

What is "Suspicious"?



When to call the Police.

NON-EMERGENCY: 303 627-3100

EMERGENCY 9-1-1

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HELP THE POLICE DEPARTMENT HELP YOU

The Police Department cannot function effectively without the assistance of concerned, responsible residents. They are depending on *YOU* to call and tell them whenever you see suspicious persons or activity.

Some residents fail to call the police simply because they are not aware of what seemingly innocent activities should be considered suspicious. Others may recognize suspicious activity and be hesitant to call for fear of being thought of as the neighborhood "busy-body." Yet others simply assume that someone else has already called the police.

Call the police immediately about all suspicious activity - and do it yourself. Don't worry about "bothering" the police; it is part of their job to investigate suspicious matters. Do not worry about feeling embarrassed if your suspicions are wrong; think instead about what could happen if your suspicions are right and you don't call.



BUT WHAT IS "SUSPICIOUS"?

Generally, anything that seems even slightly out of the ordinary for your area or for the time of day may signal criminal activity. Some of the most obvious things to watch for and report include:

- A stranger entering your neighbor's home or property when the neighbor is not home.
- Screaming or shouting may signal a fight, robbery, rape, etc.
- Offers of merchandise at ridiculously low prices could mean stolen property.
- Person removing car parts, license plates, or gasoline are considered suspicious.
- A person looking into parked cars may be looking for a car to steal or for valuables left in plain view inside.
- Persons entering or leaving a business place after hours may be burglars.
- The sound of breaking glass or other loud, explosive noises could mean an accident, break-in, or vandalism.
- Persons loitering around schools, parks, secluded areas, or in the neighborhood may be sex offenders, may be "casing" for crime, or may be acting as a look-out.
- Persons around the neighborhood who do not live there could be burglars.
- Persons claiming to be representatives of utilities (gas, phone, water, electric, cable) but who are not in uniform or have no company identification may be burglars.

SOME NOT-SO-OBVIOUS THINGS TO WATCH FOR

Not every stranger who comes into your neighborhood is a criminal. There are many perfectly legitimate door-to-door sales- and service- people conducting business in Aurora every day. Criminals, however, take advantage of this by pretending to be a legitimate business representative. After all, if criminals looked like criminals, none of us would have any problem spotting them...

Following are some situations you might see and what they might mean:

- Persons going door-to-door in your neighborhood.



Watch for a while. If they look into windows, appear to be trying doors to see if they're unlocked, or go to a side- or back- yard, they may be burglars.

- A person loitering in front of a home or business is suspicious if the residents are away and the business is closed. There may be a burglary in progress.
- Anyone tampering with or forcing entry into a building or vehicle is suspicious anytime, anywhere.
- A person who is running and does not appear to be exercising, especially if carrying property could be fleeing the scene of a crime.
- Simply carrying property may be regarded as suspicious if it is at an unusual hour, in an unusual place, if the person appears to be trying to conceal the property, or if the property is not wrapped as if it were just purchased.
- A person exhibiting unusual mental or physical behavior may be injured, under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, or in need of psychiatric help.
- Heavy foot traffic to and from a certain residence may indicate narcotics activity or a "fencing" operation (buying and selling stolen property), if it occurs on a regular basis, especially during unusual hours.

THINGS TO WATCH FOR INVOLVING VEHICLES

- Any vehicle without lights at night, cruising slowly, or following a course that seems aimless or repetitive is suspicious in any location, but particularly so in areas of schools, parks, and playgrounds. Occupants may be "casing" for a burglary or robbery, or they could possibly be drug dealers or sex offenders.
- Parked, occupied vehicles are worth noting, especially if seen at unusual hours. It could be a possible lookout for a crime, even if the occupants appear to be lovers.
- Vehicles being loaded with valuables are suspicious if parked at a closed business or residence where the occupants are away, even if the vehicle appears to be a legitimate commercial unit. Professional thieves will often take the time and trouble to customize their vehicles with special signs in order to move freely without attracting attention and raising suspicion.
- Apparent business transactions conducted from a vehicle, especially around schools or parks and if juveniles are involved, may be indicative of drug sales.
- Persons being forced into vehicles, especially if female and/or juvenile, may mean a possible kidnapping.
- The unfamiliar abandoned vehicle parked on your block may be stolen.

OTHER UNUSUAL SITUATIONS YOU SHOULD REPORT

- On- going vehicle "repair" operations at a non- business location could mean a "chop shop" where stolen cars are stripped, repainted, or otherwise altered.
- Open or broken windows and doors at a home or business could mean a burglary still in- progress or already completed.
- Gunshots, screaming, the sounds of a fight, persons chasing others on foot or in

cars, unusual barking of dogs - anything suggesting foul play, danger, disturbance of the peace, or criminal activity - should be reported.

While some, if not all, of the suspicious circumstances described above could have logical and legitimate explanations, the Police Department would rather investigate a potential criminal situation and find nothing than be called after it is already too late and someone has been victimized. Your call could stop a criminal act, prevent an injury, or possibly even save a life.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CALL THE POLICE?

All calls to the Police Department's Communications Center are prioritized according to the seriousness of the situation, *NOT* simply according to the order in which they are received. If you call the police, please be prepared to provide as much of the following information as possible:

- What are you reporting?
- When did it happen?
- Where did it happen?
- Is anyone injured?
- Vehicle description (including license number).
- Suspect description, including race, sex, age, height, weight, hair, eyes, facial hair, clothing, and any other identifying characteristics.
- Direction of flight (street and direction).
- Weapons involved (gun, knife, bats, etc.).
- Where are you calling from?

While it may seem as though you are being asked many questions, the information is for the safety of the responding officers. The dispatcher is attempting to gather as much information about the situation as possible so that the officers will have a clearer picture of what they may encounter when they arrive. *Please, remain calm and cooperate with the dispatcher.*