

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY AND CRIME TO POLICE

Most of us do not hesitate to call 9-1-1 if we see obvious criminal activity. But what should you do when you see activity that doesn't seem to actually break the law but certainly seems to be pointing towards criminal behavior? What if it is an ongoing problem but not clearly illegal?

When these activities occur in your own neighborhood, it can be especially hard to call the police. Whether it is fear of retaliation, being identified as a "nosy neighbor" or not wanting to "bother" the police, many of these behaviors go unreported.

Being proactive and calling about those behaviors that seem out of the ordinary or ongoing activity that often accompanies crimes (i.e. frequent visitors that stay only minutes may indicate drug activity) helps the police identify potential patterns or interdict crimes before they occur. Report criminal and suspicious activity EACH AND EVERY TIME it occurs.

REPORTING CRIME IS IMPORTANT

Seattle has one of the highest rates in the nation of people who report crime to the police. Reporting crimes and suspicious behavior is important because:

- It allows law enforcement officers to identify patterns and trends quicker; leading to the apprehension of criminals and fewer victims.
- It allows for a more accurate picture of criminal activity in the city.
- It shows criminals that crime is not tolerated, and it is taken seriously.

CALLING THE NON-EMERGENCY NUMBER

(206) 625-5011 is the police non-emergency number. Use this number when:

- You want to report a nuisance, such as a noise or parking complaint.
- To report a non-emergency crime, one that did not just occur, and the suspects are not in the immediate area.
- You have questions about something suspicious occurring in the neighborhood, and you are not sure it is criminal activity.

WHO SHOULD I CALL?

9-1-1 Center

- Dial **9-1-1** for emergencies or crimes in progress.
- Call **(206) 625-5011** to report suspicious activity or a crime that occurred earlier.

DRUG ACTIVITY

For on going drug activity that does not require immediate police response, contact the Narcotics Section and ask to file a Narcotics Activity Report (NARS). If it is after regular working hours, call the non-emergency 9-1-1 and tell the operator you would like to fill out a NARS:

- **Narcotics Section** (8:00 AM - 4:00 PM)
(206) 684-5797
- **Non-Emergency Number**
(206) 625-5011

ABANDONED VEHICLES

In the City of Seattle, an abandoned vehicle is defined as a vehicle that is parked on the street or city property and has not been moved for 72 hours:

- **HOTLINE: (206) 684-8763**
- **Online: https://www.seattle.gov/police/forms/Abandoned_Vehicles.htm**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

If you are aware of a domestic violence situation:
Domestic Violence Unit (8:00 AM - 5:00 PM)
(206)684-0330 | www.seattle.gov/police/prevention/DV/

CHILD ABUSE

If you are aware of a child abuse situation:
Sexual Assault/Child Abuse Unit **(206)684-5575**

Visit the crime prevention section of our website for additional information: seattle.gov/police/prevention



SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

How to Recognize & Report Suspicious Activity to Police



PRODUCED BY THE SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SEATTLE NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP



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SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES

The following are behaviors that *sometimes* indicate criminal activity. It is best to evaluate the behavior in the context they are occurring within and when in doubt, report the activity.

SUSPICIOUS PLACES

- Continuous “repair” operations at a non-business location.
- Open or broken windows at closed businesses or residences whose owners are temporarily absent.
- Unusual noises such as gunshots, screaming, unusually barking dogs, or any noise that is suggestive of foul play.
- Unusual odors coming from location.
- Continuous traffic that comes and goes to the same location, usually staying for very short periods of time.

SUSPICIOUS VEHICLES

- Slow moving vehicles, vehicles without lights, and/or the course followed appears aimless and repetitive. Particularly suspicious in the areas of schools, parks and playgrounds.
- Vehicles being loaded with valuables when parked in front of a closed business or unattended residence - even if the vehicle is a legitimate-looking commercial unit.
- Abandoned vehicles.
- Apparent business transactions conducted from a vehicle - especially suspicious when involving juveniles or around schools and parks.
- Persons, especially juveniles and females, being forced into vehicles.
- Objects thrown from a vehicle, especially when being driven at a high rate of speed.

PROPERTY CRIME

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

- Property, especially large items being carried by persons on foot. If the person is running and/or the property is not wrapped as if just purchased, this is especially suspicious.
- Property being removed from or being placed into vehicles or buildings when the owners are known to be absent.
- Someone offering to sell you something for significantly less than the market value.
- Items that accumulate in private garages, storage areas or on property, especially if the items are in good condition and not being used.
- People going door-to-door in a residential area, or the subjects going into a back or side yard. If another person remains in front of a the house when this occurs, this is especially suspicious.
- Someone waiting in front of a house or business when the owners are absent or the building is closed.
- Someone forcing entrance to or tampering with a residence, business, vehicle, etc.
- Someone forcing to enter a locked vehicle, especially at night or in a parking lot.

DRUG ACTIVITY

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

- An unusually large amount of traffic coming to a building - in cars, taxis or walking - often at strange hours. This traffic is usually quick, with people staying only a short time.
- Visitors who may sometimes pound on doors or shout to be let in, or someone will come out to meet them.
- Finding drugs or drug paraphernalia (syringes, pipes, etc.) in the area.
- Repeated, observable exchanges of items, especially where money is visible.
- Offers to sell you drugs or a conversation about drugs that you overhear.
- Noxious, toxic odors or “musty” smells coming from or around a building.
- Buildings where additional or unusual changes seem to have been made, such as a ventilation pipe coming from the basement, covered windows or grow lights.
- Buildings where extreme security measures seem to be taken.
- Buildings where no owner or primary renter is apparent, and no home activities, such as yard work, painting or maintenance seem to be going on.

KEEPING AN ACTIVITY LOG

One of the most frustrating problems for a neighborhood to take on is that of narcotics activity occurring out of a private residence. While it is clear to the neighborhood what is going on, it often takes longer than neighbors would like to shut it down. Keeping an activity log assists the police in documenting what is occurring in the neighborhood and helps to build a prosecutable case. A log should include:

- An address of where the activity is occurring.
- Date and time of activity.
- Description of the problem: people, vehicles and activities.
- Describe both what you see and hear.
- Incident or event numbers: if you report activity to 9-1-1, ask for an event number. If an officer comes out to take a report, ask for an incident number. Keep both of these numbers in your log.
- The actions that have been taken by you or your neighbors. Note how the activities have directly affected your life, either your feelings of safety or lifestyle changes you’ve made in response to the behavior.

You can print out a log worksheet at:
www.seattle.gov/police/prevention/docs/log.pdf

