

## Make the Meeting Space Conducive to Problem Solving

Since the main purpose for holding beat meetings is to engage in joint problem solving, it is critical that the meeting room be conducive to these activities. Here are some guidelines to consider as you work with beat team members to establish a good meeting environment:

- ◆ Try to hold the meeting on the beat, with convenient parking nearby.
- ◆ The meeting place should be one that residents are comfortable coming to.
- ◆ The room should be large enough to comfortably accommodate participants.
- ◆ Seating should be arranged to encourage discussion by all those present—movable chairs, arranged in a horseshoe pattern, is ideal.
- ◆ Discussion of problems should include both residents and police.
- ◆ A flip chart, chalkboard or other mechanism for recording the group's problem identification or analysis should be available.

## Be Prepared to Identify and Discuss Chronic Problems

In determining what to discuss at the meeting, ask the following questions about the problem:

- |   | <b>Yes</b>                          | <b>No</b>                           |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ① Is it of concern to a number of residents/the beat team?                                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| ② Is it likely to go away on its own?   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| ③ Does it persist or return despite traditional law enforcement efforts?                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| ④ Is it something that community, police and City agencies can impact with available resources? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

## Schedule Problem Solving Training for Your Beat

Contact the Community Education Section of the Chicago Police Department's Education and Training Division, Monday-Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., at 312-746-8310.

### For More Information:

For more information about how to get involved in community policing in your neighborhood, call: 312-744-CAPS or TTY 312-744-8599.

### Visit the CAPS Website at: [www.ci.chi.il.us](http://www.ci.chi.il.us)

When you visit the Chicago Police Department's website you can:

- ◆ Learn what district and beat you live in
- ◆ Find your beat meeting schedule
- ◆ Obtain district contact information
- ◆ Read CAPS success stories
- ◆ Report drug activity anonymously
- ◆ Register your bicycle
- ◆ Learn more about CAPS



City of Chicago  
**Richard M. Daley**, Mayor  
**Terry G. Hillard**, Superintendent

# Getting The Most From Your Beat Meeting



## Working to Improve Joint Community/Police Problem Solving



## What Is the Beat Meeting?

Beat meetings are regular (often monthly) meetings, held on all 279 beats in the city, where police and community residents meet to exchange information about conditions in the neighborhood, identify crime and disorder problems, and develop strategies to combat those problems.

## Why Are Beat Meetings Important?

The purpose of the beat meeting is to allow beat residents, other stakeholders and police to discuss chronic problems on the beat and to engage in problem solving using the CAPS 5-step problem-solving process. It also provides an opportunity for them to get to know one another.

## Who Conducts the Meeting?

Beat meetings are hosted by the Chicago Police Department and are usually conducted in one of three ways:

- 1 by a team consisting of a resident beat facilitator (community contact person) and a beat officer.
- 2 by one or more beat facilitators.
- 3 by one or more beat officers.

Option 1 is usually considered ideal.

☞ Beat meetings and problem solving are most effective when they include a broad range of community stakeholders: residents, business owners, and representatives from local schools, churches and neighborhood organizations.



## Become Informed Decision-makers

Most of us relate to the crime and disorder problems that are most visible—abandoned cars, parking-related problems, street drug dealing, gang members hanging out, etc. But many of the crime problems on the beat tend to be “invisible,” unless we or our family or friends have been a victim.

At each meeting, ask for a beat team presentation on the current crime conditions on the beat. This includes the distribution of the “Top Ten” charts or crime maps. This will ensure you have the whole crime picture before you decide which problems to attack.

Once you become aware of all the problems, you may have information that would be helpful to residents and police as they analyze the problems and work on solutions.

## Always Have a Meeting Agenda

At a minimum, each meeting should contain agenda items that cover:

- ◆ **Welcome and introduction of participants**
- ◆ **Feedback on progress made on problems since the last meeting**
  - Discuss whether the current problem-solving strategies seem to be working, whether they need to be modified, or whether the problem seems to have been sufficiently reduced or eliminated to justify moving to a new problem.
- ◆ **Discussion of current crime conditions and new problems**
  - Officers present information about general crime conditions on the beat.
  - New chronic problems are identified.
  - Determine whether the problem is significant enough to be added to the Beat Plan.
- ☞ Generally the beat team and community will be limited in the number of problems that they can work on at any one time.
- ◆ **Development of new strategies and coordination of responsibilities**
  - Since there will not be time at the meeting to talk about each strategy in detail, it is important that a beat facilitator be identified. This person will take responsibility for working with the beat team and other interested residents to develop the strategy in greater detail and to organize the community’s involvement.
- ◆ **Next beat meeting date**
  - Announce the date, time and place for the next meeting.
  - Schedule working groups for future problem solving.
- ☞ Most of the work on problem-solving strategies will take place **outside** the beat meeting. Residents and police must be prepared to work on these chronic problems between beat meetings.