

### Some Not-So-Obvious Things to Watch For

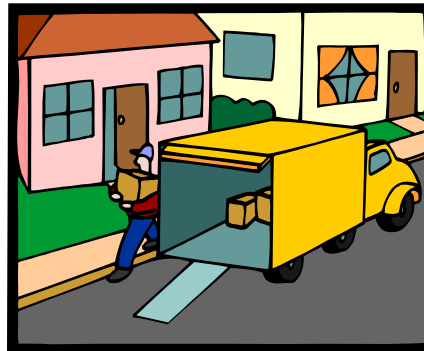
Not every stranger who comes into your neighborhood is a criminal. There are perfectly legitimate door-to-door salesmen, repairmen, and servicemen moving around our neighborhoods all the time. But criminals do take advantage of this by assuming the guise of legitimate business representatives. After all, if a criminal looked like a criminal, no one would have any trouble spotting him. Check identification of all solicitors, meter readers and repairmen prior to allowing entry into your home. Be suspicious of a deliveryman with a wrong address or asking if someone else lives there.

Other not-so-obvious things to watch for are:

- Someone going door-to-door in your neighborhood: Watch for a while. If, after a few houses are visited, one or more of the persons tries a door to see if it is locked, looks into windows, or goes into a back or side yard, it could be a burglar. Such action is even more suspicious if one person remains in the front while this occurs or if there is a car following a few houses away. Call 911 immediately. Do not wait for the person to leave.
- Someone carrying property: If it is at an unusual hour, or in an unusual place, or if the property is not wrapped as if it was just purchased.
- A person exhibiting unusual mental or physical symptoms: May be injured, under the influence of drugs, or otherwise needing medical or psychiatric assistance.
- Human traffic to and from a certain residence: Is not suspicious unless it occurs on a daily or very regular basis; especially during late or unusual hours. It could possibly be the scene of illegal activities.
- Any person taking a shortcut through a backyard: May have just broken into your neighbor's home.
- Any vehicle moving slowly and without lights or following a course that appears aimless or repetitive in any location: But particularly so in areas of schools, parks, and playgrounds.

### Neighborhood Safety Tips

- Set up a Neighborhood Crime Watch or a community patrol, working with local police.
- Make sure your streets and homes are well-lit.
- Make sure that all the youth in the neighborhood have positive ways to spend their time, through organized recreation, tutoring programs, part-time work and/or volunteer opportunities.
- Build a partnership with your local police department, focused on solving problems instead of reacting to crises.
- Take advantage of safety in numbers to hold rallies, marches and other group activities to show you're determined to drive out crime and drugs.
- Clean up the neighborhood! Involve everyone: teens, children, senior citizens. Graffiti, litter, abandoned cars and run-down buildings may tell criminals that you don't care about where you live or each other.



## COMMUNITY SERVICES

### NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY

### CRIME WATCH



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## START SOMETHING!

### Goals of a Neighborhood Crime Watch

The main objective of a Neighborhood Crime Watch is to reduce the incidence of crime by:

- Increasing citizens' awareness of burglary and other neighborhood crime through a continuing information program.
- Training citizens in methods of better property security and assist them in making their property more secure.
- Developing a neighborhood action program where neighbors help watch each other's property and report suspicious persons and activities to law enforcement agencies.
- Encouraging all citizens to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in reporting crime.

### Standard Structure of a Neighborhood Watch

#### Neighborhood Coordinator

- Coordinates activities of Block Captains and Block Watchers participating in program.
- Recruits neighborhood residents into the program.
- Acts as a liaison with the police and disseminates information which may lead to the solution of a crime.

#### Block Captain

- Hosts a Neighborhood Watch meeting.
- Personally visits each home/apartment/business in his/her block, announcing the meeting and encouraging neighbors to participate.
- Distributes crime prevention materials to residents who were unable to attend meetings.
- Assists Neighborhood Coordinator.

#### Block Watcher

- Acts as eyes and ears for their neighbors (in a limited area) and reports any suspicious activity.
- Studies crime prevention materials.
- Checks neighbors' homes when they are out-of-town.
- Assists the Block Captain.

#### HOW IT WORKS

The effectiveness of law enforcement's crime prevention efforts is enhanced by active participation of citizens. By calling to report suspicious persons or activity, you not only aid the police, you make your community a safer place to live.

Some people fail to call simply because they are not aware of activities that might be suspicious. Others may notice suspicious activity and hesitate to call for fear of being labeled a "nosy neighbor" or a "crank caller." Still others take it for granted that someone else has already called.

**Call 911 immediately when you observe suspicious activity.** Do not worry about "bothering" them. Do not worry about being embarrassed if your suspicions prove unfounded. Think instead about what could happen if you do not act.

#### Information Most Often Needed by Law Enforcement

What happened?  
When did it happen?  
Where did it happen?  
Was anyone hurt?

**Description of Persons:** When describing suspects, note age, race, sex, height, weight, and clothing. Compare your own weight and height with the suspects. Pick out some unique characteristics (scars, tattoos, piercing, etc.) that will help you identify the suspect in the future if need be.

**Description of the Vehicle:** License number, make, model, color, any noticeable damage and direction of travel.

REMEMBER: For police assistance, dial 911.

#### Obvious Things to Watch For

Anything that seems even slightly "out of place" or is occurring at an unusual time of day or night could be criminal activity. Some of the most obvious activities to watch for and report include:

- A stranger entering your neighbor's house when it is unoccupied may be a burglar.
- A scream heard anywhere may mean robbery or assault.
- Offers of merchandise at prices well below their value could mean stolen property.
- Anyone removing accessories, license plates, or gas from a car should be reported.
- Anyone peering into parked cars may be looking for a car to steal or for valuables left displayed in the car.
- Persons entering or leaving a business place after hours could mean burglars.
- A sound of breaking glass or loud explosive noises could mean an accident, burglary, or vandalism.
- Persons loitering around schools, parks, and secluded areas could be sex offenders.
- Persons loitering in the neighborhood who do not live there could be burglars.
- Anyone forcing entrance to, or tampering with a residence, business, or vehicle should be reported.

