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# WHISTLE DEFENSE™

The Effective, Affordable  
Safety Program from  
American Whistle  
Corporation

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## ORGANIZER'S MANUAL

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# The Whistle Defense™ Program

## From American Whistle

### Organizer's Manual

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The Whistle Defense™ Program from American Whistle is designed to serve as a model for colleges, universities, police departments and various community policing organizations to follow as they effectively connect with students and citizens about personal safety.

Organizers of community and personal safety programming turn to American Whistle for the safety whistles that they distribute as part of the crime prevention programs they offer. Whistles from American Whistle serve several important functions.

First, they are an effective “draw”. Free whistles are a great hook to get attendees to your event. Publicized correctly, many people will show up, bring their friends and learn more about the significance of having the right tools as well as the right attitude about personal safety.

Safety whistles are bona fide tools that have repeatedly proven their worth. Nothing attracts attention more than the strong shrill blast of a quality whistle. In a high-tech world, the high-touch of an American Defender whistle serves and empowers. There are no batteries to run down, no zone in which it is restricted. It is dependable and delivers years of service.

As an example, the University of Akron has been distributing around 5500 whistles each year to incoming freshmen. Last year a woman on campus was approached by a flasher, when she blew her whistle, he quickly ran off. Within minutes the University police had received a call and officers were dispatched. According to Captain Dennis MacFarland of the university's force, "We didn't catch the guy, but did the whistle work? Yes, it did. She blew the whistle, it scared him off and people called the police just like they're supposed to."

## **PR tool**

When the whistles have a custom imprint, the whistle serves as a visual reminder for individuals to think about their safety and that of those around them. The custom imprint will remind them of your organization every time they pick up their keys.

Your logo on the whistle is a great PR value. Since the whistle lasts for 10, 15 or even 20 years, the number of exposures is huge. Truly, your marketing dollars are well spent with custom whistles. These whistles speak for you and will represent you and your program well. Every time an individual handles a logo whistle, they are reminded of

the student life office, campus safety organization or the city police department.

## **Community Policing**

Community partnership recognizes the value of bringing people back into the policing process. All elements of society must pull together as never before if we are to deal effectively with the unacceptable level of crime claiming our neighborhoods.

Problem solving identifies the specific concerns that community members feel are most threatening to their safety. These motivating factors that impact community concern can range from car jacking and muggings to robbery and sexual assault.

### *What Makes Community Policing Different?*

Law enforcement has long recognized the need for cooperation with the community it serves. Officers speak to neighborhood groups, participate in business and civic events, consult with social agencies and take part in educational programs for school children. Foot, bike and horse patrols bring police closer to the community.

## *Community Policing Relies on Active Community Involvement*

Community policing recognizes that community involvement gives new dimension to crime control activities. While police continue to handle crime fighting and law enforcement responsibilities, the police and community work together to modify conditions that can encourage criminal behavior. The resources available within communities allow for an expanded focus on crime-prevention activities.

### **It's easy to get started**

The first step in organizing a Whistle Defense Program is to determine a budget and then set a timetable. The central event in the timetable will be the Kick-off. In determining the Kick-off date allow enough time to prepare the community for full participation in the program through publicity and training, but the date must not be set so far off that you put off preparation.

### **Budgets and funding**

It is extremely important to develop a budget that will reflect all of the costs to your organization. This includes monies to help market your program as well as funds to purchase whistles, lanyards or any other items that you

wish to hand out. American Whistle Corporation can supply you with the following:

- High-quality metal whistles guaranteed to last.
- A detailed instruction brochure included with each whistle, explaining how to use the whistle for minimum personal risk and maximum collective community effectiveness.
- Bright red and white 17" x 22" posters with room for department, sponsor or school identification.
- Lanyards, key tags and other accessories
- This organizer's manual explaining everything from how to distribute the whistles to innovative ways to promote your program.

Determine if the program can be funded internally, if you must secure an outside source, or if the project will be used as a fund-raiser. We have found that the most effective Whistle Defense programs are those that distribute the whistles free of charge to their target group, thus ensuring full participation.

### **Find a sponsor**

If your department doesn't have community policing funds readily accessible, there are many funding options

available to you. There are numerous government grant programs available. Some police departments fund community-policing activities with re-purposed monies seized from illegal activities such as drug-dealers.

Don't underestimate the interest that community businesses and not-for-profits may have in your program. For example, local businesses such as banks will provide grants for programs aimed at reducing crime. The concept of community policing also extends to businesses and many are happy to support this type of good-citizen involvement.

Service organizations such as the Lions and Kiwanis Clubs or the Chamber of Commerce are also possible sponsors. When approaching these groups keep in mind that their interest in sponsoring a program like this revolves around the P.R. potential. There are several ways for them to take advantage of this exposure. First, whistles packed for community distribution are typically individually poly-bagged with a key ring and safety instructions. There is a panel on the folded instructions for a sponsor's logo and contact information. In addition, there is room on the posters for the names of co-sponsors. Also offer to include

sponsorship credit on all marketing materials, radio and newspaper releases, flyers and more.

## **Countering objections**

Sometimes community members or campus administrators worry about potential false alarms that would distract from the program's effectiveness. There is very little evidence to support these fears. Some coordinators have handled concerns like these:

- When you hand out the whistles, encourage a group "test." Let everyone blow their whistle on the count of three. That can really help with everyone's curiosity of just what the whistle sounds like and just how LOUD it really is!
- Have individuals sign for their whistle. This can be on a form that indicates their understanding of proper whistle use—such as the understanding that these whistles are professional quality safety tools and must be respected as such.
- Some college campuses have imposed a ruling that misuse of a whistle would result in a \$500 fine. On campuses where this rule is in place, our

customers have reported never having to enforce it.

## **Planning and promotion**

Once you have made the decision to establish a personal safety awareness program and to distribute whistles, success hinges on a couple of things. First, you need to have quality whistles on hand. Custom whistles take 4-6 weeks for manufacturing and delivery. That is our department. We can handle that.

On your end, you need to promote your program. How are you going to make people aware of your program and that they need to attend your events? Consider:

- Contacting the local media including print and electronic media.
- Ask your local radio station to cover the event via a remote broadcast.
- Newspapers. Work closely with the local newspapers and school papers along with citywide and community papers. Prepare announcements and submit them to local and community publications.
- Posters. Post these in dorms, dining halls, student unions, libraries and stores.

- Flyers. Be sure to include the tried-and-true. Make lots and hand them out at meetings, sporting events, church services and retail stores. Post on bulletin boards around campus or the community. Include them in the mailings of other organizations or on your own.
- Press release. Focus on an event such as the decision to start a Whistle Defense™ program. Highlight the support of community leaders, the source of financial contributions or the effectiveness of the program.
- Meetings. A great way to make the program known to the community is face to face. If you have a strong organization, call special meetings where you can combine publicity with training and education.
- Tell all your security officers and/or community policing officers.
- Use email! If this is a campus program, utilize the e-newsletters, email blasts and online blogs.
- Access the local intranet. Run banner ads for free or low-cost on community access sites.
- Local podcast? Get on the schedule.
- Encourage people to text-message their friends and family.

- Be creative! One campus recently had the local pizza shop place stickers about the program on their boxes.

### **Police Coordination for campus programs**

Campus programs are often done in coordination between the Student Life and Campus Safety Departments. Before launch, you might also consider informing your local municipal community policing officers of your intentions. They may want to attend your meetings or even speak with students about the practical, hands-on issues of personal safety. Be prepared to answer possible questions that the police might raise such as the problem of false alarms, increased workload for beat police and the possibility of interference with police work by over-enthusiastic individuals.

Explain to local police that you are warning students of the dangers of false alarms and instituting a disciplinary program for anyone abusing whistle use. You will continue to work with students to reinforce their need to report crime—not play amateur policeman.

Try to emphasize the need for fast police response to a safety whistle call for assistance. In many communities,

local authorities feel that the Whistle Defense Program has led to direct reductions in local crime. Keep the police department informed of all details of your program to ensure continued support.

### **Publicity and Public Relations**

The key to a successful Whistle Defense Program is getting information to all community members. When Kick-off day arrives it is important that residents are conscious of this new community program. It is necessary to make sure all members of the community know where they can receive or purchase their safety whistle, when the whistle is to be used and how to respond to an alarm.

### **Education and Training**

You will need a sufficient number of volunteers to serve as public speakers and educators. If possible, train volunteers to do this at one or two sessions, then concentrate on training the participants. It is important to stress the Whistle Defense program as a *community* safety program. The basic assumption of the Whistle Defense program is that a community can be made safe only if each individual is concerned with the welfare of his or her neighbor. This safety program provides an

alternative to those who don't want to get involved simply because they don't know how to help.

Be prepared to answer common questions on the program. One commonly asked question is, "What about false alarms?" There are always false alarms, usually from people overreacting. The police are prepared to deal with this. They stress that anyone who suspects a crime should let the police know immediately and should not wait to make sure a crime has actually been committed. Make the analogy between the whistle and fire alarms. False alarms do not destroy the validity of the program. Another question is, "What about young people using the whistle as a prank?" The response is that for the first day or two people will probably be testing their whistles. This is a natural response. After that, some colleges or communities institute a fine for anyone misusing a whistle. Customers who have implemented this fine have never had to enforce it.

One way to ward off some of these things from actually occurring is to include a group "whistle test" at distribution. Encourage everyone to blow his or her new whistle and to be confident in its true sound. Take this

time to reinforce the concept that, as valuable safety tools, this shrill sound could damage an unsuspecting individual's hearing. Whistles must be used responsibly. This is a tool NOT a toy.

## **Distribution**

Most colleges and universities give whistles to their incoming freshman and transfer students at orientation. This way both commuters and residents receive a whistle. It also makes a great impression on parents attending orientation with their child. Parents realize that you are truly concerned with their child's safety. Other colleges distribute whistles through the dormitory system. Community colleges often hand out whistles to students when they purchase parking passes.

Communities frequently distribute whistles through a block-watch program or other group organization, activity or event. People love whistles from American Whistle and the whistles go quickly.

## **Instructions for whistle use**

If you are accosted on the street:

- Blow the whistle
- Call the police as soon as possible

If you fear trouble on the street:

- Run toward the middle of the street
- Blow your whistle
- Call the police

If you see trouble on the street:

- Blow your whistle
- Keep a safe distance
- Call the police

If you see trouble from your home:

- Call the police. Give your address and tell them the nature of the problem
- Open a window and blow the whistle
- As other whistles blow, go outside, keep a safe distance, and continue blowing

If you hear a whistle:

- Call the police. Report location and the nature of the trouble
- Blow your whistle
- Move carefully in the direction of the first whistle—continue blowing.

Do NOT play police officer.

- Don't get hurt.
- Stay out of the professional's way.
- They are trained to handle problems.
- Alerting them is your role in community policing.

Tell kids about your whistle.

- From a child's perspective, a whistle is a great toy. And while there are toy whistles, your American Defender is not one of them. They are safety tools and should be respected as such.

### **The main Kick-off event**

It really does work well to have one central event to kick activities off when possible. This event often focuses on overall safety and community safety. Schedule the local Chief of Police to speak or a lead Crime Prevention officer. Invite community organizations to bring and distribute their information. These groups include rape victim advocacy groups, block watches, senior advocates, and local fire departments for example.

### **Ongoing programs**

Whenever possible, have speakers for all community meetings. Continue education and training. Continue to get articles into the local paper. The degree of success

of the program depends on the number of whistles in circulation. By implementing the whistle program slowly, you can count on full participation. For college campuses this would be after 2 to 4 years, depending on the type of college.

Any safety whistle program is an ongoing program. What the sound of the whistle means and how residents should react to it should be known and accepted throughout the community. The use of whistles should be as automatic a response to trouble on the street as fire alarms are to a fire.

The Whistle Defense Program is so well established at the University of Akron that they report back that if a student misses orientation and doesn't receive a whistle, they go to campus security and ask for one. Over time, students value their whistles as safety tools, but as those students become alumni, those same whistles become cherished keepsakes.

## **Summary**

A successfully established Whistle Defense Program delivers an invaluable service to community residents that, when used properly, is a highly effective,

inexpensive deterrent to street crime. Monitor whistle use. If anyone reports successfully scaring away an attacker or getting attention in an emergency situation, keep a record. This will help to validate the program and help secure funding for future distribution.

Don't underestimate the Whistle Defense Program's PR value. This valuable little tool becomes a tactile reminder day-in and day-out of your overall safety program.

You will want to make this an on-going program or an annual event. Get on the calendar early with your chief, dean or local community officials.