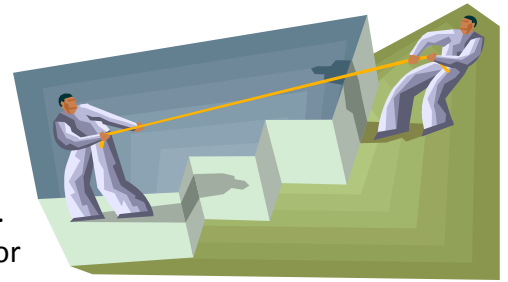


Neighborhood Toolbox

(Tips to Prevent Conflict with Neighbors)

Your behavior affects your neighbors, just as what they do affects you. The key way to prevent conflict with neighbors is to be a good neighbor and achieve a peaceful coexistence.



Meet your neighbors and keep them informed. Introduce yourself while walking the dog or when you see moving boxes arrive. Learn your neighbors' names and regularly say "hello" or "Good Morning" before there is any need or problem. Just knowing them can prevent conflict. Contact them before undertaking something that might affect them – such as hosting a big party, building a fence, cutting down a tree or getting a puppy. Getting their input lets you act in a way that avoids problems.

Be aware of differences. Differences in age, ethnic backgrounds, years in the neighborhood, etc. can lead to conflicting expectations or misunderstandings unless we make an effort to talk with and understand each other. Focus on what you have in common with your neighbor.

Be appreciative and positive. If a neighbor does something you like, tell them! They'll be pleased to hear you noticed the yard work or the new paint job – and it will be easier to talk later if they do something you don't like. If your neighbor does something which irritates you, don't assume it was on purpose. Most people don't intentionally try to create problems. Presume the neighbor doesn't know about the annoyance. If we jump to the conclusion the other person is the enemy, we decrease the possibility of an easy resolution.

Be candid. If your neighbors do something that bothers you, let them know. By communicating early and calmly, you take a step toward solving the problem. Be tolerant but don't let a real irritation go because it seems unimportant or hard to discuss. Your neighbor won't know the situation bothers you. It may grow worse or become harder to talk about as time goes on.

Be calm and respectful. Talk directly with the neighbor involved about a problem situation. Don't gossip; this damages relationships and creates trouble. If a neighbor approaches you accusingly about a difficulty, listen carefully and thank them for telling you how they feel. You don't have to agree or justify your behavior. If you can listen and not react defensively, then their anger subsides. The lines of communication remain open and there is a good chance of working things out.

Listen well and take your time. When you discuss a problem, try to understand how your neighbor feels about the issue and why. Understanding is not the same as agreeing, and it will increase the likelihood of a solution which works for you both. If you need to, take a break to think about what you and your neighbor have discussed. Arrange to finish the conversation later, and then do so. Beginning something and not following through can start a problem or make one worse.

Get help when needed. Communication can resolve conflict, and talking things over is the best way to handle problems and avoid enforcement or the courts. But at times you may need the help of a neutral third party trained in conflict resolution. If it seems that your efforts to communicate with a neighbor are not resolving the issue, do not hesitate to call Citrus Heights Problem Oriented Policing (POP) Division for assistance.

Conflict can be an opportunity for increased understanding and improved communication and relationships when handled properly. For help in talking with a neighbor or for confidential assistance with a conflict, contact the Citrus Heights POP Division at (916) 725-2845 or email: POP@citrusheights.net.

