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## FOREWORD from the Commissioner

We in An Garda Síochána are pleased to present this Neighbourhood Watch booklet to each Neighbourhood Watch scheme to assist and guide their participation with crime prevention and community safety. I believe that the information provided will give you a better understanding of Neighbourhood Watch, its functions and future aims.

On behalf of An Garda Síochána I take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to all those who have given many years of excellent service in their communities in establishing Neighbourhood Watch schemes and in supporting its operation over the last 22 years. This is an important time for the continued development of Neighbourhood Watch and this is reflected in the new **Strategy and Implementation Plan for Neighbourhood Watch 2007-2011**.

Times have changed since Neighbourhood Watch was established in 1985, but Neighbourhood Watch is as relevant as ever today in reducing opportunities for crime and in building safe and sustainable communities. This can be achieved by people, both young and old, in the community working in close co-operation with the Gardaí.

An Garda Síochána needs your support in combating crime in Ireland. You can give us that support by being an active participant in Neighbourhood Watch. Together we can prevent crime and build a better quality of life for all.

I wish the programme every success and assure you of the continued support of An Garda Síochána.

**Noel Conroy**  
**Commissioner**  
**An Garda Síochána**



# NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

## What is Neighbourhood Watch?

Neighbourhood Watch is a partnership between An Garda Síochána and the public. It is a self help crime prevention and community safety programme for urban areas. Every member of a community, young and old, can help to improve the quality of life, by keeping a look out for their neighbours and reporting suspicious activities to the Gardaí.

Neighbourhood Watch promotes community participation and good citizenship, which help to prevent crime. It reduces opportunities for crimes by improving personal and home security and fostering a community spirit where neighbours look out for each other. Neighbourhood Watch also helps to support people who are more vulnerable.

Everybody has a role to play in Neighbourhood Watch. Residents in an area decide to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme and then appoint a number of organisers (Area and Street Co-ordinators) to run the scheme. Every community or neighbourhood, no matter how large or small, can set up a scheme. A scheme can cover just one street, an apartment complex, a part or the whole of a housing estate. The heart of every scheme is the commitment of each household taking part in it.

Every Neighbourhood Watch scheme has a Liaison Garda to make sure there is a formal link with the local Garda Station. The Liaison Garda has access to specialist support staff and sections to make sure that every community gets the crime prevention advice and measures that they need.

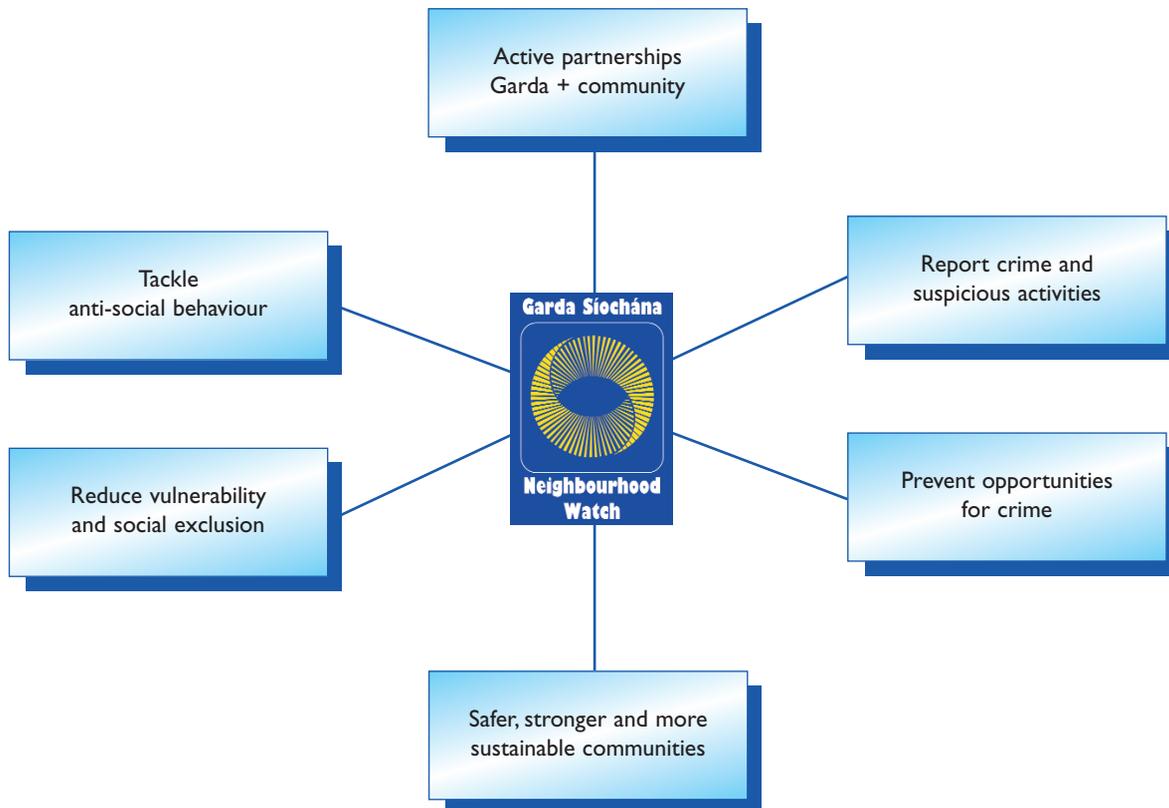
We recognise the important help we get from the public to reduce and prevent crime.

## Our aims

1. To encourage communities to adopt a quality of life approach through partnerships, team-work and good neighbourly relations, which reduce the impact and fear of crime.
2. To prevent crime by reducing opportunities for crimes to occur.
3. To improve Garda and community links by encouraging residents to contact their local Gardaí about any suspicious activity.
4. To improve community safety.
5. To increase public confidence in An Garda Síochána through better communication, consultation, service and feedback to local communities.
6. To foster a caring environment for older and vulnerable people.
7. To develop and maintain a partnership and multi-agency approach to deal with anti-social behaviour, including graffiti and harassment.
8. To promote sporting and recreation facilities for young people and actively encourage young people to become involved in Neighbourhood Watch at all levels.
9. To promote interculturalism, understanding and respect.



## Neighbourhood Watch model



## Neighbourhood Watch – a new approach

Neighbourhood Watch is a way of building and maintaining relationships - between people in a community and between communities and local Gardaí. We have carried out a national review of Neighbourhood Watch to look at how it can grow and develop. We have to take account of the significant changes that have taken place in our communities over the past 22 years. Irish society has changed in terms of the economy, jobs and housing, and people of different cultures living here. This booklet outlines the key changes and challenges that we hope will guide and inform Neighbourhood Watch over the next five years.

## Setting up your Neighbourhood Watch scheme

To set up a scheme in your area, contact your local Garda Station or visit [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie). The scheme may be set up because of community demand or as a result of Garda contact. A Garda will outline what has to be done and will arrange for your first meeting. Before you set it up, talk to local residents to see if they will support the scheme. It is important to make sure that everyone taking part understands what it's about.

The Liaison Garda will help to set up a new Neighbourhood Watch scheme in partnership with local residents. The Liaison Garda keeps in regular contact with Area Co-ordinators. They will also help to link Neighbourhood Watch schemes with other community structures such as Residents Associations, Community Councils, Town Councils and Community Associations.

Every Garda District has a Sergeant with specific responsibility for Neighbourhood Watch. They actively support the setting up and running of schemes. Your local Garda Station can put you in touch with your District Neighbourhood Watch Sergeant. This Sergeant will organise the first public meeting to present Neighbourhood Watch to the community and help explain how it works. The local Chief Superintendent makes the final decision about setting up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

Every scheme needs to be properly organised. The easiest approach is as follows:

- Choose an Area Co-ordinator. They will represent the scheme and make sure that each street has a Street Co-ordinator.
- Everybody else in the scheme is a Neighbourhood Watch member.
- The Garda Liaison Officer and District Neighbourhood Watch Sergeant will give basic training and advice to the Area and Street Co-ordinators.
- The Neighbourhood Watch scheme will meet four times a year.
- Garda managers will set up District and Divisional Neighbourhood Watch Committees.

We keep a computerised database of all schemes at Community Relations, Harcourt Square, Dublin 2. This includes details of each scheme's name and location, number of households, the names of Co-ordinators, District Sergeant and Liaison Gardaí and the date of each AGM. District Sergeants will send in completed forms on each scheme every year to keep the database up to date.

## Remember

- Don't try to catch criminals yourself. We do not want you to take any personal risk.
- You do not need to have a lot of meetings.
- Your community needs you to take part.

The success of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme depends on the enthusiasm, commitment and dedication of all partners. Everyone taking part in a Neighbourhood Watch scheme helps to make their community safer. Anyone can become a member of their local scheme.

## Members' Roles

### The Area Co-ordinator

The relationship between the Area Co-ordinator and the Liaison Garda is very important if the scheme is to be successful. The Area Co-ordinator acts with the help and support of Street Co-ordinators and scheme members to:

- Serve as the link between the Liaison Garda and scheme members;
- Encourage the Street Co-ordinators to help you run the scheme;
- Organise the overall scheme (recruit members, meetings, newsletters, AGM) with the help of the Liaison Garda;
- Plan activities that help to involve the community and prevent crime;
- Identify crime problems and work with local Gardaí to find solutions;
- Represent the Neighbourhood Watch scheme at Garda District Neighbourhood Watch Committee meetings and Local Policing Forum meetings.

### The Street Co-ordinator

- Keep in contact with and support the Area Co-ordinator and Neighbourhood Watch members;
- Encourage residents to report crime, suspicious activities and anti-social behaviour;
- Encourage people of all ages on your street to take part in the scheme;
- Give crime prevention leaflets to Neighbourhood Watch members;



- Support victims of crime;
- Give feedback to Area Co-ordinator on how the scheme is working.

## The Neighbourhood Watch member

Neighbourhood Watch will only succeed with active input from all members. Your actions and support help to make it work. Don't leave it to others. Play a part in any way you can.

- Make crime prevention part of your life;
- Attend all meetings of your Neighbourhood Watch scheme;
- Take action if you are suspicious (**call the Gardaí or in an emergency 999 or 112**);
- Report all crime and anti-social behaviour to the Gardaí. Don't leave it to others;
- Help create a caring and vibrant community – **be a good neighbour**;
- Know your Street Co-ordinator and take part in your Neighbourhood Watch scheme;
- Keep a look out for older people and vulnerable neighbours and respect their independence;
- Working together we will create better and safer neighbourhoods.

## Young people and safer communities

It is important to involve young people in Neighbourhood Watch. There are 1.5 million people in this country under the age of 25 years of age, of whom 632,432 are 15-24 years of age (CSO, 2006). We should recognise this as a resource and give greater responsibility to young people.

We will make a particular effort to involve young people in Neighbourhood Watch. We also suggest that you approach schools, youth and sporting clubs with this in mind. We need to target schools to make sure that their pupils can take part in Neighbourhood Watch, for example: crime prevention themes in essays, projects and competitions. There are successful crime prevention and community safety initiatives for Transition Year students that allow them to contribute to their communities.

A number of Neighbourhood Watch schemes have involved young people in sport and environmental activities to improve their communities. We encourage competitions and events aimed at young people at local and national level. Any activity that involves all the members of a community is good for that community. These are important steps to build confidence and understanding across social and age divides.

## Neighbourhood Watch – our commitment

While Neighbourhood Watch is a partnership programme, we will give an added commitment to promote and support Neighbourhood Watch schemes into the future. We will deliver this commitment as follows:

- We will include Neighbourhood Watch in all crime prevention and crime reduction strategies, including Policing Plans;
- We will provide all resource material (booklets, window stickers, survey forms and administration forms);
- We will carry out another national review of Neighbourhood Watch in 2011;
- Senior Garda managers will establish Divisional and District Neighbourhood Watch Committees.

## Liaison Garda

1. Will actively pursue, foster and develop the Neighbourhood Watch programme;
2. Will attend all Neighbourhood Watch scheme meetings;
3. Will give feedback at Neighbourhood Watch meetings;
4. Will organise links between local Neighbourhood Watch schemes;
5. Will arrange AGMs, to be attended by the District Neighbourhood Watch Sergeant.

### **District Neighbourhood Watch Sergeant**

- Will oversee the operation of Neighbourhood Watch at Garda District level;
- Will organise the first public meeting of each new Neighbourhood Watch scheme and actively support its establishment.

### **District Neighbourhood Watch Committee**

The Neighbourhood Watch schemes in each Garda District will form a District Neighbourhood Watch Committee. The Area Co-ordinator for each scheme will attend District Neighbourhood Watch Committee meetings four times a year. Items for discussion will include matters arising from Divisional Neighbourhood Watch meetings.

### **District Officer (Superintendent)**

1. Will chair District Neighbourhood Watch Committee meetings four times a year;
2. Will appoint a District Neighbourhood Watch Sergeant to co-ordinate Neighbourhood Watch in each Garda District;
3. Will appoint a Liaison Garda to each scheme and provide training and resources;
4. Will allow Neighbourhood Watch meetings to be held in Garda Stations.

### **Divisional Neighbourhood Watch Committee**

The Divisional Neighbourhood Watch Committee will have a representative from each District Neighbourhood Watch Committee. It will meet twice a year. The committee may invite other agencies to take part. The committee will discuss issues such as:

- Ways to improve and expand Neighbourhood Watch;
- Strategies to prevent and reduce crime prevention;
- Action plans on anti-social behaviour problems;
- How well the Neighbourhood Watch schemes are doing;
- How to tackle underage drinking;
- Initiatives to support older and vulnerable people;
- Youth clubs and recreational facilities for teenagers/young people. How to involve young people in Neighbourhood Watch;
- How agencies can work together to tackle local community problems such as graffiti and anti-social behaviour.

### **Divisional Officer (Chief Superintendent)**

1. Will chair the Divisional Neighbourhood Watch Committee Meetings twice a year;
2. Will agree ways to measure the success of Neighbourhood Watch each year (performance indicators);
3. Will appoint an Inspector to co-ordinate Neighbourhood Watch in each Division.

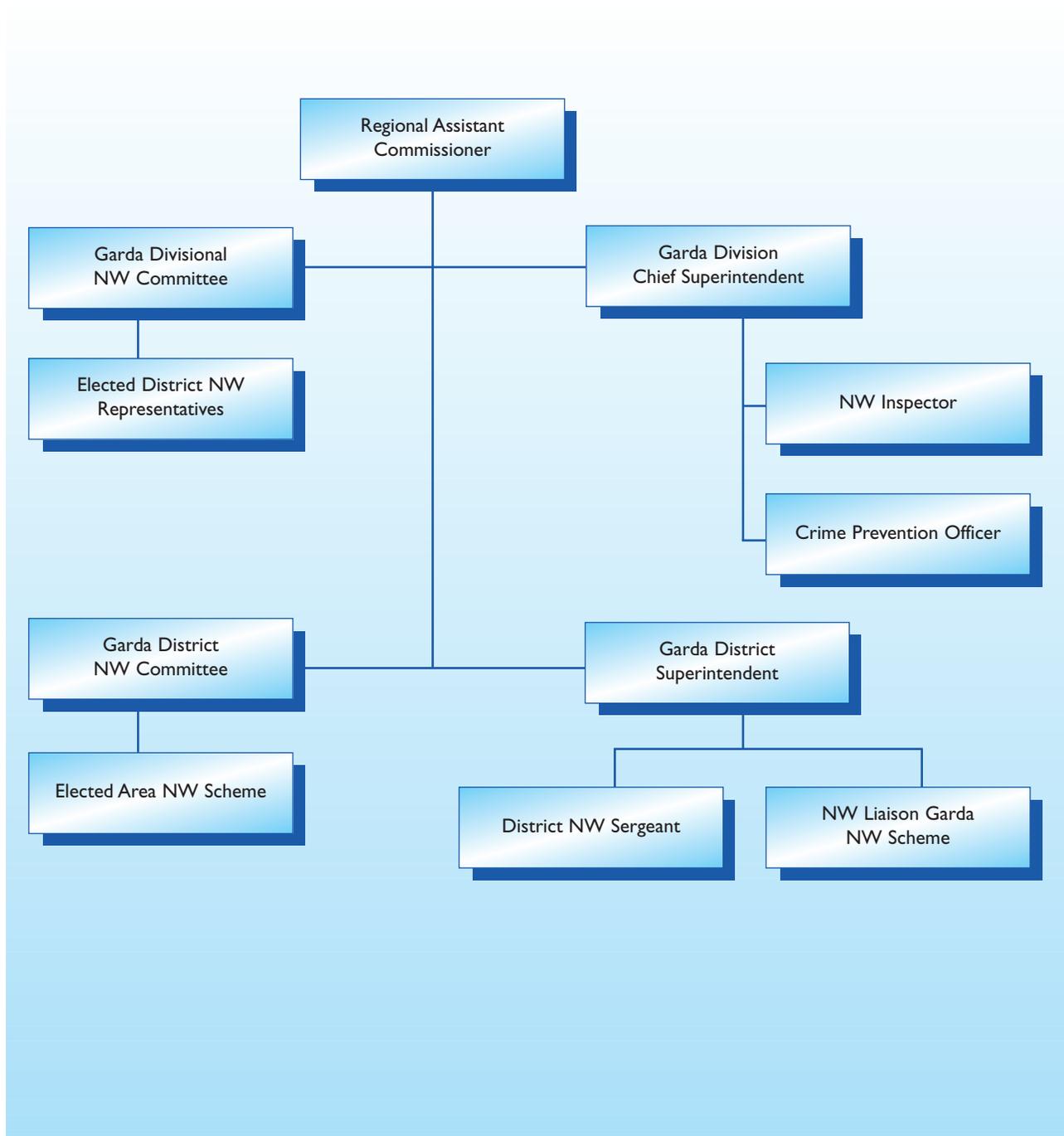
### **Regional Assistant Commissioners**



Will incorporate Neighbourhood Watch into the Regional Crime Prevention Strategy.

### The Dublin Neighbourhood Watch Regional Committee

Within the Dublin Metropolitan Region the Dublin Neighbourhood Watch Regional Committee (**DNWRC**) will continue to form an integral part of the Neighbourhood Watch structure. It will continue to be supported by Garda Community Relations on the same basis as over the past number of years.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT CRIME

### Home security survey

Burglars like easy opportunities. If they have to make a lot of noise, spend a lot of time or risk being seen, the chances are they won't bother. Complete this survey to see how well your home is secured against burglars. Every NO is a threat to your home security.

Doors and windows:	Yes	No
1. Are all your external doors properly fitted with secure locking systems? (5-lever mortice locks for wooden doors, multi-point locking for uPVC doors)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you have a wide-angled viewer in your front door?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you have a door chain or limiter fitted and do you use it?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Since moving into your home (if it was occupied before) have you changed the locks?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you lock your external doors when away from home, even for a short time?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Do you lock the doors out of your view when you are in the garden?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Have you installed an extra lock to your sliding glass or patio doors?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Can you close your garage or outhouse doors?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Do you lock your garage or outhouse doors?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10. Are all your windows secured?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11. Do you check to see if all windows are locked when you leave the house?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Inside security	Yes	No
1. Do you ask for identification before allowing unknown workmen or callers in to your home?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you avoid leaving cash at home?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you have automatic timers on some lights in your house when you are away?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Does your home always look like someone is at home?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



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### Inside security (contd.)

Yes No

- |    |   |                                     |                                     |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 5. | Have you recorded serial numbers of your valuables?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | Have you taken photos of your valuables especially items for which you have no serial numbers such as jewellery, china, crystal, paintings, antiques? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | Do you keep your car and house keys in a place that can't be seen from the outside?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

### Outside security

Yes No

- |    |   |                                     |                                     |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | Is your house number visible from the street?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Have you trimmed all hedges and shrubs so they can't hide a burglar at work on the windows and doors? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Have you ever walked around your house looking for ways a burglar might be able to get in?            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | Do you keep tools or ladders in places that a potential burglar can't get access to?                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | Can you close and lock your garage and outhouse doors?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

### Holiday security

Yes No

- |    |  |                                     |                                     |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | Do you have a reliable neighbour who can check on your house while you are away?                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Do you ask a neighbour to pick up your post or newspapers when you are away or do you use Mailminder from An Post? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Do you cancel all deliveries?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | Do you ask your neighbour to park their car in your driveway when you are away?                                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | Do you arrange to have the lawn mowed?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | Do you tell the Gardai if you will be away for a long time?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

### Electronic security

Yes No

- |    |   |                                     |                                     |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | Do you have an intruder alarm?                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Does it conform to EN 50131 standard (formerly IS 199)? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

### Electronic security (contd.)

	Yes	No
3. Do you maintain and service it every year?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you use your alarm?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you have a named keyholder(s)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Do you have outdoor security lighting?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Vehicle security survey

After your home, your car or other vehicle is often the most valuable thing you own. Complete this survey to see how well your vehicle is secured. Remember, every NO answer is a threat to your vehicle security.

#### Cars, vans and other vehicles

	Yes	No
1. Do you fully lock the doors, windows, boot and sunroof every time you leave the car, even for a short time?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you always use your steering lock or any other fitted security device such as alarm, immobiliser?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you always remove the ignition key, for example at petrol stations and when parked in your own driveway or garage?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you always remove valuables and other possessions from your car?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you remove your radio or CD player when your car is parked (if possible)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Have you marked your radio or CD player with the car registration number and have you noted the serial number?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Have you had your registration number etched onto all glass surfaces?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Do you tuck in your wing mirrors and retract your aerial (where possible) to discourage vandalism?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Do you keep your car registration and owner documents (and other personal documents such as utility bills) in a safe place (not in your car)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10. Do you keep your car keys in a safe place, even at home?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



## Bicycles

Yes No

1.	Have you noted the serial number of your bicycle and keep it in a safe place?	✓	✓
2.	Do you have a good quality secure lock for your bicycle and do you always use it?	✓	✓
3.	When parking, do you lock your bicycle to a secure object such as a bike ramp or solid lamp post?	✓	✓
4.	Do you lock or secure removable parts such as wheels?	✓	✓

## Staying safe

The following guidelines are about personal safety. It is good advice for people of both sexes and all ages. More guidelines are available on the Garda website [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie).

### Out and about

1. Do not carry large amounts of cash or valuables in your handbag.
2. Don't wear too much jewellery or other valuables.
3. Spread your valuables. For example: your house keys in your bag, your mobile phone in your jacket and your cash and credit cards in your trouser pocket.
4. Always carry a mobile phone.
5. Walk facing traffic, so that vehicles can't approach you from behind.
6. Avoid dark and empty streets and roadways when you're alone. If you are travelling at night, arrange a lift or hire a taxi to collect you.
7. Ask the taxi driver's name and ask him to wait until you have entered the building.
8. If you think you are being followed go straight to the nearest place where there are people, even a private house. Then phone for the Gardaí.
9. When walking or jogging, and especially when cycling, you should not wear headphones so you can stay more alert.

### Driving

1. Get into the habit of locking your doors when driving or waiting in the car.
2. Do not pick up hitchhikers or strangers, even if they appear to have broken down. You can always phone the Gardaí.
3. Never leave valuables in view while driving or parked.
4. Park in well-lit places, preferably with lots of people around.
5. Keep your car in good condition, with enough fuel for your journey. Know where you are travelling to and plan your route in advance.

## Victims of crime

We have revised the Garda Charter for victims of crime. It is published in nine languages on the Garda website [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie). The charter sets out the services and standards we are committed to. We will treat all victims in a **courteous, helpful, respectful and professional** manner.

*“A victim means any person or group of people who individually or collectively, directly or indirectly, suffer harm as a result of a crime or other traumatic incident which requires a Garda response.”*

From now on, we will refer victims of crime to:

**National Crime Victims Helpline**                      **1850 211 407**

We will refer victims of crime who are tourists to:

**Irish Tourist Assistance Service (ITAS)**                      **(01) 478 5295**

**The National Family Liaison Officer**                      **(01) 666 3805**

Garda Community Relations, Harcourt Square, Dublin 2

## Keeping children safe

Children need our constant care and protection. It is everyone’s responsibility to make sure they lead safe and happy lives. We urge Neighbourhood Watch members to think of children and young people as part of their community. Encourage them to take part in the planning and running of community events.

The following guidelines are about child protection. More guidelines are available on the Garda website [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie).

### Children at play

When children are playing away from adult supervision, they should know that:

- They are always safer playing in groups rather than alone.
- They should not play in secluded or dark places.
- They should always tell you where they are playing and play only in that place.
- They should not involve adults they don’t know in their game.

### Children in sport

Most children are involved in some form of sporting activity and there are many clubs and associations that cater for them. The Irish Sports Council and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland have worked together to produce a **Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport in Ireland**. This to make sure that sport is as safe as possible for children. You can get it on the website of the Irish Sports Council at [www.irishsportsCouncil.ie](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie).

### Children with adults

While we often talk of the dangers of strangers, many victims actually know their abusers. Before you let other adults care for your children, make sure that you can trust them. We do not want to scare you, just make you aware.

**Remember, the overwhelming majority of children never come to any harm at the hands of adults.**

- Use recommended babysitters whenever possible.
- Look out for danger signs, for example how your child behaves in the presence of a particular adult.
- Warn children against talking to adults they do not know.
- Tell children not to go off with adults without telling you, even if they know them.
- Teach your children to ‘say no’ to strangers who try to be friends with them.



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## Child safety on the internet

The internet has become an important way to access information and entertainment, to communicate and shop. Like adults, more and more children are using the internet - at home, in school, at friends' houses, in internet cafes and via mobile phones.

The vast majority of children using the internet will be perfectly safe. Unfortunately, there is material on the internet that is not suitable for children such as adult pornography, violence and illegal material such as child pornography. We need to be careful and protect our children from harm.

- The best way is to surf the net with your child. Try to monitor their internet use as much as you can. Never allow young children to surf the net alone.
- Place the internet computer somewhere that allows you to keep an eye on it, such as the kitchen or family room. Don't let your child have internet access in their bedroom.
- Use filtering software, but understand that it may not block all the things that you do not want your child to see.
- Discuss rules for using the internet with your children. For example:
  - never go on the internet without your permission,
  - never give out their name, address, telephone numbers or passwords without asking you first,
  - never leave the public area of a chat room,
  - never give personal details that would allow someone to make contact outside of a chat room,
  - never arrange to meet anyone they have met over the internet,
  - never reply to messages that make them feel uncomfortable or scared and always tell you if they come across any such message or material,
  - never send pictures of themselves or other family members without your permission.
- Tell your children not to believe everything they see or hear on the internet.
- Make sure they understand that a person online may not be who they say they are.
- Get to know their online 'friends' as you do with their school friends and talk to them about these on-line friends.
- Stress that talking to someone in a chat room is the same as talking to a stranger, not a friend.
- Let them know they can always come to you if they come across something that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable.

You can report illegal and harmful material on the internet at [www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie). This is an anonymous reporting service for members of the public who accidentally uncover child pornography on the internet. You can get more information on the hotline website or from the Internet Advisory Board at [www.iab.ie](http://www.iab.ie).

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence has, over the years, been viewed as a 'private family matter', with 90% of cases involving the male as the violent partner. In recent times attitudes have changed dramatically and we have become more aware of the impact this crime has on children, family members, employees and society in general.

The vast majority of cases reported to us involve the male as the violent partner with the female as the victim. However, there is a significant increase in males reporting violence. If you are subjected to violence of any kind, no matter who you are, you should contact the Gardaí for immediate help and advice. It is our duty to investigate all incidents of domestic violence, including reports from a third party.

### What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is not defined in Irish law. It is best described as the physical, sexual, emotional or mental abuse of one partner by the other partner in a relationship. They may or may not be married or living together. It includes abuse by any family member against another family member. These people may be husband and wife, partners in a relationship, family members living together or others living in some other partnership. You can get safety order or a barring order against a violent partner or member of the family.

Domestic violence tends to follow three phases:

- A tension building phase,
- An acute battering phase, and
- A reconciliation phase.

Once violence has begun, it not only continues but also gets worse over time. As the violence continues, the cycle begins to change for the worst – the tension building phase becomes shorter and more intense, the acute battering incidents become worse and happen more often and the reconciliation periods become far shorter.

### If it happens to you

No one has the right to attack you. If you suffer from domestic violence, Gardaí will protect you and advise you. We can also put you in contact with other organisations that can give you counselling, advice or refuge (see page 16).

When you report domestic violence, the Gardaí involved will not be shocked by what you tell them. For female victims, a female Garda will help and support you throughout your traumatic experience. Male victims should not be afraid of ridicule. We will give the same protection to any victim in domestic violence situations. We can advise you on protection orders from the courts, medical help or refuge or temporary accommodation. If children are at risk we can remove them to a place of safety.

### The law

Domestic violence is covered by the following laws:

- The Domestic Violence Act, 1996 and the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2002
- The Non Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997 (this also deals with assaults and threats of assaults or threats to kill someone, Section 10 deals with harassment)
- The Criminal Law Act, 1997



Under the Domestic Violence Acts, the Court can make a number of orders to protect you. If you have an order against your partner and you believe they have broken it, the investigating Garda will always arrest them. You can make the complaint or someone else can do it on your behalf. You do not need to have an order in force to report domestic violence to the Gardaí.

We can tell you about agencies that can support and advise you about seeking a Protection or Barring Order from the District Court. You can apply for a Court Order to prevent abuse even if you are not married to your partner.

## Your decision

If you suffer from domestic violence, do not hesitate to report it to the Gardaí. The most important thing is to look after **you**. The decision to apply for a Court Order comes later and **that decision is yours**.

Always get the medical attention you need after any attack and tell the doctors and nurses exactly what happened to you. Do not make excuses to protect your abuser. This will only make your abuser more powerful and make your situation worse.

## Where to get help

Remember that help is available to you. Contact the following for help and advice:

	Telephone	Website
<b>Gardaí</b>	<b>999 or 112</b>	<b><a href="http://www.garda.ie">www.garda.ie</a></b>
<b>Ambulance / Fire Service</b>	<b>999 or 112</b>	
<b>Women's Aid national helpline</b>	<b>1800 341 900</b>	<b><a href="http://www.womensaid.ie">www.womensaid.ie</a></b>
<b>Childline</b>	<b>1800 666 666</b>	<b><a href="http://www.ispcc.ie">www.ispcc.ie</a></b>
<b>Rape Crisis Network Ireland</b>	<b>(091) 563 676</b>	<b><a href="http://www.rcni.ie">www.rcni.ie</a></b>
<b>Samaritans</b>	<b>1850 609 090</b>	
<b>Crimestoppers</b>	<b>1800 250 025</b>	
<b>National Network of Women Refuges and Support Services</b>	<b>(064) 49 049</b>	
<b>AMEN (for male victims)</b>	<b>(046) 902 3718</b>	
<b>FLAC (free legal advice)</b>	<b>(01) 874 5690</b>	
<b>Crime victims helpline</b>	<b>1850 211 407</b>	

## ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Anti-social behaviour is a major issue affecting quality of life in modern Ireland. While people have a right to lead different lifestyles, it is not acceptable if their lifestyle interferes with the rights and freedom of their neighbours.

If you or your neighbours are the victims of anti-social behaviour, don't suffer in silence. Report it to An Garda Síochána. We will treat you with courtesy, consideration, understanding and respect. Working together through Neighbourhood Watch we can and will make a difference.

### What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour is when a person acts in a way that causes or is likely to cause someone:

- harassment,
- significant or persistent alarm,
- distress, fear or intimidation, or
- affects their use or enjoyment of their property in a significant or persistent way.

The law does not apply if the person is living in the same household (Criminal Justice Act 2006 – Parts 11 and 13).

### How we tackle anti-social behaviour

A Garda may issue a **Behaviour Warning** to the person involved in anti-social behaviour. A behaviour warning lasts for three months. A Garda can issue a warning verbally and later issue it in writing.

For children aged 12 - 18 years who do not obey the warning, the next step may be a good **Behaviour Contract**. If the contract doesn't work, the Garda Superintendent may:

- arrange a meeting and renew the contract,
- refer the young person to a Garda Youth Diversion Project (GYDP), or
- apply to the Children's Court for a **Behaviour Order**.

If a person over 18 years of age fails to obey a warning, the Gardaí can apply to the District Court for a **Behaviour Order**. A **Behaviour Order** states what the person is not allowed to do. These behaviour orders last for two years.

We actively enforce the law in respect of repeat offenders whose anti-social behaviour affects their neighbours. We will investigate and charge the young people involved and / or their parents. We can use the following laws to deal with repeat offenders:

1. Criminal Justice Act 2006
2. The Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act, 1994
3. The Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997
4. The Criminal Damage Act, 1991
5. The Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, 1989



## Preventing anti-social behaviour

Our role is not just to police local neighbourhoods, but to prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour. We work in partnership with local communities and other agencies to achieve this. These groups are working together to benefit the community. A lot of work has already been done throughout the country, especially in RAPID areas in urgent need of investment. Communities have new playgrounds, buildings and services and derelict areas have been cleaned up.

Pooling resources also has a positive effect on youth work, which reinforces positive behaviour in young people. We now have 84 Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs) throughout the country. Local authorities have provided flats and houses to be converted into youth and community facilities. These are usually in housing estates. These resources have helped GYDPs to target 'at risk young people'.

Community based Gardaí also use these resources to run Garda clinics, improve Garda community relations and deliver services at a local level. These help us to identify anti-social behaviour offenders and allow us to respond appropriately.

Our aims are:

- to engage 'at risk young people',
- to divert them away from anti-social behaviour, and
- to involve them in positive behaviour in their community.

## ADVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Neighbourhood Watch is a crime prevention programme for everyone living in the community. We should be aware that older people may feel vulnerable and have more fear about crime. Neighbourhood Watch supports the independence of older people living in the community and helps to reduce their vulnerability.

Many older people know their communities well and may have been the people who set up and ran community structures in their area as lifestyles have changed, they are often the only people available to run Neighbourhood Watch schemes during the day when other members are at school and work. Older people are well placed to contribute to their communities through Neighbourhood Watch.

One of the best ways to prevent crime is by being good neighbours. You can keep an eye on each other's property and call in to check that everything is okay. Make sure you know the name and telephone number of the Neighbourhood Watch Area Co-ordinator. We can advise you and your neighbours about crime prevention.

### What you can do to stay safe

#### Handling cash

- Do not hold cash at home. Keep only as much cash as you need at the time.
- Carry your cash in an inside pocket.
- Put your surplus cash in a bank or credit union.
- You can get free advice on money matters from banks, credit unions and the Financial Regulator.

#### Securing your property

- We can advise you about marking and recording details of your property.
- Take identification numbers of expensive items and photographs of unique and valuable items and store them safely. For example, use your initials and date of birth (such as PC270461) to mark your property.

#### Callers to your home

You should be careful of callers to your home and check them out before you answer the door.

- Don't let anyone in unless you know them.
- Keep front and back doors locked, day and night.
- Check callers to the door to see if you recognise them. Look for identification and keep the door closed until you know who they are.
- Install adequate lighting at your front and back doors for safety and security.
- Fit door viewers, chains and limiters to all external doors.
- If you do let people into your home, don't leave them alone.
- Do not part with money, documents or other possessions until you are sure that the caller is genuine.

#### Preventing criminal activities

- Don't accept offers of cheap goods, services or repairs, such as painting or roofing, from door-to-door salespeople. Check with your neighbours about the services offered.
- Check the identity and contact details of door-to-door salespeople and workmen before agreeing to buy anything.



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- Be careful of anyone who says you have won a prize. Do not give your personal details or money until you are sure the caller is genuine.
  - Does the caller have a genuine reason for being there or are they just distracting you? If in doubt be firm and keep your door locked.

### Remember

- If you are suspicious about a situation, contact the Gardaí
- If you are the victim of a criminal incident, call 999 or 112
- Property can be replaced - don't put your safety at risk

## Abuse of older people

A number of high profile cases involving abuse of older people have come to public attention in recent times. **Abuse of older people is wrong.**

- No one has the right to abuse an older person.
- No one has the right to allow the abuse of an older person.
- No one has the right to hide the abuse of an older person.
- Report abuse to the **Health Service Executive 1800 940 010**  
or **Garda Confidential: 1800 666 111.**

## INTERCULTURAL IRELAND

There has been a dramatic increase in diversity in Ireland in recent years. There are a total of 240,000 non-Irish people living in Ireland, or 5.8% of the overall population (Census, 2002). For more information go to [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie). According to the latest estimates, one in ten people living in Ireland will soon be a foreign national. We have become an intercultural society.

With the economic success of recent years, Ireland has changed from being a country that people emigrated from to one that people migrate to. There is no sign of inward migration slowing down. Since May 2004, 326,874 people have come from the new EU accession states. As the chart shows, four countries (Poland, Lithuania, Slovakia and Latvia) accounted for most of them.

Country	Numbers of people
Poland	193,286
Lithuania	47,729
Slovakia	25,645
Latvia	23,805
Czech Republic	12,451
Hungary	9,688
Romania	7,943
Estonia	5,113
Bulgaria	444
Malta	414
Slovenia	247
Cyprus	89
<b>Total</b>	<b>326,874</b>

Source: Dept. of Social Affairs



Some people may find these changes hard to understand and accept. We recognise that this may be a difficult process but we need to combat racism in all its forms. The best way to do this is to through:

- raising awareness
- education
- understanding
- respect
- opportunities for interaction
- equality of opportunity

For many people from other countries, their experience of living in Ireland is positive. Sadly there have been incidents involving public insults, harassment, damage to property and attacks. These can be incidents where racism was the main factor. In some cases an incident can develop into a racist incident as a result of inappropriate words and actions.

## What is racism?

“Racism is a specific form of discrimination and exclusion faced by cultural and ethnic minorities. It is based on the false belief that some ‘races’ are inherently superior to others because of their cultural or ethnic background, different skin colour and nationality. Racism denies people their basic human rights, dignity and respect.”

**(Planning for Diversity: The National Action Plan Against Racism 2005 – 2008)**

We define a racist incident as:

“Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”

We will respond to racist incidents at the following levels:

- Prevention
- Recording
- Prompt investigation
- Detection and prosecution
- Support for victims
- Feedback to victims on the progress of investigations and prosecutions

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## Issues for Neighbourhood Watch schemes

Neighbourhood Watch is a partnership between An Garda Síochána and all communities. It is an opportunity to embrace and value our diverse communities. Here are some ways we can do this:

- Include and integrate minority ethnic groups in Neighbourhood Watch schemes;
- Be good neighbours - this helps to create a feeling of community safety;
- Involve all members of the community to prevent and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Be aware of the Equal Status Act 2000/2004 and the nine grounds under which people can be discriminated against by individuals or organisations.

## Finding the right words

Finding the right words is important. People can often use inappropriate language without realising. Neighbourhood Watch is an ideal way to promote mutual understanding in the community. Using inclusive language will help you not to offend people. You should be aware of the language you use in your publications, community meetings and relationships with diverse groups.

We suggest you use the following terms:

**Minority ethnic groups:** This term is widely used and has replaced the use of the term 'race'. Race continues to be used in a legal context (it is one of the grounds of discrimination under the Equality Acts). The terms 'Black' and 'minority ethnic people' are also acceptable.

**Travellers:** Terms such as 'itinerants' or 'gypsies' are no longer acceptable. The term 'knackers' is extremely offensive and is considered by Travellers to be abusive language.

**Black people:** The use of the term 'Black people' is widely acceptable. The use of the terms 'coloured people' or 'half caste' are not acceptable and will cause offence.

## Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers

The Garda Commissioner has approved the training of 400 Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers to act as a point of contact for minority ethnic groups. You can contact these officers through the local Garda Station. They will respond to minority ethnic communities with care, sympathy and support. The liaison officers will:

- Link with representatives of ethnic minority communities and 'hard to reach' groups;
- Tell ethnic minorities about Garda services;
- Monitor racist incidents;
- Give feedback to victims of racist incidents;
- Make sure that victims of racist incidents are given adequate protection;
- Link with local organisations who provide support for victims of crime, and make sure that members of ethnic minority communities are aware of victim support services;
- Involve members of ethnic minority communities in Garda and community social events, Neighbourhood Watch, Community Alert and other community policing programmes;



- Develop initiatives at local community level to encourage integration;
- Assist in the investigation of racist incidents and make sure that appropriate support is available to members of ethnic minorities, such as: interpreters/translators, family support, cultural needs;
- Monitor policing services to ethnic minority communities;
- Visit reception centres for asylum seekers and refugees and tell the residents about Garda services and the role of Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers.

## ROAD SAFETY

Road safety is everyone's responsibility. Each of us is responsible for the way we drive and we should always drive with due care and attention. Hundreds of road users are killed on the Irish roads every year. Most road deaths and injuries are caused by:

- **Driving too fast**
- **Driving while drunk or on drugs**
- **Driving while tired**
- **Not wearing seatbelts and car seats for children**
- **Not looking out for vulnerable road users**
- **Pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists not paying attention and not making sure they can be seen**

**Speed** is the single biggest cause of road deaths in Ireland. Over 40% of fatal crashes are caused by driving too fast.

**Alcohol** could be a factor in 37% of all fatal crashes (drunk drivers/riders and drunk pedestrians) and a factor in 62% of single vehicle crashes. One fifth of fatal road crashes that happen between 6am and 12 noon are alcohol related. Drunk pedestrians are involved in 38% of fatal pedestrian road crashes.

**Seat belts** save lives. Without a seat belt, 3 out of 4 people will be killed or seriously injured in a 50 km per hour head-on crash. Always wear a seat belt while driving and make sure every passenger wears a seat belt. Children should use a car seat or booster cushion. Making sure your child is properly strapped in to their car seat can reduce injuries by 90-95% for rear-facing seats and 60% for forward-facing seats.

**Tiredness** could be a factor in up to 20% of fatal crashes in Ireland. Driving when very tired is as dangerous as driving while over the drink drive limit.

What to do if you are a tired driver:

- Stop and take a nap for 15 minutes (set your mobile phone alarm)
- Take a caffeine drink before the nap (2 cups of coffee = 150mg of caffeine)
- After the nap, get some fresh air and stretch your legs
- By doing all of this you should be able to drive for another hour or more
- If you are suffering from a serious lack of sleep the only cure is sleep
- **Never drive if you're fighting sleep**

### Mobile phones

Do not use your mobile phone while driving. It is against the law and you could face a fine and two penalty points. Only use mobile phones with a hands free device.

### Remember

- Always drive with due care and attention.
- If you witness dangerous or aggressive driving, call **Traffic Watch 1890 205 805** and report it. Dangerous driving is against the law.
- Never drive while drunk or on drugs.
- Always wear your seat belt.
- Speed kills. Slow down and reach your destination safely.
- **Arrive alive**



## Important Telephone Numbers

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