



COMMUNITY LIAISON UNIT

COLUMBUS DIVISION OF POLICE • STRATEGIC RESPONSE BUREAU

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR, KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS PERSONS AND ACTIVITIES:

Reporting suspicious activities requires raising your awareness level. That is, knowing what is normal or what is out of place; having a suspicion or a gut feeling something is wrong. The goal is to reduce criminal opportunities by reporting these suspicions to the police. This requires that you be both observant and aware of persons and events in your neighborhoods, work locations, and as you travel throughout the city. You must also overcome any reluctance you might have in reporting these observations to the police. The following is a general list of activities, which should be reported:

- Suspicious person(s) engaged in the following:
 - Forcing entry into a house, garage or vehicle.
 - Running from a house.
 - Walking around a house, checking doors, windows, etc. or who appear to be attempting to hide from view.
 - Loitering in the neighborhood, appear out of place or are unknown to you.
- Anyone with a weapon.
- Any unusual noise, regardless of the time of day; for example, a scream, breaking glass, loud crashing sound, prying or any audible alarm.
- Suspicious persons carrying what might be loot; as an example, radios, TV's, stereo equipment, large sacks, bags or pillowcases which appear to be full might be indicative of criminal activity.
- Any suspicious vehicle(s) parked on the street or in your neighbor's driveway.
- A solicitor who does not appear to have a valid reason for coming to your door, seems overly aggressive or forceful, appears hesitant, does a lot of unnecessary looking around, or asks unusual questions concerning you or your neighbors' daily schedule or habits.

WHEN REPORTING THIS INFORMATION, REMEMBER YOU SHOULD ATTEMPT TO:

- Get an accurate description of the individuals and vehicles involved, including license plate numbers.
- Remain as calm as possible and give the dispatcher the details of your observations; the dispatcher relays the information to patrol cars that are en route to investigate.
- Relay the exact location where the activity is occurring. It would be helpful if you provided your name, address and phone number in case some of the information needs later clarification. However, this is not absolutely required.
- You can remain anonymous but be advised that this will limit the actions an officer can take. The important factor is to call anytime, day or night. You may be preventing a crime in progress or helping in the apprehension of a criminal.

Personal Safety Crime Prevention Tips

Be street wise and safe:

- Stand tall and walk confidently. Watch where you are going and what is happening around you.
- Stick to well-lighted and busy streets. Walk with friends. Avoid shortcuts through a dark alley or a deserted street.
- If harassed from a vehicle, walk quickly or run in the opposite direction to safety. If you are really scared, scream.
- Never hitchhike; accept rides only from people you know and trust.
- Do not flash your cash; carry only money you need for the day. Always have emergency change for a telephone call; plan on your cell phone not working when you really need it.
- Know your neighborhood! What hours are stores and restaurants open? Where are the police and fire stations, libraries, and schools? You might need them in an emergency.
- If you go out for a late snack or a midnight movie, take a friend. Do not go alone. Most assaults happen to a lone victim.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you will come back. Call if you are going to be late.
- If you are driving, park your vehicle in a well-lighted location and lock it when you leave. Check for uninvited passengers in the back seat or on the floor before you get inside the vehicle.
- Have your keys in hand when approaching your vehicle. Do not wait until you get to the vehicle to look for your keys.
- Alter your routine. Change daily patterns and if possible, take different routes to work or to school. Park in different locations that are well lighted.

When jogging or bicycling:

- Go with a friend and take a familiar and well-traveled route.
- Do not jog or bike at night.
- Refrain from using your stereo headphones. It is safer to remain alert to what is around and behind you.

If you are a victim of crime:

- Try not to panic if someone attacks you. Look at the attacker carefully so you can give a good description to the police. Try to remember key things like approximate age, gender, race, complexion, body build, clothing, approximate height and weight, hair eyes or unusual features.
- Report all crime to law enforcement. For non-emergencies in Columbus, call 645-4545. For life-threatening emergencies call 911.
- If the attacker has a weapon and only wants your money or possessions, do not fight. Your life and safety are more important!
- If a gang harasses you, go to an open store, gas station, firehouse or any place where there are people present and contact law enforcement.