

# NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

## A Citizen's Handbook



# Attack Crime!

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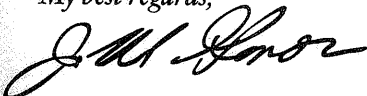
### *How This Handbook Will Help You*

*Dear Concerned Citizen:*

*This Neighborhood Watch Handbook will teach you how to protect, deter and prevent crime in your community. You will learn all about Neighborhood Watch, how it works, why it works and how you can become actively involved in this program. You will learn how to recognize suspicious activities, how to obtain a good description of a suspect and his/her vehicle, license plate numbers and many other important tips. In short, this handbook will teach you what you need to know about NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH and how to cooperate with your local law enforcement to ATTACK CRIME in your community.*

*You can start RIGHT NOW to make your community a safer and better place to live by reading this Neighborhood Watch Handbook and putting into practice what you have learned. Keep this handbook available for future reference and refer to it often. Remember, You Can Make A Difference! You can do something about crime by joining your community's Neighborhood Watch Program by contacting your local law enforcement agency. If you don't have a program think about starting one.*

*My best regards,*



*James W. Gonos, Founder  
American Security Educators, Inc.*

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## What Is Neighborhood Watch?

Neighborhood Watch is a citizen's involvement program where citizens, in cooperation with their local law enforcement agency, directly participate in the detection and prevention of crime. Other names for Neighborhood Watch include: "Citizens Crime Watch", "Home Alert", or "Block Watch". Whatever the group's name is, it all flows from the same basic concept of citizens watching their community!

Citizens involved in Neighborhood Watch are trained in how to recognize suspicious or criminal activities and report these activities to their police department. These Neighborhood Watch Citizens keep well informed about their neighborhood and of any suspicious, criminal or dangerous activities that may be occurring. In short, Neighborhood Watch Citizens provide valuable information to their local law enforcement agency which investigates suspicious activities, apprehends criminals and prevents crime. Neighborhood Watch can and will make your community a better and safer place to live.

### NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH IS NOT

Neighborhood Watch is not a group of vigilantes or lawless people taking the law into their own hands. Neighborhood Watch Citizens do not take the place of their police department in enforcing the law or apprehending criminals.

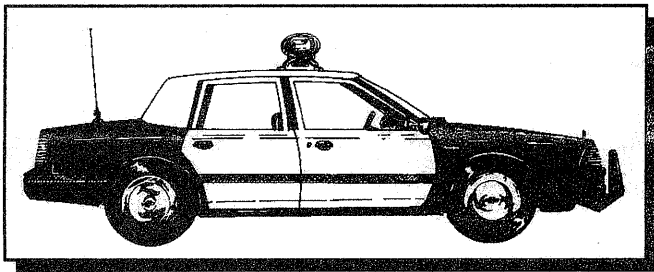


## WHY NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH WORKS

To understand the value of Neighborhood Watch in a community, you must first understand that your local law enforcement agency is limited in their available manpower. A Neighborhood Watch Program in your community will greatly help your local police overcome their manpower shortage. This is done by the use of alert citizens within the community who are constantly observing their neighborhood for suspicious activities.

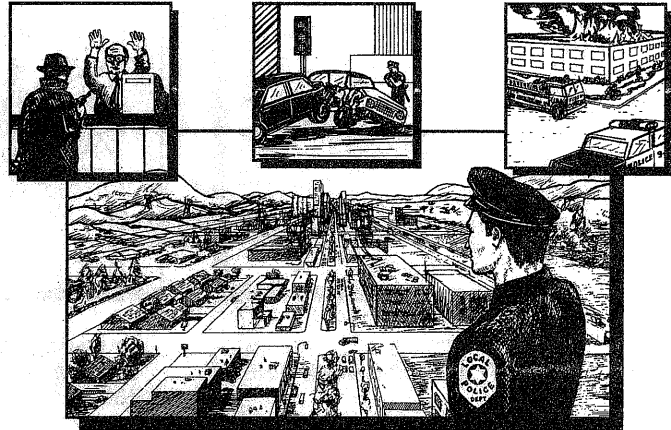
### POLICE OFFICER AVAILABILITY

On a national scale there is approximately ONE POLICE OFFICER for every 2,000 CITIZENS. From a practical standpoint, many police officers are not actively involved in patrolling their community. These officers are assigned to other tasks such as investigative work, administrative duties, traffic enforcement, writing reports and court appearances. These necessary functions limit the available police manpower for neighborhood patrol. Obviously, there are many more citizens than there are police officers. Neighborhood Watch greatly reduces this ratio of citizens to police by having Neighborhood Watch Citizens become an extension of the police department's EYES AND EARS.



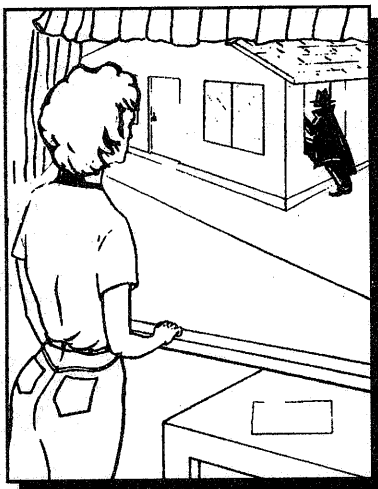
## UNLIMITED CITIZEN AVAILABILITY

Neighborhood Watch provides its community with UNLIMITED AVAILABILITY of their CITIZENS to watch their neighborhoods for suspicious activities or crimes. Unlike the police who are limited in where they can be at any given time or circumstance, Neighborhood Watch Citizens are everywhere all the time. The observations of Neighborhood Watch Citizens are many times greater than any police department could ever have the manpower to provide. This helps deter crime enormously since it puts the criminal element off balance, and the criminal, instead of limiting his concern to police patrols, must put himself on guard against an entire community watching for his criminal conduct.

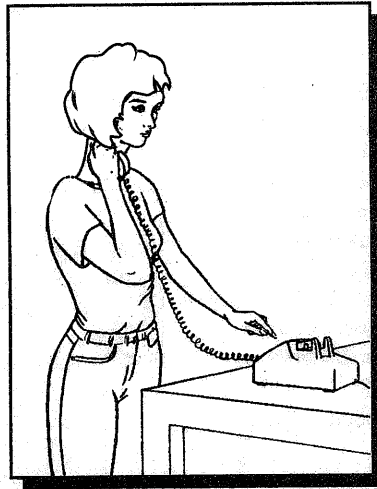


## How Neighborhood Watch Operates

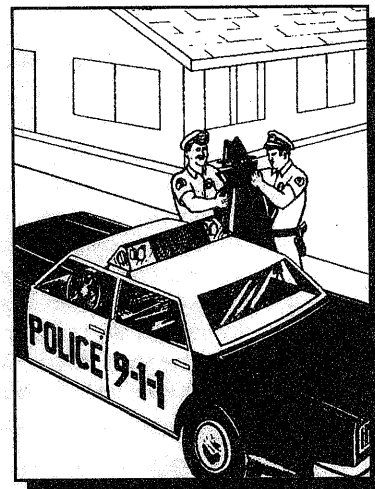
Neighborhood Watch operates in two basic ways. The Neighborhood "Watchers" (citizens involved in Neighborhood Watch) carefully watch and observe their neighborhood IMMEDIATELY NOTIFYING THE POLICE of any suspicious or criminal activity. In addition, members utilize crime prevention measures to make it much more difficult for criminals to perpetrate crime within their community.



YOU SEE A CRIME OR SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.



YOU IMMEDIATELY REPORT WHAT YOU HAVE OBSERVED TO THE POLICE.



POLICE RESPOND TO YOUR CALL AND INVESTIGATE OR APPREHEND THE CRIMINAL.

## WHAT DOES NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH COST?

Generally, there is no cost to join a Neighborhood Watch Program. Signs or decals which you may want to place in your house or on street corners may be purchased at a nominal cost. You may wish to obtain other equipment such as binoculars, spotlights, flashlights, notebooks, crime prevention information, CB, cell phones, or walkie-talkies, all to strengthen your Neighborhood Watch Program. It is suggested that those members of the community that can afford to purchase such equipment do so and perhaps could share the use of this equipment with other members. Those members who are not in a position to make such purchases could aid the watch program in other voluntary capacities. Neighborhood Watch is very economical and a highly efficient way to protect your neighborhood against crime.

## WHO MAY PARTICIPATE IN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

Any law abiding citizen within a community can participate in Neighborhood Watch. Citizens involved in Neighborhood Watch are adults, children, teenagers, middle-aged and senior citizens. No age group is exempt from crime nor the responsibility of preventing it. Neighborhood Watchers are from all walks of life. Housewives, blue collar workers, business owners, professionals, retirees, students in short, the Neighborhood Watch is the total community. Neighborhood Watch knows no color, religion, nationality, or economic dividing lines. Neighborhood Watch is citizens working together to make their community a better and safer place to live.

## WHEN DOES NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH OCCUR?

Crime can occur at any time and anywhere which means that Neighborhood Watch must be in effect 24 hours a day & 365 days a year. Neighborhood Watchers are always aware of activities in their neighborhood DAY and NIGHT. Also, Neighborhood Watch Programs can be helped during special situations or events in the community.

## HOW DID NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH START?

Early in 1970 a concerned citizen named Ellie Wegner became outraged when a close neighborhood friend of hers was raped. She organized a group of neighbors to see what could be done to help this crime victim. At her first meeting forty people from the neighborhood showed up. Many of these people had lived as neighbors but had never met. Though differing from each other in many ways they each had a central concern which was making their neighborhood a safer place to live. At the next Ellie Wegner meeting, the group was expanded by even more concerned citizens. What emerged from these meetings was the important concept of neighbors watching out for and caring for each other. Each member of the community could look out for suspicious activities in their assigned areas of the neighborhood. If they observed any suspicious behavior or if a fellow citizen was in need of help, someone was there to telephone the police for immediate aid.

# WHAT YOU CAN DO

You can do something about crime in your community by becoming actively involved in the Neighborhood Watch Program. If you participate in this program, criminal activity will be greatly reduced!

## HOW TO JOIN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Go to your local law enforcement agency and tell them you would like to participate in their community's Neighborhood Watch Program. They will provide you with the necessary information about a program in your area. They will give you the name (if available) of your block leader or captain. A block captain or leader acts as liaison (a "go between") for the police and citizens of the block. Also, the "block leader" serves as the general organizer and manager of the Neighborhood Watch within a specific block or area. According to the size of the group, there may be sub-captains and other leaders within the group. If there is no block leader in your area, you may wish to take on the position and encourage others within your block to become involved in the Neighborhood Watch Program.

## YOUR ATTITUDE

First, you must understand that crime prevention and detection is a cooperative effort between you and your local law enforcement agency. Crime prevention starts with developing the proper MENTAL ATTITUDE - THAT YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE! Yes, you have eyes, ears, and a mind and the ability to think. Your active involvement in Neighborhood Watch will create a positive attitude and feeling that you are doing your part to attack crime!

## KEEP INFORMED

In order to effectively participate in your community's Neighborhood Watch Program, it is necessary to keep WELL INFORMED about your neighborhood and community. You can do this by keeping an OPEN EAR to what you hear and a WATCHFUL EYE to what you see in your community. Talk with your neighbors, encourage them to tell you about any suspicious or unusual occurrences. Exchange information with your neighbors about what you have seen or heard happening of a suspicious nature within your neighborhood.

Attend every Neighborhood Watch Meeting that is put on by your local law enforcement agency or other related organization. Make it a point to talk with other people attending these meetings and get to know other members of your community's Neighborhood Watch Program.

Read your local newspaper and other local publications. You will be better informed of arrests, apprehensions and other criminal activities occurring in your community. Remember, the better informed you are the better prepared you will be to help prevent crime.

# OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH ACTIVITIES

The following are other kinds of Neighborhood Watch programs and activities that may be incorporated in the Neighborhood Watch Citizens involvement program. Just think of how beneficial they would be for your own community.

- ① Distribute Anti-Crime information to citizens within your neighborhood or community regarding how to prevent and deter crime.
- ② Hold public meetings with your local law enforcement agency about crime in the community and what can be done about it. These meetings could educate the community about suspicious activities and preventive measures to take.
- ③ Conduct home security checks to help detect and prevent fellow citizen's homes and residences from being burglarized or broken into.
- ④ Welcome new members to your neighborhood and encourage them to join in the Neighborhood Watch Program.
- ⑤ Set up a special watch or escort for senior citizens or other potential victims.
- ⑥ Provide "Safe Houses" for young people to go to after school or in time of an emergency to avoid being hurt or mistreated.
- ⑦ Develop a special "Vacation Watch" program where specific attention and observation is placed on the residences, apartments, or houses that will be vacant when the occupants are on vacation.
- ⑧ Monitor special CB EMERGENCY FREQUENCY such as Channel "9" NINE for call of help by citizens in need.
- ⑨ Contact the local newspaper and/or media for public attention regarding the crime prevention efforts in your neighborhood or community.
- ⑩ Aid victims of crime with both emotional support and other assistance that may be needed.
- ⑪ Post Neighborhood Watch Warning Signs and Decals on citizen's windows, street corners and other conspicuous locations letting the would be criminal know this is a Neighborhood Watch Community.
- ⑫ Contact elected leaders and demand that stronger laws be enacted to punish drug dealers, robbers, rapists, child molesters and all other kinds of criminals.
- ⑬ Have an "OPERATION IDENTIFICATION" Program where citizens within the community mark their valuables with identifying markings so they can be recovered if stolen.
- ⑭ Start a SCHOOL WATCH PROGRAM which is just like Neighborhood Watch but designed especially for schools.

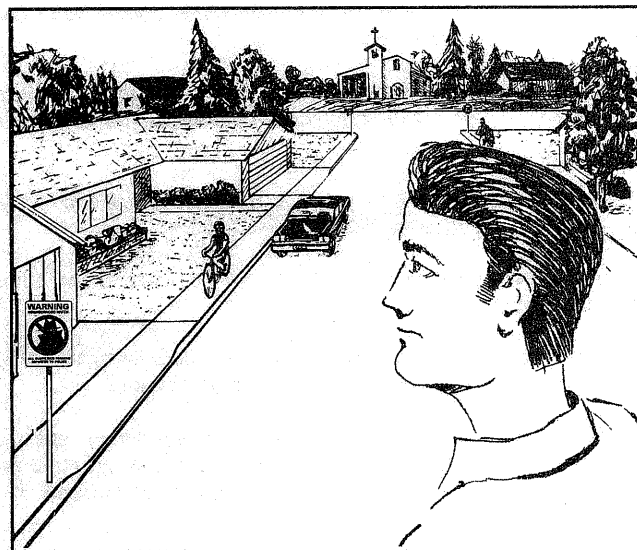
## OBSERVATION

### INCREASING YOUR POWER OF OBSERVATION

Learning to become an effective Neighborhood "Watcher" starts with your knowing HOW TO OBSERVE your neighborhood for suspicious persons or situations. The observation of suspicious situations is a learned skill, effectively developed by the guidelines put forth in the following pages.

#### VALUE OF OBSERVATION

In police work it has often been said that a police officer's greatest asset is his/her EYES. In short, it is the police officer's ability to observe his surroundings for suspicious activities or potential trouble. The same holds true for citizens involved in Neighborhood Watch. What you SEE and OBSERVE is of GREAT IMPORTANCE. For example, in the course of one week a citizen will see many different things and situations. Most of what is seen will be normal and not of a suspicious nature. Understand, however, that most of what a citizen sees will not be directly observed by his local law enforcement agency but only by the citizen himself. The Neighborhood "Watcher's" observations are the missing link between the suspicious activity and the police department. Through your observation you will obtain the facts necessary to determine whether you should or should not call the police.



## HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR OBSERVATION

Observation is simply defined as someone paying close attention and fixing his mind on anything. Proper observation is a learned skill. You can become more proficient with practice and motivation. It is important that you practice proper techniques. This Neighborhood Watch Handbook offers many such techniques. Practice everyday and soon it will become a habit well worth the effort.



### USE YOUR HEAD

Just one's ability to observe is not in and of itself sufficient to detect suspicious situations. You must THINK about what you are observing. Remember, you are a thinking creature, having the ability to evaluate, deduct, reason, organize, analyze and make judgments. You must use your head together with your observations of what is happening to determine what action, if any, should be taken under the circumstances. Observation and thinking go together and must be applied at the same time.

## KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Your ability to detect suspicious activities first starts with your knowing the neighborhood or block. You should know such things as: who (what person) belongs where, who owns what, who lives where, who is moving in or out of your block, who is on vacation, who are the "trouble makers" on the block, who are having family problems like family fights, marital problems, delinquent children, drug, or alcohol dependency, etc. By knowing all you can about your neighborhood, you should be able to focus in on potential trouble. Knowing your neighborhood does not mean that you are invading the privacy or "snooping" on your neighbor. It means that you are well-informed about what is going on in your neighborhood and for that reason on guard against potential trouble. Remember, anything that could be trouble or dangerous to your neighborhood is YOUR BUSINESS.

### OBSERVE SECRETLY

You should conduct your observations of your neighborhood as SECRETLY AS POSSIBLE. For example, say you see something suspicious happening in your neighborhood, try to observe what is going on as SECRETLY as you can under the circumstances. Try not to let the suspicious person know you are watching them. Remember, you are the EYES and EARS of your police department, but are not acting in the role of the police.

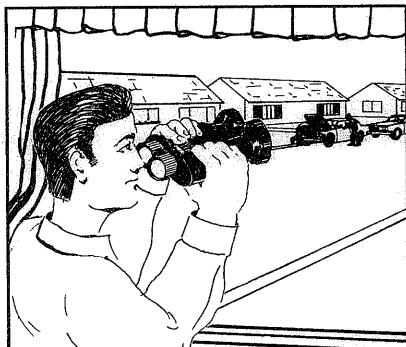
# KINDS OF OBSERVATION

## OBSERVATION FROM YOUR HOUSE

The most frequent observation location is at your own home, dwelling, or apartment. Carefully study your house to determine the best observation points that will enable you to observe your neighborhood. Ideal observation points include: upstairs windows, kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and living room windows. Locations that face the street or overview the neighbor's backyard, locations that permit you to see or observe the alley and other neighbor's back door, windows, garages and yards are also ideal.

## AUTOMOBILE AND FOOT OBSERVATION

Your ability to observe in a mobile capacity, either by car or afoot can have a considerable effect on your Neighborhood Watch Program. The use of this mobile method of observation allows you to cover a much larger area of your neighborhood and a closer observation of your block and neighborhood can expose you to many more suspicious activities within your community. As you drive or walk through your community make it a habit to observe and perceive as much as you possibly can about your neighborhood. For example, who is going where and doing what; what is new or has changed? Also, be ALERT for any suspicious activities that might be occurring before your very eyes. Use your cell phone to alert police if you see anything suspicious. Remember, if you are driving, you should first and foremost pay attention to the road and obey the traffic laws, and when safe you can then deal with your Neighborhood Watch observations.



### USE OF BINOCULARS

The use of BINOCULARS to extend the length of your vision will allow you to observe things and activities that you could never do with the naked eye. For night vision, binoculars are available with special coated lenses that allow you to observe at night.



# USE A NOTEBOOK

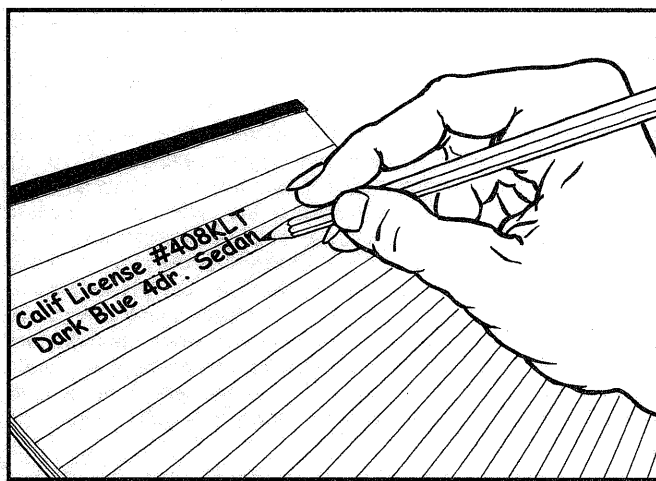
Always have a notebook ready so you can IMMEDIATELY WRITE DOWN any of your observations of suspicious persons, vehicles, and/or activities. You should record in this notebook important information such as suspect's description, method of operation, vehicle license plate number, etc. Remember to carry this notebook with you at all times along with an adequate supply of pens or pencils. In your car, you can have the large Post-Its available for use.

## NIGHT OBSERVATION

Night observation is of course more limited since the darkness obscures much of the details of your vision. Observation at night can be enhanced by using the following techniques. When observing something at night look slightly ABOVE, BELOW OR TO THE SIDE of the object you are observing. This will make the person or thing more visually clear than if you looked directly at it.

## RECOGNITION OF A PERSON

The ability to recognize a person from a distance is determined by several factors. The distance between you and the person, whether you know or have seen the person before and the time of day. For example, during the daytime you could easily recognize a person you know from a much greater distance than a person you did not know. Recognition of a person at night takes careful observation since the darkness obscures many of the finer details of the individual. Remember to be as accurate as possible in your observations of persons and to consider the limiting factors of your observations.



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# SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES

## HOW TO DETECT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES

In reality, we live in a world where there are unlimited numbers of people, things and situations that could be considered suspicious. You are going to be taught some general principles regarding what you should consider as a suspicious person, activity or circumstance.

### WHAT IS A SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

A suspicious activity occurs when a person's conduct or action does NOT FIT the norm of your neighborhood or the surrounding circumstances. It is when your attention is drawn to a person's conduct that is unusual, different, odd, dangerous, appears wrongful, or just-not-right under the circumstances. A suspicious activity is an occurrence that is out of place and should not be happening in your neighborhood under normal circumstances. For example, you see in the middle of the night a truck parked down your street with two people loading furniture and other things of value into it. You further observe that there are no lights on at the residence where the furniture is being taken from. Obviously, this is a suspicious activity. People usually don't move furniture in the middle of the night especially when the lights are out. If you were to observe such a suspicious activity you should IMMEDIATELY CALL THE POLICE as there would be a high probability that burglars were breaking into your neighbor's house.

### APPEARANCE OF SUSPICION

Understand that your interpretation of a suspicious activity is ENOUGH FOR YOU TO CALL THE POLICE. There could be, of course, and several times are, reasonable explanations for seemingly suspicious activities. Your only duty, however, is to CALL THE POLICE WHEN YOU THINK SOMETHING IS WRONG! Your local law enforcement is the one who will make the determination of whether something is wrong. Remember, you are not the one to investigate what you think is suspicious, that is a job for the police. Your responsibility as a Neighborhood Watcher is to let them know about the suspicious activity. YOU SHOULD CALL THE POLICE ANYTIME YOU THINK THERE IS SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS, DANGEROUS OR WRONGFUL GOING ON. NO EXCEPTIONS! You do not need to give your name, just report your findings to local law enforcement.

### USE YOUR INTUITION

Detecting suspicious activities requires you to make a judgment about what you are observing. Use your INTUITION - YOUR GUT LEVEL FEELING. If you think or feel something is wrong or suspicious, it probably is. By USING YOUR HEAD and THINKING, you will be able to make a reasonably good judgment about whether an activity is suspicious or not. If you are in doubt - CALL THE POLICE.

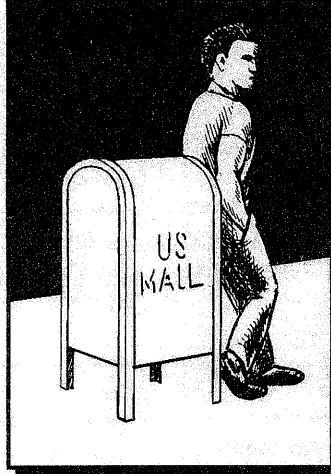
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When a person or vehicle stays in the same location for a long or unusual period of time.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** Many kinds of criminal activity could result from this suspicious activity such as waiting to transact a drug deal, acting as a lookout for a criminal act being committed, a sex deviate waiting to pick up a victim, a criminal "casing" a house, business or other location as a potential target. On the other hand, the supposed suspicious person may be sick either physically or mentally and unable to help themselves.

A person who behaves strangely or whose movements are unusual.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** A criminal(s) preparing for or committing a crime. A person(s) under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Someone who is hurt, sick or injured. Someone mentally deranged or ill.



A vehicle (car, van, truck, etc.) frequently driving around your block or within a specific area.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** It could be a criminal(s) waiting to commit a crime at an appropriate or specific time. The vehicle could be the "get-away" car for a criminal act being committed or in progress. The vehicle could be driven by a sex pervert attempting to pick up a victim.

People carrying, concealing or attempting to conceal something suspicious.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** Transporting stolen property, concealing a weapon such as a knife or gun, concealing contraband (illegal things like drugs, etc).

**Immediately Call The Police If You Observe Suspicious Activities Of Any Kind.**

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People wearing clothes that are messed up, torn, missing or their attire (jewelry and personal effects) don't fit the individuals.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** The person(s) could have recently been involved in a crime either as a perpetrator or a victim. A person like a "bum" could just have stolen some expensive item (piece of jewelry) and now is wearing it.

A car or other vehicle traveling or parked in your neighborhood, that is heavily weighed down and is obviously carrying something heavy or in bulk.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** The car or vehicle is being used to transport, sell or deliver stolen property to another. A burglar is transporting the property that has just been stolen.

A person who stops people on the street.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** The individual could be panhandling (asking for money - illegal in most states) soliciting for sexual acts or for prostitutes, trying to sell stolen merchandise, or a mentally challenged trouble maker trying to start a fight or other problems.

An older man in the company of younger females or teenagers.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** Older male serving as a "connection" i.e. a source of supply for something illegal like drugs, alcohol, etc. Male is seeking sex or sexual deviation with underage female. The male is harboring a young female runaway. The older male is pimping (soliciting for prostitution) for the younger girls.

Occupants that are unusually seated in a parked car or traveling vehicle. That is two people in a car, one person is seated in the front driver's seat and another is in the back seat.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** Car is being used in the commission of a crime, it is a getaway car for a robbery, the car is being used for the transaction of illegal activity like prostitution or drug sales.

Gangs or groups of young people or adults gathering together at a specific location.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** The gang is together to encounter another gang in a "gang fight," a massive group drug transaction is occurring, the group is simply congregating together for no purpose except to fool around and talk which usually means eventual trouble.

**Immediately Call The Police If You Observe Suspicious Activities Of Any Kind.**

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A person looking into cars and/or moving from car to car.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** Person is looking for property inside the car to steal, attempting to enter the car to steal it or hiding inside the car to rob the driver.

A car without its lights on during the night, that is departing or arriving from a location.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** The car is leaving from the commission of a crime such as a burglary and the suspect doesn't want the license number and description of the car observed. The car is being stolen and the thief wants to keep stealing as unnoticeably as possible.

A car that is being driven is in a damaged or unusual condition. Damage could be to the front of the car caused by a recent accident, bullet holes in the car, the body of the car is in an obviously unsafe condition to be driven.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** The car could have just been involved in a hit and run accident or been involved in a crime.



A person running at night for no apparent reason.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** The person may have just committed a crime or illegal act and is attempting to get away. The person could be the intended victim of a crime and is trying to escape. The person could be seeking emergency help for a variety of urgent situations.

A person that commits traffic violations, speeding or driving in a reckless manner.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** The driver may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or does not know how to drive a car. The person is escaping from a crime or the car has been stolen. The person driving the car is a reckless driver and has no consideration for public safety or traffic laws.

An individual who does not fit the car they are driving or is having trouble operating the car they are driving.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** The car has been stolen or is being stolen.

### Immediately Call The Police If You Observe Suspicious Activities Of Any Kind.

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A person(s) transporting something unusual or a valuable object during the night.

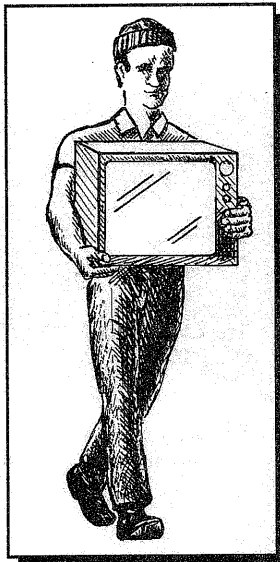
**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** A burglar carrying away stolen property or things used in the commission of the crime. Transportation of illegal things such as contraband, weapons or other illegal devices.

A person who is selling, conducting business out of his car, van, truck or other vehicle.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** Selling drugs, stolen merchandise or just an unlicensed vendor selling merchandise without a license.

A car is parked and the engine is still running.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** A getaway car for a crime being committed such as a robbery. If there are no occupants while the engine is running, it will constitute a vehicle code violation in most states.



A person dressed in criminal attire or clothing that could start or provoke trouble.

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:** A person wearing dark clothes, gloves and black tennis shoes during the night. This is common attire for a burglar.

Person(s) wearing gang insignia, patches, jackets, headbands or "Colors."

Person(s) wearing outlaw motorcycle gang jackets, insignia or other outfits.

Religious and political extremists wearing symbols, insignias or pictures of their leader, that is obviously hostile to the community in general.

Person(s) wearing sun or dark glasses during evening hours. Such a person(s) could be under the influence of narcotics or dangerous drugs.

### Action That You Should Take

Obtain the description of the individual(s), what they are doing and wearing. Call the police and give them this information.

### Immediately Call The Police If You Observe Suspicious Activities Of Any Kind.

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# SUSPICIOUS SOUNDS

Sounds are very important clues as to suspicious, criminal or dangerous activities within your neighborhood. Here is a list of some common sounds that you should be aware of:

## SCREAMING

Beware if you hear screaming from anyone, especially continuous loud screaming. This probably means someone is being hurt, mistreated or is in trouble. Try to determine where the sound is coming from and **IMMEDIATELY CALL THE POLICE.**

## LOUD MUSIC

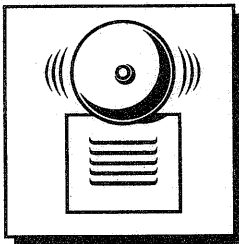
Loud music is not only an annoyance to a neighborhood but also may be used to cover up someone's wrongful conduct such as domestic violence. Beware if you all of a sudden hear screaming or yelling and then loud music, **IMMEDIATELY CALL THE POLICE.**

## YELLING FOR HELP

When you hear such a "yell for help" always assume it is real and that the person needs help. Try to determine where the person is, what his/her problem is and then **IMMEDIATELY CALL THE POLICE.**

## AN ALARM GOING OFF

Fire, burglar, car alarms, etc., should be considered as REAL (not a "false alarm") until the police have investigated the situation and determined otherwise.



## BREAKING GLASS

Beware if you hear the sound of breaking glass as this is a common method used to gain entry into houses or vehicles by some criminals.

## PRYING, POUNDING OR FORCING SOUNDS

Any sound that indicates that something is being pried, pounded, forced or broken into should arouse your suspicions.

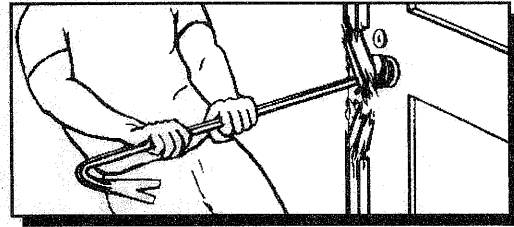
## SOMEONE BEING HIT OR BEATEN

Immediately call the police if you hear what appears to be someone being hit, beaten or knocked around by another; sound like "Oh's" or "Ow's", etc.

## GUN SHOT SOUNDS

Any sounds that appears to be that of gun shots should be reported to the police.

**IMMEDIATELY CALL THE POLICE IF YOU OBSERVE SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES OF ANY KIND.**



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## How To Get A Good Description Of A Suspect

# Description Of Suspect

It is important that Neighborhood "Watchers" be able to give the police the most accurate description of the suspect or suspicious person as possible.

Height  
 Sex, Age, Race, Complexion, Nationality  
 Mustache, Beard, Sideburns  
 Weight, Build, Posture  
 Right or Left Handed  
 Type of Gun (see back)  
 Any Physical Disabilities?  
 Hair, Wig, Color, Cap, Hat, etc.  
 Eye Color & Eyeglasses  
 Mask, Color, Type  
 Dress, Color, Type  
 Any Double Clothing to Be Used After the Escape?  
 Marks, Scars, Tattoos, Jewelry  
 Gloves  
 Was Anything Carried?  
 Color & Type of Shoes

**MEMORY HELPER**  
 You can easily recall 10 of the most important things to remember about the suspect's description by remembering this simple sentence: **"Neighbors Should Always Remember We Have Had Enough Criminal Madness."** Just associate the first letter of each word in the above sentence to the feature of the suspect you are remembering.

Keep repeating this sentence until you have committed it to memory.

Name .....  
 Sex .....  
 Age .....  
 Race .....  
 Weight .....  
 Height .....  
 Hair .....  
 Eye .....  
 Clothes .....  
 Marks .....

Neighbors .....  
 Should .....  
 Always .....  
 Remember .....  
 We .....  
 Have .....  
 Had .....  
 Enough .....  
 Criminal .....  
 Madness .....

# OBTAIN DETAILS ABOUT THE SUSPECT

The following is detailed information about the suspect that you should try to obtain:

**NAME** If you hear the suspect's name, try to remember it. Also, any other kinds of information about the suspect such as: nickname(s), residence, where he or she lives, hangouts, places the suspect frequents, place and kind of employment or any other data that could locate the suspect.

**SEX** Although this would seem obvious, today there are many cases where a suspect disguises himself to appear as the opposite sex, so his/her real identity will not be known.

**RACE** You should note and remember the nationality or origin of the suspect by accent, dress, behavior or mannerisms.

**HEIGHT** Obtaining the suspect's height can be accomplished in approximation. Try to make the best estimation of the suspect's height by comparing him to your height or someone you know. For example, the suspect is shorter than I, about my height, or much taller than I. Another way to estimate the suspect's height is to approximate it to a stationary fixture or thing. For example, many stores have special markers on the store doors that will tell the approximate height of a robber as he leaves the store. You can apply the same principle by using other stationary objects or things as a visual reference point of determining the suspect's height. (Height of Robber Kits are available for purchase through American Security Educators Inc.)

**AGE** Determining the age of the suspect is often hard to do with accuracy. Make the best GENERAL DETERMINATION you can, such as: The suspect is a KID, TEENAGER, YOUNG ADULT, MIDDLE-AGED, SENIOR CITIZEN, ETC.

**HAIR** Observe and describe the following characteristics of the suspect's hair. What is the color? Is the hair long or short? What hairstyle or part? Whether you think the suspect is wearing a wig, is the suspect bald and if so at what part of the head? Is the suspect wearing a cap, hat, or headband, etc.?

**EYES** The color of the suspect's eyes and other characteristics of the eyes like a "black eye", watery eyes, bloodshot eyes, patch over one eye, injured eye, etc. Was the suspect wearing eyeglasses or "sunglasses or contacts?"

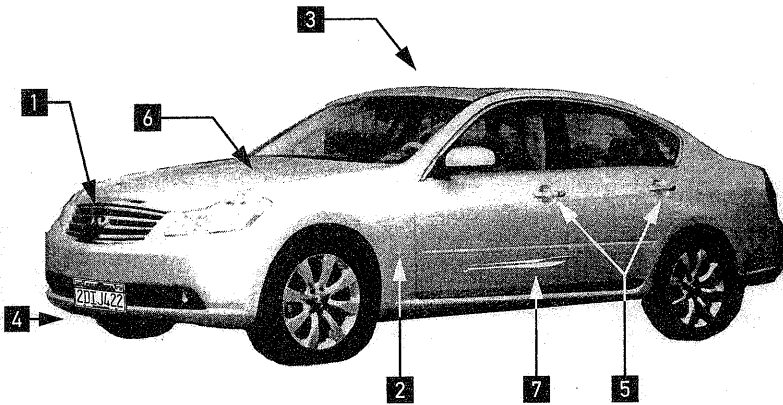
**CLOTHES** What is the color, type, style, condition (torn, bloodstained, old, new, etc.) of the suspect's dress, shirt, pants, coat? Was the suspect wearing double clothing or did he change clothes? Was the suspect wearing any jewelry or other recognizable things?

**MARKS** Does the suspect have any marks such as tattoos, scars, deformities? And if so, in what specific location? (i.e. the suspect has a tattoo of a heart with an arrow through it on his left forearm). Are there are other physical features such as a limp or unusual posture that would contribute to the description of the suspect?

## VEHICLE DESCRIPTION

### How To Obtain A Vehicle's Description

When you observe in your neighborhood a suspicious or criminal act involving a vehicle, it is VERY IMPORTANT that you obtain the BEST DESCRIPTION and the LICENSE PLATE NUMBER of that vehicle. You must be as accurate as you can in describing the vehicle, so the police will be able to locate it and the suspicious person(s) involved.



1. Make - Chevy, Ford, Chrysler, etc.
  2. Model - Mustang, Accord, Camry, etc.
  3. Auto Type - Truck, Sports Car, SUV, Van, etc.
  4. License Plate #, What State?
  5. Two Door, Four Door, Sedan, etc.
  6. Color - What Shade Of Color?
  7. Other Identifying Features - Dents, Broken Windows, etc.
- \* Year - Estimate If You Don't Know, i.e New, Old.

### MEMORY HELPER

You can remember a car or vehicle description by learning this simple word: "CLAMMY". Here's how you will remember: Just say the word, "Clammy" and remember to associate each letter of that word with these values:

"CLAMMY" = C - **Color** L - **License Plate** A - **Auto Type** M - **Make** M - **Model** Y - **Year**

# Obtain Details About The Vehicle

The following is detailed information about the vehicle that you should try to obtain:

**C = COLOR**

Try to be as specific as you can regarding the color. For example, if you see a car that is blue in color, remember if it is light or dark blue. Also, describe, if you can, whether the vehicle is multi-colored or two-tone in color.

**L = LICENSE PLATE**  
(See pages 23 & 24)

**A = AUTO TYPE**

What kind of vehicle is it? Car, sports car, SUV, van, camper, truck pick up, moving van, flat bed truck, jeep, motorcycle, etc.

**M = MAKE OF VEHICLE**

Is the car a CHEVY, FORD, CHRYSLER, VW, MERCEDES, BMW, HONDA, VOLVO, ETC.?

**M = MODEL OF VEHICLE**

Is the car an Accord, Camry, Mustang, etc. Is the vehicle a two door, four door, hard top, convertible, sun roof, etc.?

**Y = YEAR OF VEHICLE**

What is the year of the vehicle? If you don't know, tell the police that you are only estimating what you think the year of the vehicle is. If you simply don't know the year make a general estimate such as: a new car, a couple of years old or an old car.

## OTHER IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Are there any other features such as dents on the car, bumper stickers, broken windows, etc., that would help describe the vehicle?

# LICENSE PLATE NUMBERS

## OBTAINING THE LICENSE PLATE NUMBER

Your ability to observe and remember the license plate number of a vehicle involved in suspicious or criminal activity is VITALLY IMPORTANT for your police department to know.



### WRITE THE LICENSE NUMBER DOWN

When you first observe a suspicious vehicle IMMEDIATELY WRITE DOWN THE VEHICLE'S DESCRIPTION & LICENSE PLATE NUMBER on a piece of paper, your notebook, or Post-It. Write it down EXACTLY as you have observed it. Write the description of the vehicle (year, type, make, model, and color, etc. Write down the license plate number starting from the LEFT and moving to the RIGHT. Do not transpose (change around the letters or numbers) when writing. If you can't get the license plate number give the police the best description of the vehicle you can.

### STATE WHO ISSUED THE LICENSE PLATE

Make sure to remember and note the state that issued the license plate. Be familiar with your neighboring state's license plates and how to recognize them. If you observe an out-of-state plate, make sure you tell the police WHAT STATE it is from. If you can't tell what state, describe the color of the plate and any other things you can remember.

### NO LICENSE PLATE ON VEHICLE

Sometimes suspicious vehicles are ones used in the commission of criminal activity (like a "getaway" car) have no license plates. You should be suspicious of any vehicle that does not have license plates. In such a case obtain the best description of the vehicle and occupant(s) and give this description to the police.

## MEMORIZING LICENSE PLATE NUMBERS

It is important that you are able to memorize a license plate number quickly since you may NOT HAVE TIME TO WRITE IT DOWN. You can train yourself to do this with a little practice and the help of memorizing the "Phonetic Alphabet Code" used by law enforcement.

Most license plates consist of a cluster of letters and numbers that constitute the full plate number. For example, the license plate number "ADM 836" has an alphabetical cluster of "ADM" and a numerical cluster of "836." It will be easier for you to observe and recall the license plate number by breaking the plate down into these alphabetical and numerical parts. You would first observe the "ADM" (from the left of the plate) and then moving to the right the numbers "836." The license plate number 390 IZD would be read Three, Nine, Zero, I, Z, D, or phonetically, Thuh-ree, Nie-yen, Zero (not oh) Ida, Zebra, David.

Remember, when memorizing the license plate number to read it starting from the LEFT and move to the RIGHT. Also, try to remember license frames that have a personalized message and report that information to law enforcement.

## THE PHONETIC ALPHABETICAL CODE

The "Phonetic Alphabetical Code" is used by law enforcement agencies for clarity of verbal communications and the avoidance of transmission errors. This "Phonetic Alphabetical Code" will help you recall license plate numbers through the association of the license plate letters to the phonetic named person or thing contained in the code. The more your mind can associate something with something else, the better it will remember or recall. For example, the license plate number "176 MTW" could be easily recalled by stating to yourself: "One, Seven, Six - MARY, TOM, WILLIAM". You are associating the names of the letter (on the license plate) with the phonetic word. This makes it much easier to remember.

## PHONETIC ALPHABET FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

|             |             |            |             |
|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| A - ADAM    | H - HENRY   | O - OCEAN  | V - VICTOR  |
| B - BOY     | I - IDA     | P - PAUL   | W - WILLIAM |
| C - CHARLES | J - JOHN    | Q - QUEEN  | X - X-RAY   |
| D - DAVID   | K - KING    | R - ROBERT | Y - YOUNG   |
| E - EDWARD  | L - LINCOLN | S - SAM    | Z - ZEBRA   |
| F - FRANK   | M - MARY    | T - TOM    |             |
| G - GEORGE  | N - NORA    | U - UNION  |             |

## BEWARE OF COVERED PLATES

Be suspicious when you can't read the license plate number of a vehicle because it is covered, dirty, damaged or has letters/numbers taped over the original plate. Obtain the best description of the vehicle and call the police. Tell them about the license plate, how it has been covered and WHY you can't read it.

## PRACTICE EXERCISE

You can become good at remembering license plate numbers with just a little practice. First study and memorize the "Phonetic Alphabetical Code". Do this simple exercise while you are driving your car or as a passenger. OBSERVE THE LICENSE PLATE NUMBERS of other vehicles, then say to yourself, this plate number is "WVT 972" - William, Victor, Tom - Nine, Seven, Two. Do this exercise as often as you can until you can instantly recall any license plate number you see.

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# CALLING THE POLICE

## VERY IMPORTANT

Whenever you need to call the police you MUST FIRST MAKE A DETERMINATION if it is an EMERGENCY. An emergency is when IMMEDIATE POLICE, FIRE DEPARTMENT or PARAMEDIC ASSISTANCE is necessary to save and protect life or property. TIME is VERY IMPORTANT under such emergency conditions and can make the difference between LIFE or DEATH! Immediately call 9-1-1 or, if not available, call your police or emergency services phone number and advise them of the emergency.

## IT'S OK TO BE WRONG

Your police department knows and understands that their citizens can't always be right about what they think is a suspicious or wrongful activity. All they ask is that you CALL THEM whenever you think or feel something wrong is happening.

If you call the police and you were wrong about your suspicion or what you thought was wrong, it's OK, you won't be in any trouble with the police, they understand. Remember, it's the police department's job to investigate what citizens believe to be wrong. Your job as a concerned citizen is just to let them know when you think something is wrong or suspicious.

## WHEN TO CALL THE POLICE

You should call the police ANY TIME and EVERY TIME you suspect that something is wrong, suspicious, dangerous, criminal, or possible trouble (of any nature), has occurred, is occurring, or is about to occur. Follow this rule: ANY TIME YOU THINK SOMETHING IS WRONG, DANGEROUS OR SUSPICIOUS, IMMEDIATELY CALL THE POLICE. NO EXCEPTIONS!

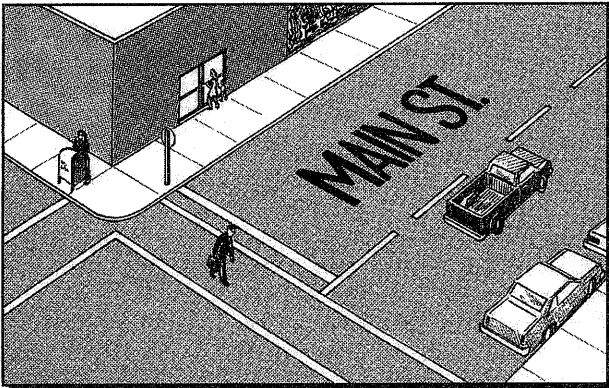
You have been provided in this "Neighborhood Watch Handbook", under the section on "Suspicious Activities" many examples of suspicious activities. They were included in this booklet to give you an idea of what to look for in your neighborhood. Now you must do your part by recognizing any suspicious or dangerous activity, or potential trouble in your neighborhood and call the police.



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## KNOW YOUR DIRECTIONS

Your ability to give the police a specific location requires that you know the basic directions of your area and the names of streets or other identifying points within your community. The way to determine your direction is first to know which way is NORTH and from that you can determine SOUTH, EAST, and WEST. You can determine which way is NORTH by looking on your city's map. (North will always appear at the top of the map). Carefully study a map of your city or community and know your points of direction. Know all your neighborhood street names by heart and how they "run" - North & South, etc. Try to give all your directions to the police based upon NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, and WEST. For example, "I saw the suspect going East on Main Street." Avoid telling the police that the suspect went or turned left or right, as this often makes the points of direction wrong or impossible to determine.



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## HOW TO REPORT A CRIME

Here's How To Report A Crime To Your Local Police:

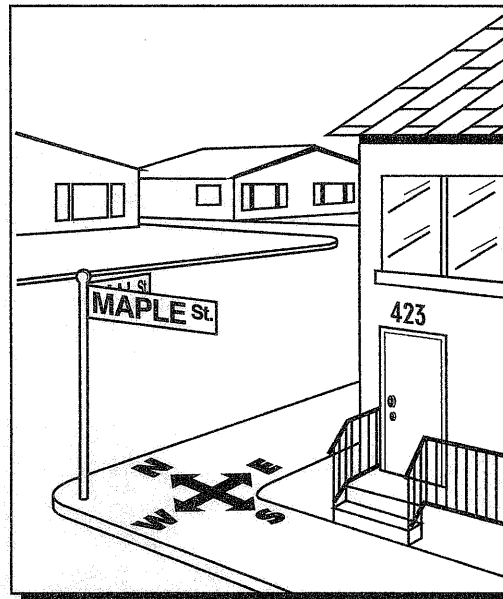
- IMMEDIATELY CALL THE POLICE - SEE SECTION ON "CALLING THE POLICE" AND "DIALING 9-1-1" - (PAGE 29)
- TELL THE POLICE AS FACTUALLY AS POSSIBLE WHAT EVENTS ARE OCCURRING OR HAVE OCCURRED. THAT IS, BRIEFLY STATE THE WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, AND HOW OF THE SITUATION.
- GIVE THE BEST POSSIBLE DESCRIPTION OF THE SUSPECT(S) YOU CAN. SEE SECTION ON "DESCRIPTION OF SUSPECT". - (PAGE 19)
- IF A VEHICLE WAS INVOLVED, GIVE THE POLICE THE BEST POSSIBLE DESCRIPTION OF THIS VEHICLE - (PAGE 21)
- PROVIDE THE POLICE WITH ANY OTHER DATA OR INFORMATION THEY DESIRE.

## KNOW YOUR LOCATION

It is important for you to give the police the best possible location of the trouble or suspicious activity. For example, it would be of little help for you to say that somebody was breaking into a house on Maple Street. In order for the police to respond to this call on Maple Street, they would need specific information about WHERE and HOW the house was being broken into. You must be able to give them a specific location or at least try to pinpoint it to a certain location.

### INFORMATION TO PROVIDE

- Street Name
- Nearest Cross Street
- Address
- Landmarks  
(places of business, parks, freeways, etc.)



Your call to the police should go something like this: "Somebody is breaking into the house at 414 Maple Street, through the south back window," or "somebody is breaking into the house on the South East corner of Maple & Main Street." By providing the police with this specific location, you will greatly help them quickly and accurately respond to your call.

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## EXAMPLE OF A POLICE EMERGENCY SITUATION

You observe someone breaking in through the back window of your neighbor's house. You know that your neighbors are not home since they are on vacation. This is an emergency situation since immediate assistance is necessary to apprehend the criminal. Do the following: Immediately call "9-1-1." Your call should sound something like this: **"This is a police emergency; I just saw someone breaking into my neighbor's house and they are on vacation. Their house is located at 414 Maple Street. The suspect entered through the back rear south window."** At this point you should follow your police department instructions and provide them with as much help or additional data (description of suspect, his vehicle, etc.) as you can. It is important in an emergency situation, like this burglary, that the police be notified immediately as burglars usually move very fast and a quick police response is necessary.

## KNOW YOUR POLICE DEPARTMENT'S REGULAR (NON-EMERGENCY) PHONE NUMBER

Memorize your local police or sheriff's department phone number. Have that number on or near your phone as reference so you or others may have it available should the need arise. Also, have the address of your location, your residence address, apt.#, etc., on or near your phone, in case another person unfamiliar with your location needs to call the police. **REMEMBER: EMERGENCY - DIAL 9-1-1. NON-EMERGENCY DIAL THE REGULAR NUMBER.**

## DO NOT DIAL 9-1-1 FOR NON-EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

You should use your police department's regular phone number, listed in the phone book, usually at the beginning of the book or alphabetically listed under Government Listings or Agencies. **Remember: USE 9-1-1 IF IT IS OR YOU THINK IT IS AN EMERGENCY. OTHERWISE, USE YOUR POLICE DEPARTMENT'S REGULAR PHONE NUMBER.**

## EXAMPLE OF NON-EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

It is 2:30 AM and you hear loud music in your neighborhood. It is obvious to you that somebody has the radio on loud but nothing indicates that immediate police or fire department assistance is necessary. You, of course, want the loud music to stop since you are unable to sleep. You would simply call your local law enforcement or sheriff's department office **REGULAR PHONE NUMBER**. You would **NOT** dial 9-1-1 since this is not an emergency that requires immediate assistance from the police to protect life or property.

Another example of a non-emergency situation: In the morning you go out to your car and attempt to start it, and it won't start. You open the hood and discover that your car's battery has been stolen. It is obvious that the battery was stolen during the night as nobody is around or near your car at this time. This is **NOT AN EMERGENCY SITUATION** as there is **NO NEED** for the police to render you **IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE** as your battery has already been stolen. You should report the theft to the police by calling their regular (**NON-EMERGENCY**) phone number but not using the 9-1-1 Emergency Number.

# DIALING 9-1-1

## WHEN TO DIAL 9-1-1

### DO THE FOLLOWING WHEN CALLING 9-1-1

(Give The Police As Much Of The Following Information As You Can)

- The location of the emergency. try to be as specific as possible.
- Specify kind of emergency, i.e. police, fire, or medical.
- What emergency or crime has happened or is it going to happen, i.e. robbery in progress, house burning, person unconscious, etc.
- If weapons are involved, i.e., hand gun, automatic weapons, knives, etc., advise police if they are being or have been used.
- Number of persons involved in the emergency or crime. Are minors involved?

### REMEMBER, IF IN DOUBT - USE 9-1-1

Although the use of "9-1-1" is for emergency use only, if you think or feel that there is an emergency occurring but don't know for certain **ASSUME IT IS AN EMERGENCY** and use "9-1-1."

### FOLLOW THE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS

Do exactly as the police department tells you during the course of the call and emergency situation. Give them all the information or other assistance they desire under the circumstances. Remember, your assistance could mean the difference between life, death or serious injury under the emergency.

## COOPERATING WITH YOUR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Preventing crime in your community is a cooperative effort between you and your local police department. As we have pointed out in this Neighborhood Watch Handbook you must do your part by acting as your police department's EYES and EARS. When communicating or working with your police department follow this check list.

- ✓ Tell the police only what you really know or have actually observed. If you are only estimating or generalizing, tell the police you are.
- ✓ DO NOT exaggerate your experience or observations, keep them as factual as possible.
- ✓ Make yourself available for interviews, attend police line-ups and don't be afraid to identify the suspect but, BE SURE OF THAT IDENTIFICATION.
- ✓ If, after you have been interviewed by the police, you remember or think of something about the crime or suspect that you did not tell them, IMMEDIATELY WRITE IT DOWN and call the police. Remember, the information you give the police may be one of the few things they will have to work with.
- ✓ Testify in court. Fully cooperate with your district or prosecuting attorney. Your testimony is vital in many cases for the conviction of criminals.

### About American Security Educators, Inc.

Founded in 1976 to help educate law enforcement, businesses and the general public on how to prevent and deter crime & violence. American Security Educators, Inc. has taught and educated millions of individuals in various crime prevention subjects. Handbooks, guides, signs, decals, pamphlets and other learning materials in the field of crime prevention have been developed. Our clients include financial institutions, schools, major corporations, large & small businesses and various law enforcement agencies including the FBI.

American Security Educators, Inc. is dedicated to providing educational materials to help individuals do all they can do to prevent crime & violence.

## STAY INVOLVED

Do keep activity involved in your Neighborhood Watch Program. Remember, to apply what you have learned in this Neighborhood Watch Handbook. BY DOING THIS YOU WILL MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY A BETTER AND SAFER PLACE TO LIVE!