

Personal Safety in Our Neighborhood: —What BCNA is doing, and What you can do.

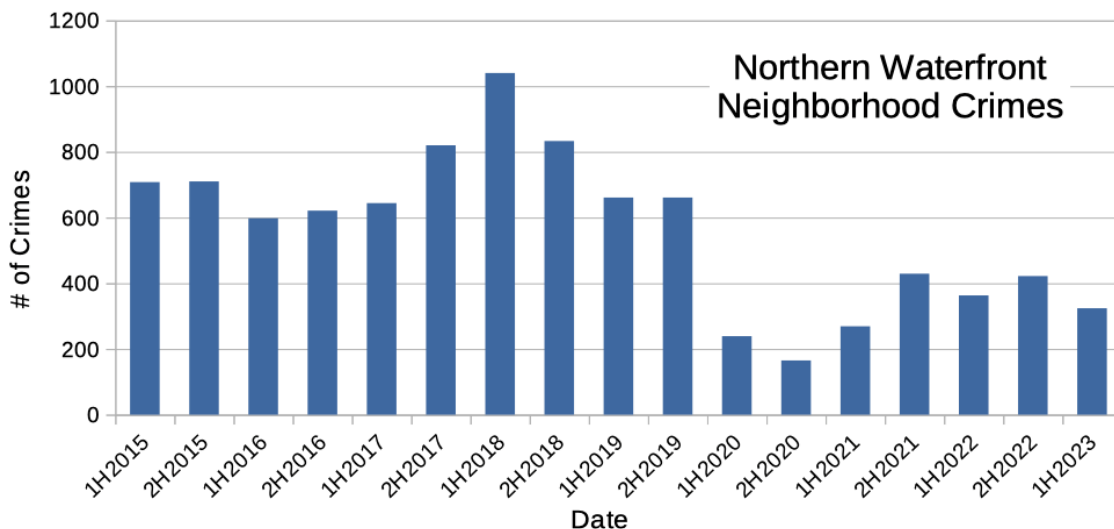
The Safety Committee of the Barbary Coast Neighborhood Association (BCNA) has three high-level goals — enhance personal security/crime prevention, improve pedestrian safety, and reduce community disruption. Over the past year, the issue of crime has become of increasing concern for many BCNA residents and businesses, and it has dominated news headlines.

To highlight our specific concerns on crime, members of the Safety Committee have regularly met with San Francisco Supervisor Peskin and SFPD Central Station Captain Farmer, attended SFPD Central Station’s monthly community meetings, and been an active member of its Community Advisory Board. Since 2021, we have hosted informal gatherings — “Coffee with a Cop,” first at Walton Square and most recently in the Broadway Cove community room at 850 Front St — as well as brought these officials to walkabouts along The Embarcadero, Jackson Square, and the Gateway area.



So what has resulted from these regular meetings with SFPD Central Station and our District Supervisor? And what can be done—by SFPD, the City, the BCNA, and by all of us, as members of the neighborhood to better enhance personal security and crime prevention?

First, let’s look at what city leaders are seeing in the data presented to them. San Francisco maintains an extensive database of reported crimes, mapped out by neighborhood. The [website](#) contains crime data at a neighborhood level. Most relevant to us is the geographical area called the “Northern Waterfront.”



It falls entirely within the BCNA neighborhood. And although it's just a bit smaller in area than what BCNA defines as our neighborhood, its statistics drive what our leaders think BCNA residents and businesses are experiencing.

Surprisingly these statistics appear to show an overall **reported crime** rate for our neighborhood that is at historically low levels. How can this be correct? It surely does not reflect the general sense of unease many of us experience daily.

There are several reasons for this discrepancy.

- This chart shows only **reported crimes**. All too often, crimes are not reported. How often have you seen someone shake their head and say, "Reporting a crime won't help...it's just part of living in SF"?
- It also does not capture the increasing number of confrontations that residents and businesses have with aggressive people who may be drug-addicted and/or mentally ill. One woman states, "While pushing my granddaughter in a stroller, I asked one person to move his things as they were blocking the sidewalk, and he got in my face and said he was "going to f*** me up." I am 64 years old and now feel unsafe in my own neighborhood."
- Nor does this chart capture the occurrence of people defecating/urinating, attempting entry to townhouses on the Gateway Plaza, stairwells, or other public areas throughout our neighborhood.
- The Barbary Coast Neighborhood is a 'drive-by neighborhood' according to the SFPD, set between the major tourist hotspots of the Ferry Building and Fisherman's Wharf. We do not have dedicated foot patrols, combined with decreased SFPD personnel.
- Finally, more recent issues confronting our neighborhood are not necessarily captured by the data in the chart. Consider, for example, the impact of a federal judge's preliminary injunction that bars the City of San Francisco from clearing homeless encampments. Apparently, this ruling does not apply on property owned by the Port of San Francisco. As a result, encampments that were formerly on The Embarcadero have recently relocated to our neighborhood.

So, what is BCNA doing?

- BCNA meets regularly with Supervisor Peskin, his staff, and SFPD Central Station officers through special BCNA meetings and in the SFPD's monthly Community Meeting. In these meetings, we can offset the erroneous impression created by crime statistics.
- BCNA has advocated for deploying SFPD Ambassadors for Walton Square/Gateway area. Captain Farmer informed us that this deployment has been approved and is expected to start in September. In the past year, SFPD Central Station has applied recently approved

overtime funding to deploy two patrol cars to roam in that area, thus increasing the visibility of SFPD in hotspots. Officer Archini and his partners can be seen walking in the area of Starbucks, Safeway, and Walton Square.

Note: These initial deployments of SFPD resources have been focused on the southern end of the BCNA neighborhood because, as a map of reported crime incidents since the beginning of the year illustrates, that area has a significantly higher incidence of crime. However, while the northern end of our neighborhood may have a lower crime rate, it is not zero. Thus, BCNA Safety Committee members living in the northern end of our neighborhood recently met to begin developing a strategy specific to that area.



- BCNA has helped coordinate the initiatives of building managers and owners working with SF Safe to deploy networked high-resolution security video cameras.
- BCNA has actively supported the use of modern technology, such as video cameras, that can improve the effectiveness of SFPD in ways that improve personal safety and deter crime without sacrificing rights to privacy.
- BCNA has held public meetings, including Mayor London Breed and DA Brooke Jenkins, to discuss issues facing our neighborhood.
- BCNA is highlighting the need for better lighting in certain areas of our neighborhood, and building managers have responded to that need.

What can you do?

- Our city's leaders cannot act unless they know our neighborhood's safety issues. Therefore, *if you see something, say something*, and please share any concerns, especially threats to personal safety. If not an active emergency, email the BCNA Safety Committee (bcnasafety@gmail.com) describing the incident (time, date, details) and with a photo if you feel comfortable. If it is an emergency, bring it to our attention, but first, call 911. We will report these incidents to SFPD Central Station.

- You can also **text incident information** to **TIP411**(enter **415-847411** in the “To” field) or **call the SFPD Anonymous 24/7 Tip Line** (**1-415-575-4444** or **415-392-2623**). Issues can also be reported to the **SFPD Non-Emergency number** (**415-534-0123**).
- **Support the efforts of our political leaders to ensure SFPD is fully staffed.** Central Station is currently severely understaffed (only 91 compared to an authorized staffing level of 120).
- **Let our political leaders know that you support modern technology, such as surveillance cameras,** that can aid in enforcing our laws and allow for more effective use of SFPD’s limited resources.
- **When you see an SFPD officer, thank them for their work to keep our neighborhood safe.**
- **Do NOT confront criminal perpetrators.** The nationwide trend that has relaxed gun control has resulted in many criminals being armed.
- **And, of course, if you are not already a member of BCNA, join now.** And if you are interested in learning more about the activities of our Safety Committee, let us know.

[For more articles & updates on the BCNA Safety Initiatives, click on these links:](#)

1. <https://www.bcnasf.org/thanks-to-sfpd-for-safety-enhancements-in-the-neighborhood/> (Aug 2021)
 - Update on SFPD action: Pier 27 side shows, Embarcadero speeding/noise and motorized scooters
 - Establish Neighborhood Safety Plan: Pedestrian Safety & Community Disruption
2. <https://www.bcnasf.org/bcna-safety-initiatives-produce-results/> (Dec 2021)
 - Follow-up on SDRU (Stunt Driving Response Unit) activities from Capt. Ng
 - Progress on SFMTA Pedestrian Safety Improvements (Sansome-Battery-Davis-Jackson-Drumm Quick Build-I)
3. <https://www.bcnasf.org/what-is-bcna-doing-about-safety/> (Aug 2022)
 - Report on community leaders meeting on increasing violence and serious threats to personal safety, including expanded Action Plan
4. <https://www.bcnasf.org/safety-initiatives/> (March 2023)
 - Presentation of BCNA Safety Initiative Goals-Action-Updates to Supervisor Peskin and Captain Farmer at a community forum (2/1/2023).
5. <https://www.bcnasf.org/battery-street-bikeway> (April 2023)
 - BCNA achieves changes to improve pedestrian safety on the dual-lane Battery Street bikeway