

Taken from Surprise Police Department's Neighborhood Watch Manual

What are the responsibilities of Neighborhood Watch members?

Everyone participating in Neighborhood Watch plays a very important part in the overall success of the program. Residents should:

1. Be alert to unusual or suspicious behavior in your neighborhood. Call the police department if warranted (emergency 9-1-1, non-emergency (623) 222-4000). Inform your Neighborhood Watch captain, know and use the phone tree.
2. Keep a copy of the neighborhood watch map and telephone tree in any easily accessible place and continue to update them with any new information.
3. Attend all neighborhood watch meetings and activities.
4. Learn neighbors' names and be able to recognize them and their vehicles without any hesitation.
5. Do not take any risks to prevent a crime or try to make any arrest. Remember, your job is to report crime, and be the best witness you can be. The responsibility for apprehending criminals belongs to the Police Department.
6. Look after your neighbors' homes when they are away, and ask them to look after yours. This includes picking up mail or newspapers, and putting back the garbage cans. Do not leave signals that say, "no one is home."
7. It is recommended that you schedule a Risk Assessment for your home with the appropriate Crime Prevention Officer and implement the suggested security measures.
8. Above all, become involved. It is the most effective way to reduce or prevent crime and make your neighborhood safe.

What is Suspicious?

So what is suspicious and what isn't. Ultimately that will depend on you; however we have some suggestions to help you recognize suspicious activity, persons and vehicles. Anything that appears to be out of place or is occurring at an unusual time of day could indicate criminal activity and should be reported such as the following:

Recognizing Suspicious Activity

- Sound of breaking glass (possible burglary or vandalism)
- Screaming or loud voices (possible assault)
- Unusual noises, such as gunshots, screaming, or dogs barking continuously

(burglary or assault)

- Heavy traffic to and from a specific residence on a regular basis (possible theft ring or drug operation taking place)
- Open or broken windows/doors at a residence occupied/unoccupied in addition to a closed business

Suspicious Persons:

Obviously, not every stranger who comes into a neighborhood is a criminal. Legitimate door-to-door sales and repair people appear in residential areas frequently. On occasion, however, criminals disguise themselves as these workers. This is why it is important to be alert to the activities of all nonresidents. Police should be called to investigate persons in the following circumstances, who may be suspects in the crimes indicated:

Going door to door in a residential area, especially if one or more goes to rear of residence or loiters in front of an unoccupied house or closed business (burglary)

- Running, especially if carrying something of value or carrying unwrapped property at an usual hour (fleeing the scene of a crime)
- Heavy traffic to and from a residence, particularly if it occurs on a daily basis (drug dealing, or fence operation)
- Loitering around or looking into cars, especially in parking lots or on streets (car theft)
- Loitering around schools, bus stops, parks or secluded areas (sex offender)
- Loitering or driving through a neighborhood several times or appearing as a delivery person with a wrong address (burglary)

Suspicious Vehicles:

Vehicles in the following situations MAY be involved in crimes and should be reported to police:

- Slow moving, without lights following aimless course in any location, including residential streets, schools, and playgrounds (burglar, drug pusher, or sex offender)
- Abandoned in your neighborhood (stolen car)
- Persons detaching mechanical parts or accessories from it (theft or vandalism)
- Parked by a business or unoccupied residence being loaded with valuables (burglary or theft)
- Parked or occupied, containing one or more persons, especially at an unusual hour (lookouts for a burglary or robbery)

Describing and Reporting of Events Vehicles and Persons

Practicing to develop skill in providing quick, accurate descriptions is an excellent Neighborhood Watch meeting activity. In attempting to describe events, vehicles or persons, write down the details of what you have observed while they are still fresh in your mind, so your descriptions to police will be as accurate as possible.

Describing Events

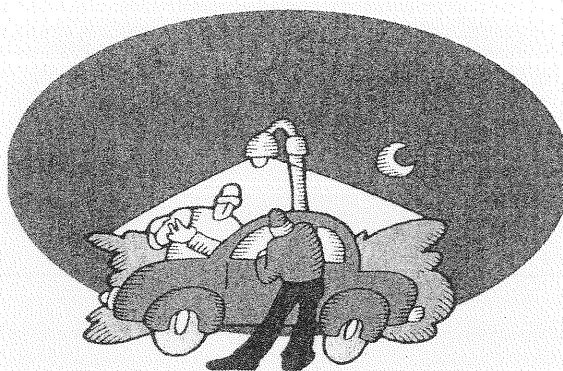
When describing events, write down the following:

- What happened
- When it happened
- Where it occurred (take note of nearest cross street, home address or possible landmark in relationship to the event)
- Whether weapons are involved, observed or suspected (extremely vital to responding officers)
- Whether injuries are involved
- Who did it (see Describing Persons)
- Why is it suspicious (why you feel the event may be suspicious)

Describing Vehicles

To help you remember descriptions of vehicles, use the acronym "**CYMBALS**" to help you remember.

- **C** Color of vehicle and license plate
- **Y** Year of the vehicle
- **M** Make and model of the vehicle (Ford, Chevrolet, Toyota, etc)
- **B** Body (SUV, Car, Van, Truck, Two-Door, Four-Door, etc.)
- **A** Additional Info (direction of travel, damage, bumper stickers, cracked windshield)
- **L** License number, VIN, DOT number
- **S** State (License Plate)



Describing Persons

In describing persons, it is important to write down the following:

- **C** Color of hair, eyes, skin
- **Y** Year of birth (approximate age)
- **M** Make (race, ethnicity)
- **B** Body Type (height, weight, build, etc.)
- **A** Attire (clothing description, baggy, tight, loose, hats, jackets, muscle shirt, etc)
- **L** Looks (length of hair, scars, tattoos, facial hair, glasses, etc.)
- **S** Sex (male or female)

Why do I need to know my neighbors?

Getting to know your neighbors, their families, their habits, the cars they drive, their phone numbers both at home and at work, and any medical problems they may have is probably one of the most important aspects of a successful Neighborhood Watch program. Knowing these aspects of your neighbors' lives will allow you to respond accurately and quickly to most emergency situations, and may thereby prevent a crime or save a life. After all, how will you know if something is out of the ordinary if you don't know what is ordinary?