



McGruff Neighborhood

The McGruff® Neighborhood Initiative strives to increase children's safety at schools and in their neighborhoods. McGruff Neighborhood—comprised of the McGruff Club, McGruff House, and McGruff Truck programs—allows communities to access a spectrum of coordinated programs that educate children and engage neighbors in keeping children safe.

Schools are cornerstones of children's neighborhoods. The McGruff Neighborhood Initiative will use the McGruff Club program to engage elementary schools in teaching children personal safety skills. The goals of McGruff Club are to

- Teach children about ways they can ensure their personal safety and security
- Engage children in service projects designed to make their neighborhoods safer
- Raise children's awareness of McGruff as a trusted source of information on how to stay safe from crime
- Teach children about what they can do to prevent crime and violence in their neighborhoods
- Foster positive relationships among children, law enforcement officers, and other neighborhood members

McGruff Club engages children in grades one to five in a facilitated crime prevention learning experience in a classroom or afterschool setting for 30 to 45 minutes each week. Children in McGruff Club explore four core topics—safe and unsafe neighborhoods, conflict management, bullying, and dangerous situations in the neighborhood. Through learning activities, children build critical thinking, conflict resolution, and decision-making skills. Children then engage in service projects to apply what they learned to address a real neighborhood safety issue. After exploring the four core issues, children in McGruff Clubs discuss additional topics, such as drugs, diversity, Internet safety, guns and other weapons, and home safety. Adults who facilitate McGruff Club receive a kit containing various publications and resources from the National Crime Prevention Council. The kit provides facilitators with the information they need to lead McGruff Club activities and engage children in service projects. McGruff Club was, in part, designed to foster a positive relationship between law enforcement and children; therefore law enforcement should have a positive presence in McGruff Clubs, and can be involved in the facilitation of McGruff Club classes.

Keeping children safe doesn't end at the schoolyard. The safety skills children learn through McGruff Club need to be supplemented with a network of caring adults that can help them if they encounter danger in their neighborhoods. McGruff Houses (residences) and McGruff Trucks (utility or municipal vehicles) offer temporary havens for children who find themselves in frightening or dangerous situations.

McGruff Houses provide a safety network for children and reduce the risk that children will be victimized. Children are told that they can go to specially marked McGruff Houses, which might be houses, townhouses, apartments, or mobile homes, any time they sense danger as they go to and from school or are playing in the neighborhood.

McGruff House volunteers do

- Call the child's parents or appropriate authorities if a child is lost or has a medical emergency
- Reassure the child if he or she is frightened
- Report crimes and suspicious activities
- Consent to a background check

McGruff House volunteers don't

- Provide first aid (except in life-threatening situations)
- Administer medications
- Supervise the neighborhood
- Enforce laws

McGruff Trucks are utility or municipal trucks that children and other individuals can flag down when they feel threatened or in danger. The driver then calls for help on the truck's two-way radio. McGruff Trucks are marked with special McGruff logos, which most children recognize immediately. Participating companies benefit by offering a valuable public service that builds goodwill in the communities they serve. McGruff Truck program participants follow the same "dos and don'ts" as McGruff House volunteers.

Additionally, McGruff Truck program participants can be

- Publicly owned, publicly regulated, or publicly franchised utility companies
- Government-regulated utility companies

All McGruff Trucks must

- Be identified by the company's logo
- Have immediate direct access to two-way communication

Through presentations at schools or community centers, children learn how to approach McGruff Houses and McGruff Trucks (identified through approved signs) if they are frightened or need help.

A McGruff Neighborhood site consists of:

1. An elementary school in which McGruff Club is active
2. The neighborhoods surrounding the school where students reside, in which McGruff House and (optionally) McGruff Truck are active
3. A team comprised of teachers, law enforcement, parents, and neighbors who actively work to create a safer environment for children and build support for, and raise awareness of, their McGruff Neighborhood efforts