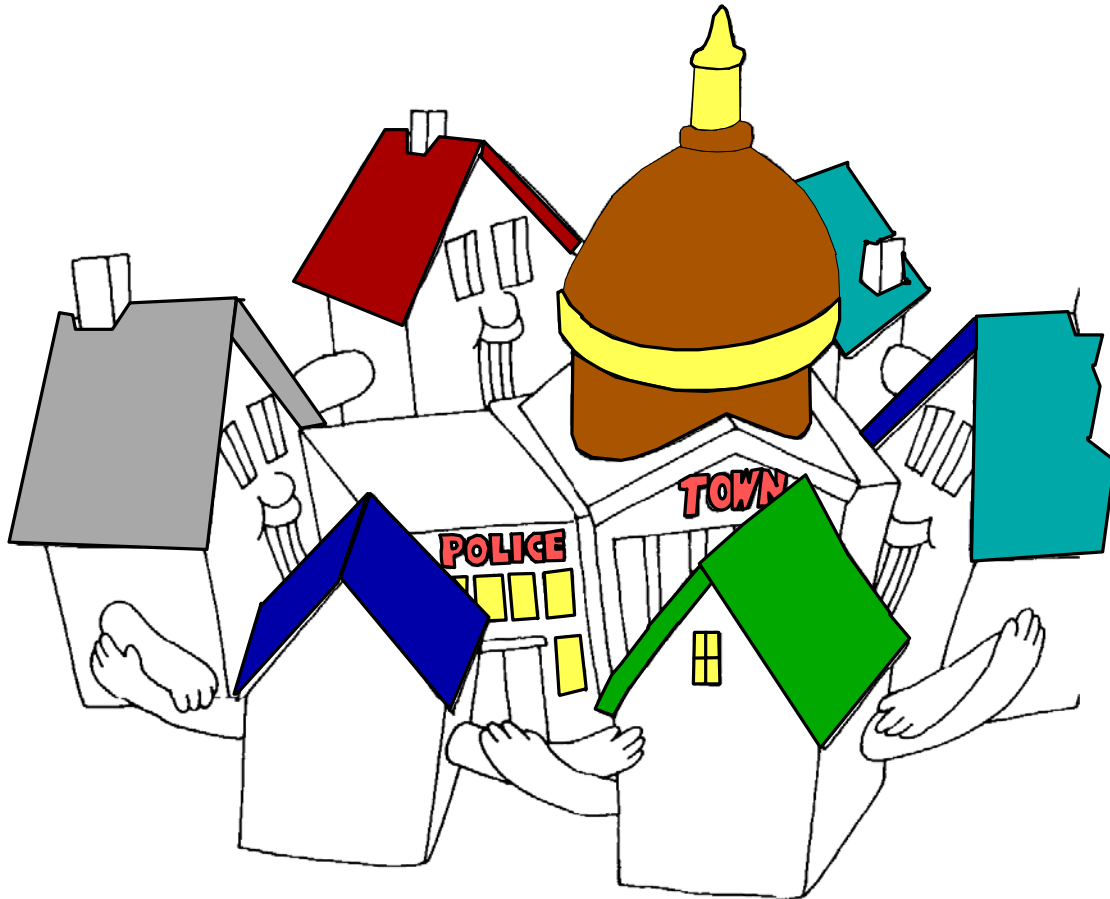




The Public Housing Resident Safety Department: A Model Program Manual¹

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NOTICE TO NON-RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO THESE PREMISES:

1. You will be considered a Trespasser* and subject to arrest and prosecution without further notice if any of the following applies to you:
 - a) If you are not an authorized guest, escorted by a resident, or in a direct route to or immediately leaving from the resident's apartment in the most expedient manner;
 - b) If the resident can not confirm you are a guest, then you will be asked to leave or considered trespassing. Guests may be subject to questioning;
 - c) If you are an authorized guest then the resident is responsible for your actions up to the point where such behavior becomes criminal;
 - d) If you engage in any illegal behavior;
 - e) If you walk or stand on the yard of any resident without the resident's permission and presence;
 - f) If you sit on any fence or barrier;

Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority *SS 2911.21 ORC



Resident Safety: A Shared Responsibility

Concern about the high rates of crime in public housing reached its apex in the 1970's with the destruction of 33 high-rise buildings at the Pruitt-Igoe project in St. Louis and the demolition of family high-rises at Wayne Minor in Kansas City. Crime and fear of crime had made the developments unmarketable even among those most desperate for housing. The physical deterioration and associated fear of crime had cost these communities much needed housing resources.

This concern about crime in public housing has been fueled by studies indicating that the rates of crime in public housing complexes are as much as seven times higher than the crime rates in the cities in which they were located.¹ These studies also indicate that those who can least afford safe and decent housing and to lose what little they own are most likely to be the victims of crime within these neighborhoods.

Three types of reaction to these concerns are generally experienced. First, some view the residents themselves with suspicion and distrust. Potential employers, for example, are reluctant to hire public housing residents for fear that they will engage in theft, drug abuse or other criminal activities associated with public housing. This distrust also results in reduced support for, if not the open opposition to, the location of public housing in other parts of our cities. Residents, themselves, often share this fear and distrust their neighbors, as well as anyone who frequents their neighborhood. They view everyone with suspicion and withdraw from involvement in their community associations as their concerns about crime increase.

A second response is denial. Officials and community leaders often deny the existence of a problem or play down the significance of the concerns expressed by residents and the broader community.² As a consequence, many housing authorities and cities failed to adopt policies and practices which could have re-established social control in neighborhoods which were in the beginning stages of the transition toward high crime rates and apathy.

¹W. Victor Rouse and Herb Rubenstein, Crime in Public Housing: A Review of Major Issues and Selected Crime Reduction Strategies, Volume I. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, December, 1978.

²Department of Housing and Urban Development, Final Report of the Evaluation of the Urban Initiatives Anti-Crime Demonstration. Washington, D.C.: HUD, May, 1985, p. E-5.



A third reaction is illustrated by the army of social workers, recreation specialists, law enforcement professionals, counselors, trainers, and organizers which have descended on these neighborhoods in an effort to address the assumed problems. Many of the saturation efforts to combat crime did more to reinforce the notion that something was wrong than to reduce the actual incidence of crime experienced by those living in these neighborhoods.

Recent research sponsored by HUD has suggested that the general impression of public housing as crime ridden may be more of a perceptual issue than a universal reality.³ The research argues that the victimization rates are not any higher for public housing residents than those found for the residents of nearby neighborhoods. In fact, recorded⁴ property crime rates are most often lower in public housing than for the cities in which the developments are located. The research also points out that crime and victimization rates for the residents of elderly complexes are much lower than those for the residents of either other public housing developments or the city as a whole.

These studies also found that "fear of crime among residents of public housing projects was not, in general, higher than that shown by residents living nearby or by residents of urban areas studied in previous surveys."⁵ As evidence of this over emphasis on crime issues, the HUD research points to the fact that crime was "perceived to be less of a problem among public housing residents than were vermin, trash and other matters not directly related to crime."⁶

In spite of this more optimistic view of crime problems in public housing, the same research finds that the rates of victimization among residents of older public housing complexes and the neighborhoods in which they are situated are somewhat higher than those found in previous studies. These rates are also higher than for the cities in which they are located. In addition, recorded personal crimes were higher in public housing than in these cities.

The research also found that although crime may not outrank living conditions for public housing residents in older, more deteriorated housing developments, these residents were more likely to be concerned about groups of people loitering in their neighborhoods and drug sales and use than those

³HUD, May, 1985.

⁴"Recorded" crime refers to offenses which have been reported to the police and for which the police have completed a police report. Crimes are recorded in roughly one-fourth to one-third of all calls the police receive.

⁵HUD, op cit., p. E-6.

⁶Ibid.



surveyed in previous studies of urban areas.⁷ According to Skogan and Maxfield, people loitering in an area and the presence of bars, liquor houses, and drug use contribute heavily to the fear of crime and to the avoidance of a neighborhood by persons who might otherwise exercise positive control over the types of activities which occur in a neighborhood.⁸

Research conducted in Charlotte, North Carolina, gives added clarity concerning the extent and nature of crime in public housing. This research suggests that while crime rates are often three to five times higher than for the city as a whole, these high crime and victimization rates are not universal for all public housing developments nor for all types of crime.⁹ The highest crime rates tend to be found in the largest and oldest developments which are situated in deteriorating low-income neighborhoods; the lowest crime and victimization rates are found for the elderly and residents of small developments (50 units or less) located in suburban or middle- or upper-income neighborhoods. Larcenies and property crimes are more often associated with elderly and small developments in middle-income neighborhoods while assaults and crimes against persons are most often associated with large family developments and small developments in low-income areas.

This research also shows that fear of crime is not linearly related to the rate of crime. Fear of crime is often highest in relatively low-crime areas and remains high until crime directly effects nearly two-fifths or more of the families in a neighborhood; at this point, the proportion who are afraid of crime levels off or declines as they accept crime as a reality of life and no longer a stellar event of which they should be afraid. Associated with this decline in fear is also a reduction in the reporting of crime to the police: People do not define the victimizations as significant enough to warrant reporting or as important enough that the police or authorities would even care enough to do anything about the incident. This is especially true of the reporting of larcenies and minor assaults.

What emerges is a tolerance of crime and those activities closely associated with criminal behavior - loitering, gambling, alcohol abuse, drug use, and prostitution. Greenberg, Rohe and Williams argue that this tolerance of crime is associated with expectations that no one will intervene in criminal or suspicious situations; a diminished sense of responsibility for and control over areas

⁷HUD, p. E-7.

⁸Wesley Skogan and Michael Maxfield, Coping With Crime: Individual and Neighborhood Reactions. California: Sage Publications, 1981.

⁹A series of studies by John G. Hayes, Ph.D., are referenced. Most prominent are city-wide victimization studies conducted for the Office of Budget and Evaluation of the City of Charlotte in 1976 and 1978. Also included is The Dalton Village High Crime Neighborhood Project: An Evaluation of Mini-Team Policing in Public Housing (June, 1978) and The Impact of Citizen Involvement in Preventing Crime in Public Housing (January, 1982).



around their homes and neighborhood; and the absence of affective attachment to the neighborhood.¹⁰

Survival values replace social responsibility. The rule of the street becomes one of "hear nothing," "see nothing," and, if you should, you "say nothing." Violence and the threat of violence maintain the veil of secrecy that permeates the community.

It is these attitudes that most often appear in discussions with residents of high crime neighborhoods. In fact, residents disavow moral and social responsibility for events that happen on their door step and inside their apartments, even when the activities threaten members of their own family. They argue that they have no right to tell guests or other family members not to engage in criminal activities even if these things are going on within their own apartment.

It is these attitudes that must be changed before crime rates can be reversed and the efforts of the police, housing authority, and residents groups to control crime can be successful. It is in these areas that the Resident Safety Program focuses its attention within public housing in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Crime and Its Correlates

The Housing Authority of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, has long recognized that public housing does not enjoy a favorable image either from the general citizenry or from many of its residents in its largest and oldest housing developments. This negative image of public housing is often created by the association of public housing with high rates of crime and deviant activities as discussed above.

Many of the problems associated with crime, the fear of crime, and the general living conditions of which residents complain (trash, maintenance, and vermin) exist because residents do not report the incidents or conditions which exist. Often they are afraid of retaliation either from those against whom they have acted or by those to whom they have reported the situation. Those committing offenses contribute to the atmosphere of fear by direct and indirect threats when people are believed to have snitched. Those to whom incidents are reported contribute to this atmosphere either by

¹⁰Stephanie Greenberg, William Rohe, and Jay Williams, Informal Citizen Action and Crime Prevention at the Neighborhood Level. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, March, 1985.



openly blaming the person reporting the incident for the problem or by belittling and not immediately responding to the concerns and conditions as reported.

Most people determine obligations and restrictions on behavior interactively through the reactions to behavior by authorities rather than from written doctrines, policies or rules. Because the police and management have not consistently responded to the concerns, problems and infractions within public housing neighborhoods, neither residents nor their visitors take the policies and rules seriously, especially if they are applied in the context of their neighborhoods. Consequently, they either do not understand their rights and obligations, either legally or under the conditions of the lease, or treat them as inapplicable within the context of "public" housing. Hence, they often openly engage in activities which contribute to the atmosphere supporting the negative image of the community.

Among the activities most clearly associated with creating this atmosphere of fear and general disregard for rules is the every day presence in the community of persons not on the dwelling lease: Overcrowding (nearly two-thirds of all calls for service to the police and three-fifths of those arrested with public housing addresses involve persons who are staying with a resident but who are not on the lease); loitering and public consumption of alcohol (four-fifths of those observed loitering and consuming alcoholic beverages on the streets in public housing developments are not legitimate residents of public housing); and domestic disputes (Eighty-five percent of the household are female headed but nearly two-thirds of the police reports involve incidents between husband-wife, boyfriend-girlfriend or friend-friend).

Other activities clearly contributing to a permissive and often criminal atmosphere involve the selling of drugs and stolen goods; operating a liquor house (periodic or regular sales of liquor in violation of liquor laws); operating a lottery; providing a place for people to get high for a fee (operating a "shot house" or "shooting gallery"); and conducting fish fries and vending operations without appropriate permits. Each of these activities demand a disregard of both the law and the lease. The last two activities often draw criminal and unsavory elements to the neighborhood although they are not, in themselves, illegal; they generally result in more serious interpersonal offenses no matter how well intentioned or well meaning the persons involved.

The pervasiveness of these attitudes and behaviors make the problems associated with public housing difficult to successfully address. It is made even more difficult when well-intentioned persons seek to understand and forgive the seemingly minor transgressions of residents simply because they have small children or they lack income or education. This enables those engaged in questionable, if not illegal, activities to rationalize or justify their activities at the expense of their neighbors. They are permitted to conveniently avoid dealing with the consequences of their actions because they have already "suffered".

The role, therefore, of the crime prevention program in public housing is to address these issues and concerns. It is focused on helping both the community and authorities distinguish between



appearance and reality when dealing with crime and its related problems. It is aimed at helping residents understand their rights and obligation and in holding them responsible for their actions once it is clear that they understand and tacitly, if not expressly, agree to abide by those requirements. It is focused on assisting communities in exercising the rights they do possess in order to take control over their own neighborhoods.

Crime in Public Housing

As indicated above, not all public housing developments are crime ridden and the same crimes are not found in all developments. In order to develop successful crime prevention and safety programs, it is important that one understands the types of offenses and problems that exist. One way to do this is by examining the types of crimes that have been prevalent in the past.

The charts and graphs which follow attempt to summarize the extent and nature of crime facing residents of public housing in Charlotte, North Carolina. The analysis is divided into five groups of developments managed by the Charlotte Housing Authority:

Type	Development	Units	Population
Large Developments Constructed Prior to 1974	Piedmont Courts	240	531 ¹¹
	Fairview Homes	408	1151
	Southside Homes	400	954
	Earle Village	409	1247
	Dalton Village	300	1075
	Boulevard Homes	300	1041

Type	Development	Units	Population
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¹¹Reliable estimates are not available because Piedmont Courts is in the middle of a modernization project at the present time and the number of units has been reduced from 368 to 240.

Small Developments Constructed	Belvedere Homes	136	471
	Pitts Drive	61	268
	Keyway	56	225



Prior to 1974	Dillehey Courts	200	521
	Villa Courts	36	119
Scattered Sites Constructed After 1977	Leafcrest	48	145
	Cedar Knoll	49	158
	Meadow Oaks	32	103
	Sunridge	44	140
	Tall Oaks	51	163
	Savanna Woods	49	158
	Mallard Ridge	35	109
	Live Oak	32	101
	Tarleton Hills	51	165
	Robinsdale	30	96
City Sponsored Developments	Gladedale	49	153
	Brighton Place	50	145
	Shelton Knoll	50	160
	Coliseum Drive	50	150
	Victoria Square	36	97
	West Downs	25	68
	Clinton Square	25	73
	Wilkerson Apts	20	46
Pence Road	50	150	
Senior Citizen Developments	Edwin Towers	175	202
	Strawn Apartments	318	336
	Charlottetown Terr.	180	193
	Parktowne Terrace	175	173
	Hall House	190	206
	Red Carpet Inn	102	105
	Addison Apartments	78	80
Totals	All Developments	4,540	11,278

Crime Prevention and Resident Safety

The notion of crime prevention and resident safety is an inherently ambiguous concept which has undergone several stages of evolution in the past several decades. The traditional definition of crime



prevention as the anticipation, recognition, and assessment of a crime risk with appropriate action to reduce that risk is inherently law enforcement oriented. It was and remains the focus behind many crime prevention units within law enforcement.

This definition and its law enforcement orientation has come under increasing fire during the past decade. In 1979, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration published a monograph entitled The Community's Stake in Crime Prevention: A Citizen's Action Guide in which the concept of "community crime prevention" was introduced. Crime prevention was defined as "the involvement of citizens and community organizations in the planning, development, and implementation of various programs designed to identify and prevent crimes."

The role of the citizen in preventing and controlling crime has been increasingly accepted as key to the crime problems in our communities. Herman Goldstein, for example, writes that the police depend on citizen involvement and cooperation for reporting offenses and suspicious incidents, for information regarding suspects and crimes which have been committed, and for testimony in the prosecution of wrong doers. He also points out that when citizens are involved in their community and concerned about what goes on in their neighborhoods, they exercise considerably higher levels of control and influence than could be exercised by the presence of uniformed police officers on every block. So great is this influence that a "5 to 10 percent increase in the involvement of all citizens in a community could possibly prove of much greater value than a 50 to 60 percent increase in the number of police officers or and equally large investment in technical equipment."¹²

It is within this context that the Housing Authority's Crime Prevention and Resident Safety Program was conceived and implemented. It is the contention of the program that the ability of the police to prevent crime or to even patrol a neighborhood is a function of the level of involvement and support received from the residents in the neighborhood. No matter how professionally or diligently the police perform their role or management enforces the lease, their success will be determined by the degree to which people in the neighborhoods cooperate with the police and management as they investigate offenses and attempt to implement corrective programs.

¹²Herman Goldstein, Policing a Free Society, 1979, p. 62.

Wherever there are existing community organizations which involve residents in their activities, both the police and management have enjoyed the levels of support necessary to perform their functions efficiently and effectively. Unfortunately, most public housing neighborhoods lack the organization and involvement of their residents necessary to engender those levels of support and cooperation. Many are characterized by disillusionment and powerlessness. Under the best of conditions, the police and management enjoy only grudging cooperation in their efforts to perform their duties.



This grudging cooperation is illustrated in the patterns of reporting crimes to the police found in public housing neighborhoods. Our own research has shown that while public housing residents call the police about four times more often than do residents of surrounding neighborhoods, only two of every five crimes are every reported to the police by public housing residents compared to three of every five crimes in other neighborhoods.

Some have suggested that the low reporting rate may be the consequence of the fact that criminal events are so frequent and interwoven into the pattern of interpersonal relations that residents have come to accept these offenses as part of the normal risk of living in low-income housing. Others suggest, however, that low reporting is a consequence of the realization that it does little good to report problems to the authorities.

When residents do report incidents, they risks retaliation from those engaged in criminal activities. This partly a consequence of a general aura of fear employed to enforce a deviant value system, but it also exists because the authorities require residents to sign the warrants or become the witness against the offenders. This has given rise to actions and values discouraging snitching and cooperation with "the man" and labels those who try to better themselves and their community as do-gooders and uppity. Those who attend community meetings or call the police are warned to "watch out" and "not to be out after dark" and are called "pimps" and "whores for the police".

When the police and housing authority attempt to implement betterment programs, the criminal element generally increases in the frequency and volume of warnings to the neighborhood residents. Initially, those who attend meetings or volunteer may act as informants for criminal underworld as they attempt to gauge the impact and seriousness of the efforts. Programs can be coopted by the criminal element at this stage and manipulated for their own ends. When this happens, participation will stagnate and cooperation from other community members will be difficult achieve.

An equally devastating consequence is the emergence of a value system which preaches a lack of control over one's environment if one lives in public housing. Public housing means "public property" both to the criminal who denies the resident's ability and right to control his or her activities and to the police officer who tells the resident that he or she can't control what goes on outside the confines of his or her apartment or that there are no yards, no private space which they control. It results in false notion that no one has the right to require people not to play, walk, or loiter on any part of the property including the resident's own porch and furniture.

And, finally, there emerges a value system which justifies this lack of control. It is a value system which denies the responsibility of the resident for what happens around them, including the behavior of their own children. Such responsibility is assigned to the police or the Authority, but not to themselves. They decry the drug abuse and needles in their yard and people who have taken over their porch, but when asked to provide information as to who, what, when and where, the stock reply is



"If you and the police were doing your jobs, you would know who is doing these things and when it happens." They close their eyes to what is occurring, declaring that "I don't have any control over my child," "I only go out to go to church and don't talk to my neighbors," or "It's not my job to report on what others are doing". They have shifted blame to others rather than understanding their role and responsibility in the events occurring around them.

The thrust of the programs described here, therefore, is to reduce the intrusion of the value system and to encourage residents to become involved in and to take ownership in both their environment and the programs which function in that environment. Ownership is expressed through involvement in planning, developing and implementing the programs which take place in the community. It is demonstrated by residents rejecting any notion that "public" housing means lack of control of who comes and goes in one's neighborhood. It is indicated by increased interaction among neighbors and by neighbors watching out for one another. It is voiced through neighbors joining to speak as one for their rights.

Community crime prevention, then, begins with a restoration of the concepts of mutual assistance which once characterized public housing and low income neighborhoods in the form of self-help credit unions and cooperative stores. It continues with a re-emergence of the notion of civic responsibility and accountability which asserts that one has responsibility for what happens or doesn't happen in one's neighborhood. It culminates in a substitution of the sense of community for the notion of project thus signifying the reclamation of the neighborhood from those criminal and deviant elements who have abused and corrupted the notions of brother- and sisterhood in their own self interest.



Objectives

The primary objectives of the Resident Safety Department are to:

1. Reduce the incidence of crime in targeted neighborhoods as well as throughout the Housing Authority;
2. Reduce the level of fear of crime expressed by the residents of each development managed by the Authority;
3. Increase the level of participation of residents in programs aimed at preventing crime;
4. Reduce the prevalence of factors such as unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, and illiteracy which contribute to high crime rates;
5. Improve the relationship and cooperation between the residents and the police officers which patrol their neighborhoods; and,
6. Reduce the number of repeat incidents occurring within the developments managed by the Housing Authority.

To address the problems of crime and fear of crime, the Housing Authority established a Resident Safety Department in 1982. The Department was modeled after the Fairview Homes Crime Prevention Program started in the Fall of 1979 and has undergone slight modifications in order to better address the needs of the neighborhoods in which the program is operating.

The Department seeks to assist the police, managers and residents in designing and implementing effective responses to crime-related problems in each housing development managed by the Authority. The following are the primary areas in which the Department operates:

A. Crime Prevention Education

1. Provide programs, activities, and information to make residents more knowledgeable about methods to protect lives and property. This is done monthly for Resident Organization officers of CP Sites and Staff of those sites.
2. Design, in conjunction with the Crime Prevention Division of the Police Department, and conduct quarterly workshops/programs on crime prevention techniques and initiatives.



3. Establish crime prevention activities and training programs which will result in implementation of crime prevention goals in the targeted neighborhoods.
 - a. Conduct programs such as Operation I.D., Female Security, Child Safety, and Crime Stoppers.
 - b. Develop programs to address issues such as domestic violence, child abuse, defensive living, vandalism, and alcohol and drug abuse.

- B. Re-Establish Informal Social Control
 1. Establish active building captains groups in the Crime Prevention Sites representing at least 75 percent of the buildings in the complex which meets monthly.
 2. Assists resident organizations in stimulating involvement of their members in crime prevention activities and the development of formal programs to reduce crime in conjunction with the Crime Prevention Division of the Charlotte Police Department.

- C. Respond to Specific Crime Problems
 1. Identify crime patterns which require a more systematic and comprehensive response both from the Authority and from external agencies, such as the police, substance abuse agencies, mental health, and other prevention or treatment agencies and the coordination of such an approach in a timely manner.
 2. Establish an Oversight Planning Committee to identify neighborhood concerns and develop crime prevention strategies and activities which will address those concerns.
 3. Provide assistance to all residents who have been victims of crime in targeted sites to insure that they follow-up on warrants, court appearances, and hearings and that they are referred to appropriate agencies who can more adequately assist them.
 4. Insure that appropriate steps for counseling, mediation, warnings, and referrals are followed in matters involving the violation of Section 8 of the Dwelling Lease (Tenant's Obligations);
 5. Provide technical assistance and support whenever activities or crime patterns emerge requiring concentrated efforts.

- D. Linkages With Criminal Justice Agencies



1. Obtains and reviews copies of all offense and arrest reports occurring in public housing developments or involving persons using public housing addresses;
2. Undertakes or assists in the investigation of serious incidents occurring in public housing developments to insure that appropriate actions or responses, including evictions, are undertaken by the authority;
3. Keep the department informed of problems and results of follow-ups with victims of crimes in targeted crime prevention sites.



Organization

The Organizational Chart for the Resident Safety Department is provided on the following page. The Chart depicts the staffing and internal organizational relationships of the Department.

Technically, the Resident Safety Department falls within the Management and Resident Services Divisions of the Housing Authority. Functionally, however, the department is more closely associated with the management and occupancy division. The linkage with management is clearest in the investigation of potential lease violations and the conduct of conferences and grievance hearings involving matters other than non-payment of rent. The human service nature of the activities is evident, however, in the assistance provided to the victims of crime and in the referrals to medical and social service agencies for problems not related to criminal incidents.

While the Resident Safety Department is ultimately governed by the Board of Directors of the Housing Authority, it looks to a committee of key professionals within in the public safety arena for advice and guidance. Entitled the Safe Neighborhood Awareness Program (SNAP) Advisory Board, this board of nine key actors reviews the crime problems and issues confronting the residents living in Authority managed properties and provides advice and guidance for addressing these issues. The Board consists of a representative from each the following agencies or groups:

- The Housing Authority Board of Commissioners
- The Housing Authority's Attorneys
- The Housing Authority's Management Staff
- The Housing Authority's Human Services Staff
- The Police Department
- The County Police Department
- The Fire Department
- The District Attorney's office
- The District Courts
- Mental Health
- Substance abuse agencies
- The Victim Assistance Program
- The Dispute Settlement Program
- The Residents Advisory Committee

The SNAP Team illustrates the importance of linkages with community agencies as well as with the residents of public housing. Links with the police and fire departments, the courts, Mental Health, substance abuse, Victim Assistance, and the Dispute Settlement Center are crucial to the on-going success of the programs sponsored by the Department. The Department receives and makes referrals to these agencies, thus increasing the importance of their relationship with the Authority.



The Director, or Public Safety Coordinator as the position was originally defined, is responsible for implementing programs and ideas related to the departmental objectives suggested by the Advisory Board. In carrying out these programs, the director is responsible for developing and maintaining liaisons with various community agencies in order to reduce duplication of services. In addition, the Director administers grants and supervises the staff which implement the preventive programs in those developments with the highest crime rates.

The Director is assisted by a Field Coordinator whose responsibilities include not only the supervision of on-site staff, but also the provision of assistance to managers and residents in developments where Resident Safety Staff have not been assigned. The Field Coordinator assists in the investigation of criminal incidents and often provides preliminary counseling for both the victims and the accused.

Liaison with the police department is maintained through the Department's Records Clerk. The Records Clerk's responsibilities include meeting regularly with the Records Department of the Police Department to obtain copies of all incidental, offense and arrest reports pertaining to Housing Authority property, staff, or residents. The clerk checks each report against tenant records and enters information about each report in the Department's computer. The clerk also prepares all correspondence of the department and disseminates copies of reports and correspondence to the appropriate managers and staff.

Three Site Coordinators and two Resident Safety Aides work with residents' organizations to develop comprehensive programs which can be implemented by the residents themselves in targeted neighborhoods. The staff are residents themselves and fully understand the fears, anxieties and pressures experienced by the residents and work to help the through these barriers to a safe neighborhood.

Safe Neighborhood Awareness Programs

A primary objective of the department is to establish SNAP Teams in each neighborhood within the Authority. The SNAP Team at the neighborhood level is composed of residents of both the neighborhood and the surrounding residential area. The Team also includes the Manager of the development and the Maintenance Foreman, a representative of the Police Team which patrols the neighborhood, and representatives from businesses and churches in or near the community. The Team's function is to examine neighborhood problems and suggest strategies for addressing these problems to the Authority and the Department.

The on-site staff, where available, work with the residents' organizations to implement the activities as directed by both the Department and the SNAP Teams. In addition, the staff assists the residents' organizations in developing programs in many of the following areas:



1. Traditional crime prevention strategies -- Operation I.D., Neighborhood Watch, Elderly Watch, and Building Captains;
2. Aid and assistance to neighbors who have been victimized;
3. Dispute settlement and mediation of conflicts between neighbors;
4. Social service information and referral;
5. Substance abuse information and referral; and,
6. Employment and educational counseling and referrals (Job Banks).

In neighborhoods where a full- or part-time resident staff person is not available, the Director and Field Coordinator will work with the President of the Residents' Organizations to assist in establishing the SNAP Teams. Training in specific program areas is provided at quarterly meetings of the SNAP groups and technical assistance in implementing programs is provided as requested.

Building Captains

Neighborhood watch, with its attendant emphasis on block captains and persons who are responsible for organizing their neighbors, is crucial to the notion of crime prevention. The informal control exercised by neighbors who keep watch, report activities to the authorities, and, sometimes, intervene to discourage certain types of unacceptable behavior pushes the criminal element outside of the community. Because of this, the Resident Safety Program encourages the emergence of Building Captains or floor captains in each of its neighborhoods.

The role of the building captain in the Housing Authority is four-fold:

1. To assist the police and the Resident Safety Department spread the word about crime prevention and to encourage participation in crime prevention activities;
2. To act as a link between the residents' organization and the residents to insure they are informed of meetings, policy changes, programs and other events which could affect them;
3. To serve as a helper to other residents to insure that the victims of crime report crimes and that the residents know what services are available to them; and,
4. To inform the police, manager, or crime prevention staff of situations which are in



need of correction in order to make the development a safe, decent and sanitary place in which to raise a family.

The building captain is the natural helper in their neighborhood. They are generally people to whom other residents go for advice and help when they are uncertain or troubled. They are residents who have traditionally stepped out of the crowd to demand adherence to community values. The program merely recognizes their natural leadership and enhances their ability to provide accurate and useful information through training and linking them with helping agencies throughout the city.

For further information, see the Building Captain Job Description in the inset. The building captain is the link between the Authority, the Police and the other residents concerning any problem or issue affecting the community. They do not stop crimes, nor do they patrol their neighborhoods. They are not managers; neither are they staff with the authority to threaten other residents with legal actions. They are community helpers.

Volunteer Activities

In order to encourage resident involvement, the Department makes small stipends available to residents' organizations to help cover the incidental costs associated with implementing these programs. These stipends may be used to purchase a bus pass to assist residents to get to services or may be used for the cost of child-care while a resident is volunteering with the program.

The stipend may also be used in lieu of direct assistance to a family. Instead of providing a hand-out, the staff can provide a resident a small stipend of up to \$40.00 in return for assistance in implementing crime prevention strategies. Hopefully, such an incentive will break down the barriers to such activities created by fear and anxiety.

Confidentiality

The success of the programs described in this guide is founded upon a basis of trust between the Department and residents living in the developments managed by the Housing Authority. It is also a function of the trust between staff and the agencies with whom they work. Such trust is established by ensuring the confidentiality of the information obtained through investigations, conferences, referrals, and police reports. While such information is and must be used to benefit the residents and the community, confidentiality and respect for client and resident information is the one cardinal rule of the Department:

No information obtained by an employee or volunteer in the Department may be divulged to or discussed with anyone outside the Departmental, Management or Human Services Staff without the written consent of the resident.





Procedures Guide

Day-to-Day Procedures: Organizational Chart and Job Descriptions

Much of the effort and energy of the Resident Safety Department is devoted to developing resident-managed and implemented, self-help crime prevention programs. These activities are outlined within the job descriptions of each of the positions within the department. The descriptions should be reviewed in order to develop an understanding of the procedures which staff are expected to follow in reaching the primary objectives.

***** Insert Job Descriptions *****

Counseling, Warnings and Conferences

Although the efforts of the on-site staff are devoted to implementing the self-help neighborhood program, the efforts of the Central Office staff are focused on the problems of residents who find themselves entangled in the criminal justice system in one way or another. Both victims and offenders find themselves enmeshed in a complicated, confusing, and frustrating set of procedures which often results in victims feeling left out and offenders believing that they have beat the system.

Not only do the residents of public housing find themselves caught up in the criminal justice system because of crime, they find themselves threatened with the loss of their apartment due to serious or repeated violations of Sections 8 and 11 of the Dwelling Lease. Almost every incident dealt with by the Resident Safety Department will technically involve a violation of at least one element of the lease and could result in the termination of the lease for the family. This includes even those incidents in which the resident is a victim of a crime.

Because public housing is generally housing of last resort for the residents, the Resident Safety Department is committed to working with the resident at risk in order to find ways to insure that they will not lose their apartment. Whether substance abuse, physical or mental health, exploitation or abuse, the lack of education, or unemployment, the focus is on helping the resident at risk in defining the source of their problem and, once defined, in obtaining assistance to remedy that condition. Failing that, the ultimate responsibility is to determine if the nature of the problem is repeated or serious enough to recommend termination of the lease for reasons other than non-payment of rent.

The sections which follow outline the efforts and procedures followed by the Resident Safety Department to insure that problems are dealt quickly and compassionately.



Responsibilities under the Lease: Demanding Control Over One's Environment

Part of the role and function of the Department is to insure that the residents are aware of their responsibilities under the Dwelling Lease. Each year the Department distributes copies of a letter which outlines the lease and describes behaviors which are considered to be in violation of each section of the lease.

The Department also cooperates with other departments to publicize policy changes and rules which will affect residents and reduce crime. The policies regarding loitering, consumption of alcoholic beverages, and closing times for parks and playgrounds are examples of strategies developed by the Department to address resident concerns and distributed to residents at special meetings.



Letters to the Victims of Crime

At the beginning of the 1980s, public housing residents were about three times more likely to be the victims of crime than were others in cities throughout the country. They were also less likely to report crimes to the police and to follow through by swearing out a warrant once a report was filed. If a resident did take out a warrant, there was little probability that the resident would appear in court to prosecute the suspect.

Some of the reasons for this seeming lack of concern about crime were lack of transportation to the magistrate's office and to court; the lack of telephones so that they could be notified to court dates; and the inability to read or understand notices sent to them. In addition, the victims and witnesses encountered a variety of pressures, including threats against taking out warrants or prosecuting once a warrant had been sworn. There were few in the community who seemed to openly support and comfort the victim and the victim would succumb to the pressures against reporting crimes and prosecuting the criminals.

The Resident Safety Department recognized that there is a need to support the victim and to reinforce the values of reporting and prosecuting criminal activities. Victims need assistance both psychologically and materially to insure that they follow through in actions against the suspect. First, they need assistance to overcome the internalized values against being a snitch. Second, they need support once threats are issued and the war of nerves begins. Next, they need coaching as to what will happen in court and what facts need to be brought out to insure that their suffering and loss is adequately brought out. They will need encouragement just getting from home to the court room. And, they will need support and understanding to combat any implications that they contributed to their own victimization.

Both the criminal justice system and the Authority depend upon the cooperation of the victim and witnesses to insure that justice is served and corrective actions will be forthcoming. The department and staff are committed to assisting the victim in becoming a dependable and credible witness. And, in helping the victim, we building a network of friends who reject the value system and who are willing to stand along side the Authority to prevent similar types of crimes in the future.

Two types of letters offering assistance are sent to victims within 7 days of the crime in order to achieve these objectives. The first type of letter is sent to victims when the crime is not of a domestic nature. As illustrated in the following examples, Assistance Letters will vary slightly according to whether the victim's live in developments in which we have active Safe Neighborhood Awareness Programs and staff or not. In SNAP neighborhoods, a staff member or volunteer will contact the family within seven days of the date of the letter to offer assistance and discuss the nature of the offense. In the other developments, the letter requests that the victim call the Field Coordinator if they wish assistance.



**Housing Authority of the City of YourCity,
YS**

900 East Your Street
YourCity, YS 22222-2222

March 18, 2006

YourCity, YS 22222-2222

RE: OFFER OF ASSISTANCE

Dear :

The Housing Authority recently received a Police Report dated _____ indicating that you were the victim of _____.

The Housing Authority is committed to making our developments safe, decent, sanitary communities in which to raise a family. Because of the nature of this incident, we would like to assist you in any way we can to insure that similar incidents do not happen again. Your cooperation with the manager and our staff is essential if we are to effectively assist you and your family in finding a solution to this problem.

If you wish our assistance in this matter, please call , Resident Safety , next week at .
Enclosed is material on programs we offer.

FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
CITY OF _____, _____

CC: Resident Safety Staff
Manager

JGH:8/85



Many assaults involve husbands and wives or boyfriends and girlfriends. These domestic offenses are more difficult to work with and potentially more violent than most other offenses we encounter. It is the ambivalent nature of domestic offenses which makes them so difficult for the Authority staff. The nature of the victimization creates a level of sympathy for the victim, while the repeated nature of the events and the complaints from neighbors results in a view that the victim is responsible for their own problems. The victim is also subject to immense psychological pressures from the spouse or friend to drop charges and not to proceed with formal actions. For these reasons, the effort of the staff is to refer these incidents to community professionals while reminding the resident of the lease violations involved.

Cities usually have several programs and task forces which work specifically with domestic offenses. The District Attorney's office, for example, may have a special unit which screens all warrants for domestic offenses which will be handled by specially trained prosecutors. A special task force on Domestic Violence is often appointed by the Mayor or County Commission to review the way in which domestic violence is handled in cities. Often, local Women's Commissions and Victim Assistance Programs develop specific programs to respond to the recommendations. The efforts of the Resident Safety program should always be coordinated through these agencies. They are the experts in dealing with domestic violence issues.

The following letter is sent to victims in cases in which domestic violence is implicated. This letter refers the victim to the domestic violence programs indicated above, as well as provides them with the name of a staff person to whom they can speak. It also points out that these offenses are generally related to repeated disturbances which may cause the lease to be terminated if these disturbances continue.

Domestic Dispute



**Housing Authority of the City of YourCity,
YS**

900 East Your Street
YourCity, YS 22222-2222

March 18, 2006

YourCity, YS 22222-2222



RE: DOMESTIC DISPUTE

Dear :

The Housing Authority has received a police report indicating that you were the victim of _____ on _____.

We are committed to making our developments as safe as possible for all of our residents. We are concerned about your welfare because the suspect is someone whom you apparently know very well and who was a guest when the incident occurred.

Domestic incidents tend to happen over and over until one of you is seriously injured. The incidents disturb your neighbors and may even place them in jeopardy.

Filing a police report is only the first step. You must prosecute the suspect. You may need help to do this and to understand what other things you can do to make things better. Help can be obtained from:

**The Victim Assistance Program at _____ or
The Shelter for Battered Women at _____).**

You may also call _____ of our Resident Safety Program (_____) for assistance.

You owe it to yourself, your family, and your neighbors to get help. We hope that you will let us help you before someone is seriously injured or you are about to lose your apartment for repeated disturbances.

FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF _____, _____

Manager

CC: Manager, Area Manager



Illegal Activities

The lease indicates that the head of house is responsible for the behavior of all persons in the household and their guests. Within this context, the head of house is to cause these persons to behave such a manner that they neither create disturbances nor engage in activities which would impair the social and physical environment in which they live. Residents and their guests are obligated to behave in a manner which "will be conducive to maintaining the Project in a decent, safe and sanitary condition."

Illegal activities are expressly forbidden in Section 8(i) of the Dwelling Lease. The nature of the activities, however, are not spelled out. The lease merely states that all activities which materially impair the physical or social environment of the developments are forbidden. The conviction of a resident or guest for illegal activities in criminal court is not a necessary prerequisite for the invocation of this section of the lease; all that is required that there is substantive evidence that the resident and their guests are engaged in activities which negatively impact on the physical or social climate of the community.

The Authority generally follows a policy that certain activities result in immediate eviction rather than typical warning processes. Among these activities are arrests for the possession, sale and distribution of controlled substances by a family member or guest; the seizure of controlled substances from Authority property and under control of a resident or guest; the arrest for operating a lottery or a liquor house; and threats or assaults on any staff person. All other offenses or activities follow a series of warnings and remediation efforts by staff and management.

Two types of letters are mailed as warnings for illegal acts. One letter is sent when a person on the lease is accused of illegal or other acts which affect the physical or social environment of the community and the other is sent whenever a guest or person using a resident's address is accused. As shown in the accompanying examples, the letters summarize the potential lease violations and requests that the resident contact their manager if they wish to present evidence contrary to the allegation or discuss the actions implied in the letter. The manager will be consulted to ascertain the results of such discussions should repeated illegal acts increase the probability that the lease will be terminated.



Housing Authority of the City of YourCity, YS
900 East Your Street
YourCity, YS 22222-2222

March 18, 2006

YourCity, YS 22222-2222

RE: LEASE VIOLATIONS -- ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES OF TENANT'S FAMILY OR GUESTS

Dear "Mr./Ms./Mrs. LastName {F9}•:

The Authority received a Police Report stating that on "Date of ARRESTš{F9}• , a member of your household was arrested for "Arrest Charges{F9}• . If the charges against NAME OF SUS{F9} (Age AGE OF SUS{F9}) are found to be true, you may be found to be in violation of Section 8 of your Dwelling Lease.

According to Section 8(a) of the Lease, as Head of House you are responsible for the behavior of both family members and guests of your household. It is important you understand that "any arrest and/or conviction of a family member or guest for illegal activities may result in the termination of your lease under Sections 8(i) and (h) of the Dwelling Lease. Serious or repeated offenses will result in the eviction of your family.

The Authority is presently reviewing this incident and will be making a decision concerning further actions in the near future. Discuss this matter with your manager within five (5) working days.

FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF
THE CITY OF _____, _____

CC: Manager, Crime Prevention
Account Code

RSILLEGAL12@87JGH



**Housing Authority of the City of YourCity,
YS**

900 East Your Street
YourCity, YS 22222-2222

March 18, 2006

YourCity, YS 22222-2222

RE: ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES OF UNAUTHORIZED GUESTS

Dear :

The Housing Authority received a Police Report dated _____ involving a _____, who claims to be living at your address. According to our records at the Central Office, this individual is not on your Dwelling Lease!

According to **Section 8(a)** of your Dwelling Lease, only those persons listed on your lease may stay in your apartment. Guests may stay with you for very limited periods of time, "provided such guests observe the reasonable rules and regulations of the Authority applicable to residents of the Project." This Police Report constitutes written evidence of a violation of your lease for unauthorized persons living in your apartment.

The Police Report indicates this individual was arrested for . This constitutes a violation of **Section 8(i)** of the Lease which prohibits illegal or criminal activities by residents and guests and **Section 8(h)** which prohibits actions by residents and guests which disturb or threaten other residents or staff of the Authority.

This is a warning. If you feel this information is in error, you must present written evidence to your manager within five (5) working days.

FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
CITY OF _____, ____

CC: Manager
Crime Prevention Staff

RSIOG12-87JGH
Unauthorized Guests



Crime in public housing would be 50 to 60 percent less if the Authority could keep persons who have not been processed through the tenant selection process from living in its developments. For example, over half of those arrested using addresses in CHA developments are not on the lease at that address and nearly three-fourths of the assaults committed against residents are committed by persons who are not supposed to be living in CHA managed properties. In addition, the Authority's rental income would increase significantly if the incomes of these persons were to be added to those reported by the residents who are on the lease.

Section 8(a) requires that the head of house is required to insure that the only persons staying in the apartment are those persons who are included on the lease. The resident is permitted to have guests for reasonably limited periods, provided such guests obey the rules and regulations of the Authority. Unfortunately, many residents define reasonably limited periods and "living with" more liberally than does the Authority.

There are two basic sources of information concerning persons staying with a family in violation of the lease. The first is from police reports. When a person files a police or accident report and when they are arrested they are required to provide a current address. Failure to provide an address when arrested will result in the person being ineligible for pre-trial release or bond and such addresses usually accurately reflect where the person is staying.

The second source of information comes from agency referrals and complaints from neighbors.

Both sources result in a letters being sent to the resident warning them that information has been received and summarizing the lease violation. If information concerning the guest's employment is available, a letter is sent to the employer asking for verification of employment and the address used by the person, if employed. Examples of these letters follow.



**Housing Authority of the City of YourCity,
YS**

900 East Your Street
YourCity, YS 22222-2222

March 18, 2006

YourCity, YS 22222-2222

RE: LEASE VIOLATION - UNAUTHORIZED GUESTS

Dear :

The Housing Authority recently received a Police Report dated _____ in which an individual named _____ used your address as their current place of residence. According to our records at the Central Office, this individual is not listed on your Dwelling Lease!

According to Section 8(a) of your Dwelling Lease, you are obligated "to use your dwelling only as a private dwelling for tenant and members of Tenant's family, as identified and accepted by the Authority, except that the dwelling may be used to accommodate Tenant's guests for reasonably limited periods, provided such guests observe the reasonable rules and regulations of the Authority applicable to residents of the Project." This Police Report constitutes written evidence of a violation of your lease for unauthorized guests.

This is a warning: Further violations of this section of the Lease will result in the termination of your lease. You must present written evidence of where this individual lives to your manager within five (5) working days to be kept in your files.

FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
CITY OF _____, ____

CC: Manager
 Crime Prevention



**Housing Authority of the City of YourCity,
YS**

900 East Your Street
YourCity, YS 22222-2222

March 18, 2006

YourCity, YS 22222-2222

RE: LEASE VIOLATION - UNAUTHORIZED GUESTS & HOUSING FRAUD

Dear :

The Housing Authority recently received information indicating that an individual named _____ is staying in your apartment. According to our records at the Central Office, this individual is not listed on your Dwelling Lease!

According to Section 8(a) of your Dwelling Lease, you are obligated "to use your dwelling only as a private dwelling for tenant and members of Tenant's family, as identified and accepted by the Authority, except that the dwelling may be used to accommodate Tenant's guests for reasonably limited periods, provided such guests observe the reasonable rules and regulations of the Authority applicable to residents of the Project." The information has been independently verified and indicates you are in violation of your lease for unauthorized guests.

This is a warning: Further violations of this section of the Lease will result in the termination of your lease. If you feel this information is in error, you must present written evidence of where this individual lives to your manager within five (5) working days to be kept in your files.

FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
CITY OF _____, ____

CC: Manager
Crime Prevention

RSGUEST8-85JGH



Housing Authority of the City of YourCity, YS

900 East Your Street
YourCity, YS 22222-2222

March 18, 2006

YourCity, YS 22222-2222

CONFIDENTIAL REQUEST FOR EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

RE: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Time Period: _____ TO _____

Dear Director of Personnel:

The individual listed above is a subject in an investigation regarding possible housing fraud during the time period indicated. The individual has listed you as their employer for at least a portion of this period and we need to **verify the address(es) used while employed by you.**

If possible, please provide the following information:

-
1. Dates of Employment: _____ to _____ Never Employed
 2. Address Used:
 - 19__: _____ Same as above
 - 19__: _____ Same as above
 - 19__: _____ Same as above



- 3. Gross Wages Paid: (Last 3 years, if employed longer than 3 years)
 19____: _____ 19____: _____ 19____: _____
- 4. If this investigation leads to a housing fraud case, may we obtain a copy the application, or similar document, containing both the address and the signature of the individual in question? **Yes** **No**

If you have any questions regarding this matter, do not hesitate to call me or Mr. _____ at (____)_____. Thank you in advance for your assistance in helping us resolve this matter.

Sincerely,

Please complete the following information as well:

COMPLETED BY: _____

Date: _____ -

—

Title: _____

Address Verification



Disturbances

The Police Department receives about 30,000 Calls for Service from public housing residents each year. Most are related to disturbances within our developments in which neighbors have called the police due to the noise or activities of their neighbors and their guests. An analysis of these Calls for Service several years ago revealed that about half of the calls are created or involve less than 5 percent of the residents. In other words, about 400 families cause the police to make 15,000 trips into public housing.

Section 8(h) clearly defines activities, especially repeated activities, which disturb one's neighbors as grounds for terminating the lease. Whenever the police receive a Call for Service which clearly involves activities which disturb a resident's neighbors or whenever a police report is filed indicating a disturbance type of crime, the resident at whose residence the disturbance occurs will receive a warning letter for disturbances.



**Housing Authority of the City of YourCity,
YS**

900 East Your Street
YourCity, YS 22222-2222

March 18, 2006

YourCity, YS 22222-2222

RE: LEASE VIOLATION - DISTURBANCES

Dear :

The _____ Housing Authority has received a report from the Police Department that on _____ there was a disturbance involving people in or from your apartment. The Police Report describing this incident indicates a serious violation of your lease involving _____.

Under Section 8h, "Tenant's Obligations", of your Dwelling Lease, you are required to conduct yourself and to cause other family members and guests to conduct themselves "in a manner which will not unreasonably disturb Tenant's neighbors in the peaceful enjoyment of their accommodations and which will be conducive to maintaining the project in a decent, safe and sanitary condition." Please note that the Authority usually undertakes lease termination actions after the fourth warning.

Although this is only a warning letter, **you have five (5) working days to contact your manager to discuss this matter.**

FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF
THE CITY OF _____, _____

CC: Manager
Crime Prevention Staff

JGH:8/85



Dispute Settlement and Mediation

Most "offenses" and "arrests" occurring in the context of public housing represent a breakdown in communication between two parties and the use of the criminal justice system as a weapon in the struggle for power and control. As partner to the lack of control, there exists a warrant mentality in which parents threaten that to call the police if their small children do not behave and warrants are taken out in order to get a family member or another party to stop and listen. Breakins and larcenies are often attempts of an estranged friend, or "room-mate", to reclaim what they believe to be theirs. Assaults erupt and the police are called based on "he-say"/"she-say" rumors boosted by a third party. Damages to property and trespassing warrants reflect this lack of listening and communication.

Both the police and managers and staff of the Authority are besieged with lamentable pleas from residents for help in solving their conflicts with family, friends or neighbors. They want the Authority or the police to "make them listen", to "threaten them with arrest or eviction", to "talk some sense into them".

Most of us believe that the courts will do these things if the police or the Authority can't or won't. Unfortunately, the courts can only determine whether someone violated the law or not. Judges do not listen to the reasons why something happened or take into account what the plaintiff wishes to happen; they make decisions based on the rules of evidence and hand down sentences which are the least restrictive, and often least enforceable. In addition, we have generally found that both the plaintiff and the accused are dissatisfied and frustrated with each other as a result of their experience in court.

Mediation and dispute settlement programs, or neighborhoods justice centers as they were once called, have emerged to meet the needs of people who have experienced this breakdown in communication. Mediation is a simple process that trained volunteers use to help people identify and solve their disagreements. The volunteer meets with the people (two or more) who are having a disagreement or who are due to appear in court to discuss what the disagreement is about. After all views are heard and the volunteer makes sure that the views are clear and understood by the disputants, the group discusses what might be done to settle the dispute. The mediator's role in this process is to listen carefully to the disputants, help them think constructively about possible solutions, and make sure both parties are satisfied with any solution which is reached.

Research on mediation consistently shows that 80 to 90 percent of those who participate in the programs are very satisfied with the process. Victims acquire a better understanding of why the person engaged in the activity bringing about the dispute and the defendant both understands the suffering of the victim and has an opportunity to make "things right".¹³ In over 90 percent of the

¹³Dispute Resolution: Quarterly Information Update. Washington, D.C.: American Bar Associations' Special Committee on Dispute Resolution, Issue 19, Summer, 1986, p. 9.



cases dealt with by mediation, satisfactory restitution arrangements are worked out between the parties. Follow-ups reveal that the three-quarters of the parties report no further conflicts with each other within the first year after the mediation session.



Housing Authority of the City of YourCity, YS
900 East Your Street
YourCity, YS 22222-2222

March 18, 2006

YourCity, YS 22222-2222

RE: NOTICE TO APPEAR FOR A MEDIATION CONFERENCE

Dear :

We recently received information concerning an incident _____. While it has been recommended that we hold a lease termination conference regarding this matter, we would like to offer the services of the Dispute Settlement Center in this matter instead.

You have the opportunity to resolve your conflict without having to go to a pre- eviction hearing for repeated conflicts and disturbances. The Dispute Settlement Program offers you the opportunity to talk to the other person about the incident in the presence of a trained mediator. Everything you discuss at the mediation session will be confidential.

If you cannot resolve your problem or choose not to utilize these services, the Authority will schedule a pre-lease termination conference under Section 8 (Tenant's Obligations) for repeated disturbances and conflicts affecting the social climate of the community. However, if you participate in the mediation program and are making a sincere attempt to resolve your problem, the Authority will work with you. Mediation is the best way we know of resolving conflicts.

We have scheduled a mediation conference for you on:

at _____

Please contact the Dispute Settlement Center at _____ before to confirm your attendance. They will notify us of your participation in their program.

Sincerely,



CC: Management Staff
Crime Prevention Staff
Dispute Settlement Center, _____

Initial/JGH/122987.2



While the Resident Safety Department should provide mediation training for both residents and managers, the department should also establish a cooperative agreement with the local Dispute Settlement Program to handle mediation involving more serious conflicts between residents in public housing. The major reason for this cooperative agreement is that neither the staff nor management could act as truly impartial mediators in disputes because of the violations of the lease implicated in most disputes. Residents are reluctant to discuss issues where violations were implied and staff and managers are tempted to use information of violations in later actions against the residents.

The following discussion and forms present a chronology of stages through which a case is referred to the Dispute Settlement Program and the results are reported back to the Authority. The process is initiated by a complaint from a resident or a police report which has been received in the Resident Safety Office.

Stage I: Determination of Appropriateness. Disputes will be referred to the Resident Safety Department by managers, staff, residents or the police (usually as a result of police reports). Upon receiving a referral, the Resident Safety Department will conduct an initial investigation to determine the appropriateness of the dispute for mediation. The criteria used to make such a determination include the following:

1. The incident does not involve violence or the threat of violence between persons involved in an intimate relationship (husband-wife, cohabitation, boyfriend-girlfriend). Such incidents are referred to the programs dealing with domestic violence.
2. The incident involves a dispute between persons who live in the same neighborhood or area.
3. The incident does not involve serious harm to persons or Authority property which could result in immediate eviction of the accused party.

Once it is determined that the dispute falls within the criteria, the Resident Safety Department will send a letter offering the disputants the assistance of the dispute settlement program.

Stage II: Referral. If the parties agree to participate in mediation, the Resident Safety Department will notify the referral source of the pending mediation. A Notice of Mediation Intervention will be sent in the event other legal actions are pending the outcome of the mediation session. The Department will also send the Mediation Referral Form to the Dispute Settlement Program. This form will contain minimal background information on the dispute and the situation for the mediators. The form also permit the tracking of the mediation.



Stage III: Mediation. Once a mediation session is scheduled, the Dispute Settlement Center will notify the disputants of the schedule and will send a copy to the Department for its records. The Department will coordinate the preparation of the meeting place for the mediation session and will insure that both parties appear.

Stage IV: Results. Although the details of the mediation sessions are confidential, the Dispute Settlement Center will notify the Authority that the dispute was or was not resolved as indicated by the two letters to the Manager of the Development.



Conferences with Residents

The Resident Safety Department is charged with assisting residents find resolutions to problems which will reduce the risk of serious threats or harm to persons or property. It is also charged with determining the validity of allegations of repeated or serious material violations of the lease in terms of other actions which the Authority may wish to undertake.

The primary focus is on providing residents with every opportunity to take corrective actions on their own in order to decrease the likelihood of repeated incidents. In most cases, our offers of assistance, the warnings from managers, and the warning letters discussed above are sufficient to initiate corrective actions. In some incidents, there is a high likelihood of serious harm if immediate actions are not forthcoming and immediate assurances of corrective actions from the resident are needed in order to insure reduced risks. These incidents will result in house calls and conferences with the resident to obtain those assurances and commitments.

Unfortunately, warnings do not always work and offers of assistance go unanswered. The type of situations in which this is most likely to be true involve repeated or serious violations of the lease by guests or adult children. Unauthorized residents and activities by former husbands and boyfriends represent another significant category of repeated violations in spite of warnings. Sometimes the residents simply do not understand their lease and their obligations which are spelled out in the lease. They either have not read them or have interpreted them in such a manner that they don't feel they apply to their situation.

Most of the time people rationalize their actions and justify violations by appeals to higher loyalties of family or humanity. They interpret the conditions leading up to the incident in such a manner that the law and the lease were inoperable or invalid at the time of the violation.

The Resident Safety Department has found conferences and Resident Statements (or Agreements) useful tools for insuring that residents understand their obligations and take corrective actions. The persons attending the conference should include the staff person, the resident's manager, and the resident. The forms which follow are self-explanatory for the most part.

The Resident Statement form is used to summarize all agreements and promises made by the resident during the conference. An attempt should be made to make actions as concrete as possible with clear deadlines:

"I agree to make an appointment with Open House for screening and drug counseling no later than March 1, 1988."

"I will request that the counselor send the Resident Safety Department a Card each time I attend a counseling session for the next 6 months."



A copy of the Statement should be given to the resident. The Original will be retained and forwarded to the Management Office where the resident lives to be placed in the resident's continued occupancy file.

The Conference Summary should be used to summarize any information and impressions obtained during the conference. If additional facts are gathered, they may be written in the first block under the resident's statement (the Recommendations section may also be used).

It is useful to record the attitudes and strategies employed by the resident during the conference. Some residents use tears as a defense, others use ignorance, and others attempt to overwhelm you with their problems to gain sympathy. These impressions are useful if the violations continue and lease termination becomes a real probability.



Housing Authority of the City of YourCity, YS

900 East Your Street
YourCity, YS 22222-2222

March 18, 2006

YourCity, YS 22222-2222

RE: CONFERENCE REGARDING LEASE VIOLATIONS

Dear :

We have received reliable information regarding several serious violations of your Dwelling Lease. These violations are covered in Section 8 of your Lease (Tenant's Obligations) and consist of .

Because of the seriousness of these violations, the Authority is considering terminating your lease. However, I would like to offer you the opportunity to discuss these violations with your manager and the Continuing Occupancy Hearing Officer before any final decision concerning your lease. If you have other information or ideas about how we can avoid ending your lease, we would like to hear them at this conference.

This conference is scheduled for _____, _____, _____, 19____.
The conference will be held at _____ Office at _____. Please ask _____ when you arrive.

It is extremely important that you attend this conference. If you are unable to attend at the date and time specified, please call _____ to reschedule this meeting the day before the date listed above. Please understand that your lease *is not* being terminated at this time - it is held to help us understand the facts and the actions that can be taken to avoid similar problems in the future.

FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF
THE CITY OF _____, _____

CC: Manager
Area Manager



CONFERENCE AGREEMENT

_____, residing at _____, have consulted with members of
Your Housing Authority concerning _____.

uring the course of this conference, I have been informed of and understand the following:

- My obligations as Head of Household to control the activities of all members and guests of my household both while on Housing Authority property;
- That, as Head of Household, I am accountable for the actions of anyone who is either on my lease or using my address as their residence of record with my consent;
- The actions which are in violation of the Dwelling Lease;
- That I may be evicted for serious or repeated violations of the Dwelling Lease;

s a result of this conference, I have agreed to do the following:

understand that if further violations of my lease occur or if I have failed to undertake the actions as stated above, the Housing authority will undertake more formal actions in this matter, which may include the termination of my lease for repeated violations of the section of the lease describing my obligations.

Signature of Resident

Date of Conference

mmilments or Comments by the Authority:

OR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY:

Staff Signature

Staff Signature

Staff Signature

Staff Signature

Results of Lease Violation Conference, RS22566.1 1 = Resident's File 2 = Resident 3 = Program File



Prohibitions from Property

Housing Authorities have traditionally overlooked the legal remedies available to them to combat crime and loitering on their properties. Perhaps, it was because housing officials bought into the notion that "public" housing meant "public" property and they could not control activities on those properties. Possibly, the emphasis on making the head of house responsible for controlling the actions of their family members and guests gave rise to the notion that they could not require strangers not to hang around in yards and on benches. At any rate, managers and other officials tended to ignore, although they did complain about, the numbers of strangers who had virtually taken over the public and semi-public places in their developments.

As public corporations, housing authorities have as much right to control what occurs on their property as any other corporation. As managers of housing, they are obligated to take every action to insure a "safe", decent and sanitary environment in which families may live. Part of that responsibility and right includes the right to request that people not congregate on public and semi-public parts of the development which are under control of the Authority. In addition, the Authority has the right to refuse entrance to their property to persons engaged in activities not approved by the Authority or which threaten the lives and well-being of its residents.

As a general practice, the Housing Authority follows the policies and procedures listed below:

1. **Sales on CHA Property.** The Housing Authority does not permit the sale of any items on its properties without the expressed written consent of the Executive Director or his/her designated representative.
 - a. No sales may be conducted from apartments or buildings because such sales would be in violation of local building codes.
 - b. Vendors may request permission to enter onto streets and parking lots in developments which house the elderly by setting up an appointment with the Director of Resident Safety. At the appointment, the vendor must
 - 1) Present a valid vendor's license;
 - 2) Sign a consent for an arrest records check; and,
 - 3) Sign a statement of understanding regarding the following:
 - a) They may enter only those properties designated as housing for the elderly.
 - b) They may remain on Authority property for no more than 30 minutes in any 24-hour period.
 - c) They must inform the manager whenever they are on the property.
 - d) They must obey all regulations specified in the local



- ordinance governing the activities of vendors; particularly the rules regarding the hours of operation (8 a.m. until 8 p.m.).
- e) Dispose of all trash and litter created by the conduct of their business.
- 4) Current driver's license, address, and telephone numbers.

Permission may be granted only if the result of the record's check does not indicate criminal activity in the last three years, serious criminal offenses in the last ten years and/or no arrests for drug related offenses at any time.

Failure to obtain written permission or failure to obey the conditions of the statement of understanding will result in legal action for trespass and breach of peace.

- c. Yard sales and similar types of sales conducted by residents may be permitted under the following conditions:
 - 1. Presentation of a valid permit for a yard sale or similar activity from the Mecklenburg County Tax Office at least 5 days prior to the date of the sale.
 - 2. Recommendation by the manager of the development in which the activity will occur.

Failure to present the permit and to obtain a recommendation from the manager will be treated as a violation of the lease and subject the resident to the lease termination process discussed herein.

2. **Criminal Activities.** Periodically, the Authority encounters persons who do not live in the developments managed by the Authority who refuses to obey the reasonable rules of the Authority, who engages in behavior which repeatedly damages property or disturbs residents, or who is engaged in serious criminal activity. The Authority will take steps to bar such persons from their property. These steps are as follows:

- a. The person engaged in these activities should be warned of the action to be taken if they don't leave the property. Such warnings may be given in person or in writing. If they are given in person, it is recommended that a police officer be present when the person is warned. If the warning is by letter, a copy should be sent to the police department. A copy of this letter is included in this manual.
- b. If the person returns to the property, the manager or staff should
 - a. call the police to inform them of the violation and to have the person



- b. arrested if the person refuses to leave; or, take information concerning name, date of birth, residence, and dates and times of past warnings to the magistrate's office and seek a warrant for trespass against the person.



**Housing Authority of the City of YourCity,
YS**

900 East Your Street
YourCity, YS 22222-2222

March 18, 2006

YourCity, YS 22222-2222

RE: PROHIBITION FROM ALL HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY

Dear :

The Housing Authority of the City of _____ is deeply concerned about the impact of crime on our residents. We are committed to invoke all appropriate measures under the law to preserve and protect the lives and property of all our residents.

This letter officially notifies you that the Housing Authority of the City of _____ considers you a threat to the health and safety of its tenants because of your involvement in repeated disturbances and other Authority housing developments. Information obtained from the _____ Police Department and other source indicates your involvement in illegal activities on our property.

By this letter, the Housing Authority of the City of _____ hereby prohibits you from entering onto its property and into any of its housing developments. Any violation of this order will be considered a trespass upon the Authority's property and subject you to appropriate civil and criminal penalties. A copy of this letter will be forwarded to our local law enforcement agencies for appropriate action.

FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF
THE CITY OF

Director of Resident Safety

CC: Manager
Area Manager
Police Department



Evictions

The termination of the lease is the last resort in combating problems within public housing. As a general rule, lease termination is not considered until after all other resources available for correcting the problem have been exhausted. When counselling, conferences and referrals have been exhausted or when the violation is serious, such as arrests for drug sales, liquor sales, burglaries, or serious assaults on Authority property, a thirty-day notice of proposed lease termination will be sent to the head of house. The thirty-day notice provides the resident with the opportunity for a grievance hearing before an impartial panel as governed by the Authority's grievance policies.

Occasionally, the offenses or actions bringing about termination of the lease are so heinous or pose an immediate threat to staff or residents that a thirty-day notice would make the Authority liable or increase risks of further harm to residents and/or staff. Under these conditions, the Authority will terminate the lease using a three-day notice of termination. The grievance procedure is suspended and the hearing in Magistrate Court is substituted for the grievance procedure due to the seriousness of the lease violation.

The letter notifying the resident of the proposed termination of the lease are included on the following pages. The only difference between the 3-day notice and the 30-day notice is the exclusion of the notice of a right to a grievance procedure in the 3-day notice.



**Housing Authority of the City of YourCity,
YS**

900 East Your Street
YourCity, YS 22222-2222

March 18, 2006

YourCity, YS 22222-2222

**RE: NOTICE OF IMMEDIATE LEASE TERMINATION:
SERIOUS VIOLATION OF TENANT'S OBLIGATIONS**

Dear _____:

This is to notify you that your lease at _____ shall be terminated on _____ (____ days from the date of this notice) for reasons of serious and repeated violations of the material terms of your lease.

The specific reason for our proposed action is that you have violated Sections 7, 8, and 11 of your Dwelling Lease:

DWELLING LEASE

- 7. **Use.** During the term of this lease, Tenant shall have the right to exclusive use and possession of the dwelling, but Tenant shall not use the dwelling or permit the dwelling to be used in violation of the terms and conditions of this lease.
- 8. **Tenant's Obligations.** In addition to the obligations set forth elsewhere in this lease, Tenant shall be obligated:
 - (a) to use the dwelling only as a private dwelling for Tenant and the member of Tenant's family, as identified and accepted by the Authority, except that the dwelling may be used to accommodate Tenant's guests for reasonably limited periods, provided such guests observe the reasonable rules and regulations of the Authority applicable to residents of the Project;
 - (b) to abide by the necessary and reasonable rules and regulations promulgated by the Authority (after consultation with the Residents' Advisory Council or other similar representative group) for the benefit and well-being of the Project and its residents, which rules and regulations shall be posted in the Project office and made a part of this lease by reference;
 - (c) to comply with all obligations imposed upon tenants by applicable provisions of building and housing codes materially affecting health and safety;
 - (d) to keep the dwelling in a clean and safe condition;



(e) to dispose of all ashes, garbage, rubbish, and other waste from the dwelling in a sanitary and safe manner;

(h) to conduct himself/herself, and cause other persons (who are in the dwelling with Tenant's consent) to conduct themselves, in a manner which will not unreasonably disturb Tenant's neighbors in the peaceful enjoyment of their accommodations and which will be conducive to maintaining the Project in a decent, safe and sanitary condition;

(i) to refrain from illegal or other activity which materially impairs the physical or social environment of the Project;

(o) to refrain from assigning the lease or subletting the dwelling or any portion thereof;

(p) to refrain from, and to cause Tenant's household and guests to refrain from, destroying, defacing, damaging or removing any part of the dwelling or the Project;

11. Redetermination of Rent, Eligibility and Dwelling Size

(b)(iv) The Authority determines that Tenant has knowingly misrepresented to the Authority the facts upon which his rent is based, resulting in an underpayment of rent; in which event the Authority may, in addition to or in lieu of exercising its other rights and remedies including termination, charge and collect rent at the correct rate applied retroactively;

The activities which the Authority believes constitute the violations of these provisions of your lease are listed in a Statement in Support of Lease Termination which is attached hereto.

In support of this notice and any actions resulting therefrom, the Authority will rely upon written and verbal testimony of its staff, witnesses, and other complaining parties.

Your lease will be terminated on and you will vacate the premises by midnight on that date.

FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
CITY OF _____, _____

Attachment



STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF LEASE TERMINATION

HEAD OF HOUSE:

ADDRESS:

DEVELOPMENT:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
4. In legal action in this matter, the Authority intends to rely upon the following in support of the foregoing:
 - A. Live testimony of police officers, Authority staff, complaining residents, and any other persons who can provide testimony to support this decision;
 - B. Official records and correspondence of the Authority;
 - C. Police Reports and other Official Records; and,
 - D. Any and all other evidence produced in support of this action by subsequent investigation.

This is March 18, 2006.

FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
CITY OF _____, ____



Contacts with Residents

The type of relationship which exists between the staff and the residents will determine the success of the programs to be implemented by the staff. The Program is totally dependent upon the cooperation of the residents for its success and it is essential that credibility and rapport with residents be established.

Critical in the development of credibility and rapport is the level of trust and confidence the resident can have in the staff to fulfill any promises they might make either directly or indirectly -- if a resident provides information or makes a request of staff, they expect something to happen as a result of that interaction. Residents will invest time and effort in activities only to the extent that they believe that something can and will be done to achieve their goals. They provide information about situations with the expectation that staff will initiate some action to either correct or change that situation, even if it is only to tell them to whom they should talk.

Every conversation with a resident will contain bits and pieces of information which the resident reveals to see how the staff person will respond. Sometimes, the conversation is assigned a greater meaning by the resident than by the staff person and may even be used as a justification for some action or position they were planning to take. Too often, innocent conversations become transformed into meaningful prescriptions or authorizations for actions -- "Well, Jimmy Staffperson told me I didn't have to pay my rent now" or "Jenny, the Manager, told me to do it this way."

It is important, therefore, that staff record all contacts and conversations with residents, even seemingly insignificant ones. A contact summary form is provided to staff to record such interactions. This form functions as a note pad and record keeper to help staff summarize each conversation they have had with residents over a period of time. It also provides space to describe the nature of the conversation and record significant statements; any referrals which were made in a direct or indirect manner; the promises implied by either staff or resident during the conversation; and the type of follow-up which will be needed.



Lease Violation Citation

DATE, TIME & PLACE OF VIOLATION			
Date	Time	Name of Person(s) Committing Violations	Address Where Violation Occurred
RESIDENT INFORMATION:			<input type="checkbox"/> Resident <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor / Guest <input type="checkbox"/> On Lease <input type="checkbox"/> Not on Lease
Name of Head of House (if known)	Address		Development
LEASE CLAUSE VIOLATED <input type="checkbox"/> §1C Unauthorized Residents <input type="checkbox"/> §14 Violations By Guests/Visitors <small>All visitors or guests to any member of my household must obey the rules and regulations while I am present, I will still be subject to the loss of my apartment and/or any other charges levied by the CHA for damages or violations of the rules.*</small> <input type="checkbox"/> §16A RULES & REGULATIONS <input type="checkbox"/> Loitering in Common Areas/Parking Lots <input type="checkbox"/> In Park/Playground After Hours <input type="checkbox"/> Trespassing on Others Yards <input type="checkbox"/> Consumption of Alcohol on CHA Property <input type="checkbox"/> Inviting Barred Persons onto CHA Property <input type="checkbox"/> §16D Disturbance <input type="checkbox"/> Party/Loud Music <input type="checkbox"/> Drunk/Under Influence <input type="checkbox"/> Disorderly Conduct <input type="checkbox"/> Unruly Guests <input type="checkbox"/> §16E Damage To Property <input type="checkbox"/> §16F Suspected Criminal Activities <input type="checkbox"/> Assault <input type="checkbox"/> Threats <input type="checkbox"/> Drug-Related Activity <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> §16G Dangerous Weapons Violation <input type="checkbox"/> Carrying/Displaying Weapon <input type="checkbox"/> Shooting/Discharging Weapon <input type="checkbox"/> Exploding Dangerous Weapon <input type="checkbox"/> Assault with Weapon <input type="checkbox"/> §16H Arson/Settling of Fires <input type="checkbox"/> §16I Disposal of Trash <input type="checkbox"/> §16S Interfere with Police <input type="checkbox"/> §16T Motor Vehicle Policies <input type="checkbox"/> Registration of Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Parking Violation <input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe Movement			Explanation of Violation: Citation Issued By:

White: File Copy Green: Management Copy Pink: Resident's Copy Canary: Residents Safety's Copy

The contact summary form is also useful for recording conditions observed during trips through the community or home visits. Notations of problems, concerns, damages, loiterers, or other observations may be important in making referrals, leveraging assistance, verifying conclusions or allegations, or reconstructing a problem situation at a later date. The summary form provides space for jotting down notes and reminding self of how to follow-through on the observation when one returns to the office. If immediate action is demanded, a copy of the form can simply be forwarded to the appropriate department for action.



Referrals

No staff person has all of the resources or skills to solve all of the problems presented by residents. Neither supervisors nor residents expect this of a staff person. What is expected and demanded is that the staff person will refer the resident or situation to appropriate departments or agencies when the situation warrants such referral.

Release of Information. As discussed earlier, the Resident Safety Program is governed by strict codes of confidentiality. In order for staff to divulge any personal information other than name and address about a resident to other agencies, the resident must sign a statement authorizing the release of information by the program. Such releases are suggested, but not required, when information is being exchanged between departments within the Authority; the resident should always be informed of whom the staff is planning to speak concerning a situation even if a release is not required.

In many instances, the agencies to whom residents are referred will require a signed release of information before they can discuss a client's or resident's files with the staff person. It is essential, therefore, that staff obtain such releases whenever referrals are made in order to insure that adequate communications can occur between staff and the agency for the best interest of the resident and the Authority.

Referral Forms. The Resident Safety Department utilizes a referral form whenever referrals to other agencies or departments are made. This form has multiple purposes.

First, the form authorizes the exchange of information between the Authority and the agency. The authorization is sufficient for most agencies with the exception of Mental Health and Open House which utilize the release of information form which follows the referral form.

Second, the form provides the resident with information concerning the agency and their contact person within the agency. It also serves as a reminder of any appointment date and time which the staff person may have arranged.

Third, the form clarifies for the agency the type of assistance which is being requested by the resident.

Fourth, the form provides the agency with a way of reporting the kinds of assistance provided to the Authority. This serves as notification that the resident has sought services as well as permits monitoring of the appropriateness of referrals which have been made.

Finally, the form signifies the staff's concern. It emphasizes the importance which has been attached to the resident receiving appropriate services to help resolve whatever problems or situation they have encountered.



Referrals Concerning Crime Problems. Because of the role associated with Resident Safety, staff continuously receives information concerning illegal activities, including the sale and used of controlled substances. Too often the information which is given is insufficient for immediate action, but it still needs to be communicated to the appropriate law enforcement agencies for appropriate investigation and action.

The Authority is obligated to take appropriate actions to maintain a level of safety and security for residents. The Authority may be held accountable for situations about which they have knowledge and have failed to take corrective actions. Memoranda and records indicating that information concerning problems have been transmitted to the appropriate investigative office is often sufficient evidence that the staff and Authority have acted upon information which has been received.

Although such records may be necessary to indicate that actions have been initiated, the simple reporting of incidents does not assure that the information will be acted upon. In addition, simply reporting a problem does not release the Authority from its obligation to initiate appropriate actions to address the problem nor does it guarantee that the Authority will receive information back from the agency concerning the accuracy or validity the allegations which have been made. Moreover, both staff and the sources of information expect to see some action on the information which has been provided before further information and cooperation will be forthcoming.

Both the Authority and Police Department recognize the importance of such exchanges of information concerning criminal activities and have devised a referral and follow-up form to be used in reporting suspected criminal activity. This form has been reviewed and approved by the Police Department's Attorney and serves as the primary vehicle for information exchange regarding the sale and distribution of controlled substances and police actions regarding this information.



Referrals from Management and Other Authority Staff

Whenever managers and other Authority staff become aware of problems which should be handled by the Resident Safety Department, they will forward a Departmental Referral form to the Director requesting assistance. The Director will initiate appropriate follow-up action on the referral and will provide the manager or staff person with a written report of actions taken with a reasonable period of time (not to exceed 45 days).



Investigations

Timely assistance to the victims of crime is crucial in gaining the confidence of residents and achieving the goals of the Department. Moreover, because the Resident Safety staff and SNAP member are residents themselves, the victims and witnesses to crimes will often be more willing to talk to them and will reveal more information than they will to either management or the police. To assure that appropriate action is taken, adequate assistance is provided and necessary referrals are made, investigation and fact finding become a central part of the role played by staff in the Resident Safety Department and members of the SNAP Teams.

The Investigation Report is the principle tool utilized by staff and the SNAP Team for (1) summarizing fact finding once problems have been reported and (2) reporting the results of that fact finding to supervisors, management, and the police.

The Investigation Report forces the person completing the report to review the most important sets of information which will be necessary in order for others to take appropriate corrective steps. The Report also asks the staff person to examine the strengths and needs that the parties bring to the situation in order that any planning will take these into account. Finally, the Report asks the person completing the report to make their own recommendations concerning the actions which should be taken based on their first-hand knowledge of the situation.

These reports, when completed accurately, are useful tools for both the Authority and the police in deciding actions and the validity of allegations of criminal activities. They also help gauge the likelihood that a victim will follow through and provide insight into the kinds of resistance which may be experienced if the resident were to go to court or be asked to be a witness at an eviction hearing. They help assess how much assistance the victim will need in order to insure that such incidents will not occur in the future.



Crime Prevention Activities

Crime prevention is generally thought of as reducing the risk of becoming the victim of a crime. The victim is viewed as a person or object that is attractive to a criminal and who presents the criminal with the most opportunity and the least risk of being caught.

Public housing residents unfortunately fit the role of victim almost perfectly. Although many people assume that low income families have little that would be attractive to a potential criminal, they are sorely mistaken. While middle-income families may earn more, they are likely to have bank accounts and are unlikely to have large amounts of money around the house. Low-income families, on the other hand, do not have checking or savings accounts, as a rule, and, therefore, will have relatively large sums of cash on them or in the house, especially between the first and tenth of each month when social security and AFDC checks are mailed.

Even though one's income is low, it does not mean that one does not desire material goods just like more well-to-do families. Many families are enticed to purchase T.V.'s, stereos, and other "luxury" items from furniture stores who offer credit to "welfare" recipients with low payments but high interest. These items are not likely to have been marked and the family is often unable to locate the serial numbers, even though they have receipts for payments they are making.

Opportunity for theft is often greater in low income neighborhoods than in middle income areas because of both the maintenance conditions of the homes and the life-styles of the residents. Doors are seldom locked and residents are in the habit of hollering "Come in" from another room without getting up to see who is at the door. In an effort to be friendly, they often permit strangers to enter their apartment to "get a drink" or "use the bathroom". They go away and leave doors and windows unlocked. Too often, they have not reported broken windows and locks for fear of being charged for the damages. Their homes, therefore, are open invitations for entry.

Low income families are also least likely to have telephones to be able to report crimes when they occur in a timely fashion. Even if they do have a telephone, the rules against snitching which have been discussed reduce the likelihood that the criminal will be identified, even if everyone "knows" who is ripping their neighbors off.

The objectives of the Resident Safety Department and the SNAP Teams are to reduce the opportunities for victimization and to increase the risk that persons committing crimes will be caught and punished. What follows is a brief description of programs designed to achieve these objectives.

Operation ID

Operation ID(entification) is a program to enable local law enforcement to easily identify and recover stolen property. A larger percentage of stolen property is never recovered or returned to the



owner if recovered because the owner cannot be identified. Serial numbers are not adequate in making recoveries once the crime is more than a few days old. Operation ID simply substitutes one's driver's license or Department of Motor Vehicle Identification number for less widely recognized or known serial numbers.

The North Carolina Driver's License number permits the property to be readily identified as "belonging" to the person matching that number. In North Carolina, the Department of Motor Vehicles issues an identification card to persons who don't drive a means of identification and for use in the Operation ID program. This permits any law enforcement officer to have almost instantaneous access to the identity of the person who was issued that number.

To implement Operation ID, the number is engraved onto the personal property of the individual. The number should be preceded with the initials NCDL to indicate that the driver's license or DMV Identification Card number is being used. TV's, tape recorders, stereos, tools, appliances, and other personal property may be marked.

For items too delicate or expensive to mark, one should take pictures of the items and store the pictures in a safe place. As the property is marked, a list should be made of the items, their model numbers, their serial number and the location where they are marked. One copy of the list should be given to the resident, one copy to the Crime Prevention Division of the Police Department, and one copy for the Program Files at the development.

Once the property has been marked, an Operation ID Decal should be placed near each entrance to the apartment. This will warn potential thieves that the items have been marked and should they pawn items stolen from the apartment, they are likely to be caught.

Staff and SNAP Team Members are asked to conduct Operation ID each year during January and February. This ensures that any Christmas presents will be marked and protected from theft.

The Marking Guide and Summary on the following pages should be used for completing this task.



Burglary Prevention Checklist

Every home represents a potential target for the criminal. As staff and SNAP members mark items for Operation ID, they should conduct a survey of the risks utilizing the Checklist on the following page. Every "NO" check shows a weak point which either the resident or the Authority should correct to reduce the opportunity for burglaries.

The persons conducting Operation ID should go through this list carefully and systematically. It may be necessary start the survey during the day and to complete it in the evening in order to assess the lighting problems which may exist. Each "NO" should be explained by notes under the item.

Elderly Watch (Cold Packs, Health Information)

The elderly of our communities are the backbone of our history and the source of stability. Unfortunately, they are also likely to be exploited and victimized. They are also more sensitive to noise and other problems when they occur.

SNAP Teams are committed to taking care of the elderly residents in their neighborhoods. They check on each resident weekly if not more often to insure that they are all right and that they are not sick or in need.

Two services are particularly helpful. The first is a health and family survey to insure that accurate information about family and doctors is available in case of an emergency. The second is the storage of information concerning doctors, emergency notification, medications and other vital information in the resident's refrigerator where medics or other personnel can easily locate that information in emergencies.



Files and Reporting

Staff members in the Resident Safety Department are expected to keep accurate records of contacts with residents and the services provided. In addition to completing the forms and activities as described above, staff will maintain separate file folders for each resident with whom the person has worked or for whom services have been provided.

File Contents

Resident contact files shall be kept for each household in the community. The files shall contain all notes, contact summary sheets, investigation forms, police reports and observations regarding the resident(s) and guests of that family. These notes shall be placed in the folder in chronological order with all notes pertaining a specific incident or police report being stapled together with the referral form, report or investigation form which generated the contact with the resident.

Files shall not be identified by the name of the resident. The CHA Account Code identifying the apartment they are renting should be used to label and identify the file folder.

Program Reports

Staff are required to submit two statistical reports each month. The reports summarize the contacts, referrals and meetings held with residents in relationship to the job descriptions and procedures as outlined above. The reports are due on or about the 1st and 15th of each month and summarize the activities of prior 15-day period. A copy of the Assistance Activities Report is attached.

¹ This manual was originally prepared for the Charlotte Housing Authority's Drug Elimination Program in 1987 by John G Hayes.