



# BERWYN POLICE DEPARTMENT



Mayor Robert J. Lovero

Chief James D. Ritz

# NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH BLOCK CAPTAIN PROGRAM MANUAL

[berwynpolicedepartment.com](http://berwynpolicedepartment.com)



## QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE – IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

**FOR ALL EMERGENCY CALLS (Police or Fire): 911**

**BERWYN POLICE DEPARTMENT: NON-EMERGENCY:** (708) 795-5600 (Press "0" when menu begins to be immediately connected to an operator in the Radio Room/Communications Unit)

**BERWYN FIRE DEPARTMENT: NON-EMERGENCY:** (708) 484-1644 (Central Station)

**POISON CONTROL CENTER:** (1-800) 222-1222

**CRIME TIP HOTLINE:** (708) 749-6564

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS HELPLINE:** (708) 749-6565

**GRAFFITI HOTLINE:** (708) 795-2112 or (708) 795-5628 ext. 3112

### AREA HOSPITALS

<b>MACNEAL HOSPITAL</b> (708) 783-9100 3249 Oak Park Avenue, Berwyn	<b>LOYOLA HOSPITAL</b> (708) 216-9000 2160 South 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue, Maywood	<b>HINES VA HOSPITAL</b> (708) 202-8387 5000 South 5 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, Maywood
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**CITY OF BERWYN (708) 788-2660**

**[www.berwyn-il.gov](http://www.berwyn-il.gov)**

<b>Berwyn Mayor: Robert J. Lovero</b> (708) 788-2660 ext. 3203 (708) 788-2567 fax Email: rlovero@ci.berwyn.il.us	<b>Berwyn Fire Chief: Denis J. O'Halloran</b> (708) 788-2660 ext. 3280  Email: DOHalloran@ci.berwyn.il.us.
<b>Berwyn Police Chief: James D. Ritz</b> (708) 795-5600 ext. 3100 Email: jdritz@ci.berwyn.il.us	<b>Berwyn Public Works: Robert Schiller</b> (708) 749-4700

### HELP FOR SENIORS

**City of Berwyn Senior Service Division:**  
 (708) 788-2660 ext. 3510

### HELP FOR ANIMALS/PETS

**Berwyn Animal Control:**  
 Berwyn Police Department (708) 795-5600  
 Press "0" when menu begins – or select option 2

### HELP FOR VETERANS

<b>Combined Veterans of Berwyn:</b> (708) 359-3710 <a href="mailto:VFW237@yahoo.com">VFW237@yahoo.com</a> 1529 South Harlem Avenue, Berwyn	<b>Veterans Service Officer</b> Angel Herrera, Jr. (708) 447-0416	<b>Veterans Crisis Line</b> (1-800) 273-8255 – Press "1"
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**Berwyn Neighborhood Watch Liaison: Unit Commander Frank Cimaglia**  
 (708) 795-2150  
 Email: FCimaglia@ci.berwyn.il.us

# What is Neighborhood Watch?

Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program that enlists the active participation of residents in cooperation with the Berwyn Police Department to reduce crime. It involves neighbors getting to know each other and taking the time to work together. The goal is to train residents to recognize and report suspicious activities in their neighborhoods, and to use crime prevention strategies that benefit the community.

Neighborhood Watch is one of the most effective ways to prevent crime, as it combats the isolation that crime creates and feeds upon. Neighbor Watch creates bonds among area residents, helps reduce burglaries and robberies, and improves relations between police and residents. A good neighbor is an extremely effective crime prevention tool.

The Neighborhood Watch Program has been in effect in Berwyn for many years. The Berwyn Police Department coordinates the Neighborhood Watch Program through the use of Block Captains and works closely with them to ensure continuity.

## **Neighborhood Watch is:**

- A partnership between the community and the police to prevent crime;
- Neighbors coming together to help each other and to address community issues;
- Residents learning to identify suspicious activity and reporting the activity to other neighbors and the police;
- Members living on the same street or within line of sight, generally 5 - 25 homes per group.

## **Neighborhood Watch is NOT:**

- A residents armed patrol.
- A vigilante group.
- A law enforcement entity.

## **WHAT ARE BLOCK CAPTAINS AND WHAT ARE THEIR DUTIES?**

Block Captains organize the Neighborhood Watch Program on their particular block. They are responsible for becoming familiar with their neighbors and learning the best way to get in touch with them to report suspicious activity to each other and to the police department.

Blocks Captains are not required to hold regular meetings, but are asked to operate more along the lines of an informational network. Organized neighborhoods have been effective in assisting the police department in making arrests and solving crimes. If you would like to act as a block captain, contact:

**Unit Commander Frank Cimaglia: (708) 795-2150**  
**Email: FCimaglia@ci.berwyn.il.us**

Anyone over the age of 18 who is a resident of Berwyn may apply to become a Block Captain. Applications are available at the Berwyn Police Department or can be downloaded from the Berwyn Police Department website – [www.berwynpolicedepartment.com](http://www.berwynpolicedepartment.com) -- click on the "BE A BLOCK CAPTAIN" logo (shown below) to go to the Block Captain Program page where there is more information about the program.



## **BLOCK CAPTAIN BASIC GUIDELINES AND IDEAS**

### **Starting Your Neighborhood Watch Group**

Starting a Neighborhood Watch is quite easy. First, contact your neighbors and talk to them about the program and how to participate. Then, obtain their contact information and distribute flyers announcing your first meeting. A representative from the Berwyn Police Department will be glad to attend your meetings with prior notice given to the Unit Commander.

### **Maintaining Your Neighborhood Watch Group**

When your Neighborhood Watch network is established, observe the following guidelines:

#### Block Captain Responsibilities:

- Ensure that your group communicates (phone, e-mail, meetings);
- Develop a block roster and phone tree for your group;
- Coordinate meetings, cookouts, block parties, and other events;
- Greet new neighbors and invite them to join the program;
- Encourage members to complete Property Inventory Sheets (Appendix A). Block Captains DO NOT RETAIN these records; the residents keep them in a safe place;
- Be aware of local crime trends and what you can do about them; Encourage neighbors to report concerns. Local crime reports are available in real time via the Berwyn Police Department's website: [www.berwynpolicedepartment.com](http://www.berwynpolicedepartment.com);
- Ask law enforcement experts and community leaders to participate in neighborhood meetings or to hold workshops on public safety issues. This may be coordinated through the Unit Commander at the Berwyn Police Department.

#### Member Responsibilities:

- Notify Block Captain if your contact information changes;
- Learn neighbors' names;
- Be alert to suspicious activity in your neighborhood and notify police and your Block Captain of any such activity;
- Implement security measures suggested by your Block Captain or the police;
- Look after your neighbors' homes when they are away, and ask them to look after yours. Tell a trusted neighbor how to reach you in an emergency. Do not leave signals that disclose

no one is home. Pick up mail and newspapers and put back garbage and recycling cans. Call the police department and request a vacation check of your residence while you are away;

- Stay alert and get involved. This is the most effective way to reduce or prevent crime and keep your neighborhood safe.

### **Managing Your Neighborhood Watch Meetings**

Invite a representative from the Berwyn Police Department to your first meeting. Allow time prior to starting the meeting for neighbors to meet and socialize. Introduce yourself as the Block Captain and welcome all guests. Topics for discussion could include:

- The value of the Neighborhood Watch program;
- How to find information on the Berwyn Police Department Website: [www.berwynpolicedepartment.com](http://www.berwynpolicedepartment.com);
- Crime conditions in your neighborhood;
- Effective crime prevention techniques for your home and neighborhood;
- How to report a crime: what to look for; how to effectively describe the person, vehicle or activity;
- A discussion of how your group will communicate with each other and to the police;
- Encourage your neighbors to complete inventory sheets. See appendix A;
- Thoroughly emphasize that **NO RESIDENT IS TO TAKE ANY PERSONAL RISK** to prevent a crime or execute an arrest. The first and only action members should take is to call the Berwyn Police Department and report the crime in progress or any suspicious persons or activities. After reporting to Berwyn PD, the resident should contact their Block Captain, who will alert other neighbors, if necessary.

### **Reporting Suspicious Activity**

Neighborhood Watch is based on the premise that your group members know what activity is normal in your neighborhood. A police officer will not be able to identify a strange person or car as quickly as a resident.

### **When Crime Occurs - Report It**

Eyewitness information is the key to solving many crimes. Call the police immediately. Unfortunately, only about half of all crimes are ever reported. Even a five-minute delay can reduce the chance of catching the criminal. Tell the police as much as you can. In attempting to describe events, vehicles, or persons, write down the details of what you saw while they are fresh in your mind so your descriptions to police are as accurate as possible.

### **Describing Events**

Write down the following: what, when, where did it happen? Note the nearest cross street, home address, or landmark in relation to the event. Were injuries or weapons involved? How many suspects were there? What did they do, say, take? Which way did they go? Were there any other witnesses and what are their names? Can you describe the suspects?

### **Describing Persons**

Relate the following: sex; race; age; height; weight; hair (color, length); facial hair (beard, mustache); manner of dress (shirt/tie; coat/jacket; trousers); shoes; peculiar or distinguishable mannerisms; physical disabilities; disfigurements; scars or tattoos; voice characteristics; direction of movement. Start from the head down - hat to shoes.

**(See Appendix B - Suspect and Vehicle identification Form.)**

## **Describing Vehicles**

Write down the following: vehicle license number and state, make and type of vehicle, color, and approximate age; special designs or unusual features (vinyl top, mag wheels, body damage, pinstripes); and direction of travel.

**(See Appendix B - Suspect and Vehicle identification Form)**

## **COMMON NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS**

### **Animal Control**

The Berwyn Police Department is available to assist residents in regards to aggressive or sickly animals. To report an animal that you believe is a danger to residents, please call the non-emergency number for the Berwyn Police Department at (708) 795-5600. An officer will be dispatched to assess the situation.

### **Animal Poison Control Center**

The ASPCA offers services for animal poison-related emergencies, 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. If you think that your pet may have ingested a potentially poisonous substance, call (888) 426-4435. A consultation fee may apply.

### **Berwyn Fire Department**

If you see fire or smell smoke, call 911 immediately. The Berwyn Fire Department also conducts annual inspections of all businesses and multi-family buildings (three or more units) in the City of Berwyn. Please note the Berwyn Fireworks Ordinance bans the discharge or possession of fireworks without a permit. Keep your family safe by installing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and replace batteries on the same day each year. Create and practice a safety plan for your family in the event of a fire.

For more information about services provided by the Berwyn Fire Department call (708) 484-1644 or go to [www.Berwyn-IL.gov](http://www.Berwyn-IL.gov)

### **Berwyn Municipal Code**

A complete copy of the Berwyn Municipal Code can be found through the City of Berwyn website at: [www.Berwyn-IL.gov](http://www.Berwyn-IL.gov)

### **Bicycle Registration**

Encourage residents to mark bikes with indelible ink or an engraving tool and to register their bicycles with the Berwyn Police Department by contacting:

**Detective Karl Robinzine – (708) 795-2156 or [KRobinzine@ci.berwyn.il.us](mailto:KRobinzine@ci.berwyn.il.us)**

### **Curfew**

The City of Berwyn ordinance 660.04 states that any person under the age of 18, unless accompanied by a parent, legal guardian or is on their way to or from work may not be on the streets during the following hours:

- 10:30 p.m. - 6:00 a.m. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
- 11:30 p.m. - 6:00 a.m. Friday, Saturday
- During normal school hours when school is in session

If you notice youths loitering on public areas (streets, sidewalks, parks) during curfew hours, call the Berwyn Police Department and report the location and number of youths involved.

## **Emergency Notification System**

The City of Berwyn provides a means of notifying the public of pertinent emergency and community based alerts. All residents are strongly encouraged to register their information in the City's Emergency Notification System. To opt in, click on the Emergency Notification System picture on the city's website [www.berwyn-il.gov](http://www.berwyn-il.gov) or [www.berwynpolicedepartment.com](http://www.berwynpolicedepartment.com) and add your cell phone numbers and email addresses. During the process you may also choose to receive automatic weather alerts. You may also call (708) 749-6563 to opt in and leave your contact information.

Block Captains should explain to their neighbors the value of such notifications and promote enrollment. At end of this manual is an ENS Sign Up Form which you may print, cut and distribute to neighbors who may not have internet access. These forms can be filled out and delivered to the Berwyn Police Department.

## **Graffiti**

Graffiti is defined as any writing, word, symbol, figure, design or other inscribed material written, sprayed, painted or otherwise applied to any exterior surface without the authority or consent of the property owner. If you notice graffiti, call the **Graffiti Hotline** at (708) 795-5628 or the **Berwyn Police Department** at (708) 795-5600.

## **Home Security**

Your neighborhood's environment can be managed to reduce the incidence of crime. Develop the habit of surveying your home as you approach it; **DO NOT ENTER** and **CALL POLICE IMMEDIATELY** if you see evidence that someone has broken in. Should you encounter a burglar, the first rule is not to get between a burglar and the exit, and never try to stop him. Remember that the key factor in most crimes is **OPPORTUNITY**. The key is to eliminate opportunities. Follow a plan of home security to deter a potential intruder.

- Use a timer or photo-electric cell that automatically turns a light on at dusk;
- Leave a radio on when away from home;
- Close and lock garage doors; Secure automatic garage door transmitter in glove compartment of your car;
- Stand outside your home and think as a burglar: How you would get in? Take notice of unsecured doors and windows and install secure locks. Lock up all ladders, ropes, or tools that could help a burglar gain entry;
- Keep all shrubbery trimmed especially near doors and windows. Don't provide areas in which to hide or platforms to climb onto next to your home. Keep the exterior of your home clear of debris, tools, or other objects that could be used by criminals to break into your home or be used as weapons;
- Maintain your yard. Keep bushes trimmed, grass cut, and leaves raked. This indicates a well-cared for and occupied home and deters intruders;
- Install exterior lighting especially by all entrances. Refer to Berwyn's Code of Ordinances regarding the brightness of exterior lighting;
- Empty your mailbox daily or arrange to have it emptied;
- Install new locks when moving into a home;
- Never hide a key outside--most hiding places are obvious to burglars;
- Avoid displaying valuable items near windows with open drapes or shades;
- Never leave a note on the door disclosing that you are not home;
- Display only your last name on your nameplate or mailbox;

- Have a neighbor pick up packages or have them delivered to a local business;
- Exterior doors should be solid core with door viewers and deadbolt locks.

When leaving home for several days:

- Cancel your paper and mail deliveries, or ask a neighbor pick them up every day;
- Leave a key with a friend or neighbor and ask that the house be checked periodically. Consider asking friends or relatives to stay in your home while you are away;
- Have the drapes periodically opened and closed, and have different lights turned on and off so the house appears occupied;
- Secure your valuables;
- Tell police when you are leaving and when you plan to return; they will check on your house periodically;
- Leave a car in the driveway, or ask neighbors to park in your driveway;
- Ask your neighbor to put your garbage cans out on trash day.

### **Identity Theft**

If you believe you are a victim of Identity Theft, take steps quickly to ensure that further damage is not done to your credit. Make sure to file a report with the Berwyn Police Department.

### **Internet Safety**

Tips for parents:

- Keep the computer in the family room or common area of your home;
- Keep the computer screen facing the room so you can monitor activity;
- Talk to your children about Internet safety and establish rules: time limits, who they can talk to and what websites they can visit. Post the clear, simple, easy-to-read Internet rules near the monitor;
- Know who your children are talking to and what websites they visit;
- Look into safeguarding programs your online service provider might offer;
- Make sure screen names and email addresses are appropriate;
- Teach your children what to do if they receive a harassing or mean message.

Tips for kids:

- **NEVER** give out personal information online;
- **NEVER** pick a screen name that gives away your personal information;
- Tell your parents about mean or harassing messages and **NEVER RESPOND** to them;
- Check with your parents before posting or sending a picture;
- **NEVER** meet with anyone in person that you met online unless your parent is with you;
- Remember that people online are often not who they say they are;
- **NEVER** post a message on Facebook (or other social network) that your family is not at home.

For more information, call the Cook County State's Attorney's Office ICAC Task Force at (773) 869-6492.

### **Narcotic Complaints**

If you suspect narcotics activity, **CALL BERWYN POLICE IMMEDIATELY (708) 795-5600**



### **Operation Identification**

Operation Identification is a nationwide program where residents place marks or numbers on valuables with indelible ink. The identification marks make it easier for police to recover, identify and return property to owners if stolen. You may wish to purchase an engraver for your block group, or use the engraver available at the Berwyn Police Department to mark items. Encourage residents to mark and list valuables, bicycles, computers, and other electronic equipment, also keeping a list of serial and model numbers. Keep this list in a safe place. Photograph items that can't be marked.

### **Poison Control**

The Berwyn Police and Fire Departments are available to assist in emergency situations when a person has possibly swallowed or been exposed to a toxic substance. In case of emergency, call 911. If you have any questions regarding a substance, contact the Illinois Poison Control Center at (800) 222-1222. The Center is staffed by nurses, physicians, pharmacists and other poison specialists and offers free, confidential poison prevention advice and treatment recommendations.

### **Registered Sex Offender Information**

The public has a right to obtain sex offender registration information. Convicted sex offenders living in Berwyn must register with the Berwyn Police Department. The length of time the offender must remain registered depends on different laws. Go to [www.idoc.state.il.us](http://www.idoc.state.il.us). Click on "sex registrant search" and follow the prompts to find Registered Sex Offenders living in Berwyn.

### **Suspicious Persons**

Never open your door to strangers. Not every stranger who comes into your neighborhood is a criminal, however, criminals may disguise themselves as door-to-door salespeople or repair workers. If you question the legitimacy of a person at your door, call the Berwyn Police Department at (708) 795-5600 (Press "0" when the menu starts and you will be immediately connected to the Dispatchers.) Berwyn ordinances prohibit soliciting. Be aware of the following red flags:

- Salespersons or workers who go to the rear of a residence;
- Unknown individuals in vehicles on your street who may be watching homes to determine when the owners are away;
- Unknown individuals seemingly watching the home of a senior citizen;
- Anyone loitering in front of an unoccupied house or closed business;
- Anyone peering into cars, especially in parking lots or on streets;
- Anyone looking into windows of a residence;
- Anyone forcing entrance into a house or vehicle or the sound of breaking glass;
- Anyone at your door without a reasonable explanation;
- Heavy traffic to and from a residence, particularly if it occurs on a daily basis, which may be indicative of drug dealing;
- Anyone loitering around secluded areas, schools, parks, or where children may congregate or a stranger offering a child any type of gift;
- Anyone loitering or driving through a neighborhood several times or appearing as delivery person with a wrong address;
- Individuals in cars that are following the UPS delivery person in order to take the packages.

## **Suspicious Vehicles**

The following situations should be reported to the Berwyn Police Department:

- A vehicle parked containing one or more individuals at an unusual hour;
- A vehicle parked by a business or residence, being loaded with valuables;
- A clean car with damaged or dirty plates;
- Anyone being forced into a vehicle;
- Business transactions taking place in a car, especially around schools or parks;
- Persons detaching parts or accessories from a car;
- Objects being thrown from a car;
- Erratic driving.

## **Stolen Motor Vehicle and Burglary to Auto**

Motor vehicle thefts are on the rise. Many of these thefts occur because the keys were left in the car. Remember to always pocket your keys and lock your car doors even if you are only away from your vehicle for a moment, such as warming your car in the wintertime, or paying for gas while the car is running. Remember to remove ALL valuables from your vehicle.

## **Telephone Security**

- NEVER give personal information to a stranger on the telephone.
- NEVER let a strange caller know when you will or will not be home.
- NEVER let a stranger on the telephone know you are home alone; Instruct babysitters NEVER to tell callers that they are home alone with children.
- Teach young adults alone at home to tell callers, "My parents can't come to the phone now. May I take a message?"
- Do not give out a credit card or social security number to someone whom you do not know or whom you did not call.
- Consider having your telephone "put on vacation." (Notify the telephone company approximately two weeks before your trip, and arrangements will be made for an operator or a recording to state that your telephone is temporarily out of order each time it rings);
- Use "call forwarding" if available in your area. Call forwarding transfers your incoming calls to another phone number giving the impression that residents are home when they are actually away. Your local phone company can provide you with more information.
- Tell telemarketers to "Please take me off of your list."

## **Well-being check**

If you suspect that a neighbor needs help, you may request that the police conduct a well-being check. Call the Berwyn Police at (708) 795-5600. Press "0" when the menu starts and you will be immediately connected to the Dispatchers.

## CRIME IDENTIFICATION WORKSHEET

### Suspect Description

**(NOTE: Never place yourself in harms way in order to obtain this information)**

- Sex, Age, Height, Weight
- Body type and build (slight, heavy, posture, proportions)
- Race or nationality (dark-skinned, fair-skinned)
- Face (shape, bone structure, complexion, glasses)
- Eyes (narrow, wide-set, deep-set, color)
- Nose (long, short, broad, narrow)
- Chin (square, dimpled, pointed, beard, mustache)
- Hair (color, style, texture)
- Ears (shape, size, prominently sticking out)
- Identifying marks (scars, tattoos, birthmarks)
- Identifying actions (mannerisms, walking style, speech pattern, left or right handed)
- Weapons or equipment used
- Identifying comments (mention of names, places, dates, etc.)

### Clothing Description

Cap/Hat	Shirt	Coat/Jacket	Pants
Shoes	Socks	Shirt	Blouse
Backpack	Bag	Jewelry	Purse

### Vehicle Description

- License Plate Number and State, Make, Model, Year (late year, newer)
- Body Style (2-door, 4-door, van, convertible)
- Identifying characteristics (hub caps, wheels, dents, scratches, bumper stickers, decals)

## **BURGLARY PREVENTION CHECKLIST FOR HOMES**

- Are your external doors of solid core construction?
- Do entry doors have a wide-angle viewer?
- Are all door locks secure if a burglar breaks out the glass or a panel?
- Do exterior doors have cylinder-type dead bolt locks?
- Do doors have a heavy bolt or device that operates only from the inside?
- Can all of your doors (basement, porch, balcony, etc.) be securely locked?
- Do your basement doors have locks that allow you to isolate that part of the house?
- Are all your locks all in good working order?
- Are entry areas clear of shrubbery to permit maximum visibility?
- Do porch lights have working bulbs?
- Do sliding doors have locks that secure both the door panels together?
- Do sliding glass doors lift out of the track?
- Do you lock your garage door at night and when you are away from home?
- Do you lock your car and take the keys even when it is parked in your garage?
- Do you leave valuables in areas that can be seen from the outside?
- Are your window locks properly and securely mounted?
- Do you keep your windows locked when they are shut?
- Do you use locks that allow you to secure a window that is partly opened?
- Do you have secure locks on garage windows?
- Are your garage windows have curtains?
- Are basement and second floor windows secure?
- Do you keep a list of all your valuable property?
- Do you have a list of the serial numbers for your electronic equipment?
- Do you have a description of other property that does not have a serial number?
- Do you keep excess cash and other valuables in a bank?
- Are your trees and shrubs trimmed to eliminate hiding places?
- Are lights installed and working around the perimeter of your home?
- Have you made it difficult for the burglar to gain access to a second floor or roof?
- Do you have emergency telephone numbers listed by your phone?
- Do you have working smoke detectors on each floor of your home?
- Do you change the batteries in your smoke detectors?

## Sign-up for City of Berwyn Emergency Notification

If you would like notifications sent to your cell phone number or your email, you can complete the form below and **return it to the Berwyn Police Department at 6401 West 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Berwyn, IL 60402**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like weather notification: Circle either YES or NO

**Disclaimer:** The information you will provide **will not be shared with other agencies or companies.** Please consider **any additional phone costs you may incur when signing up** for the Reverse 911 Emergency Notification System.

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If you would like notifications sent to your cell phone or your email, you can complete the form below and **return it to the Berwyn Police Department at 6401 West 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Berwyn, IL 60402**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like weather notification: Circle either YES or NO

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