



# Neighborhood Watch Groups of Syracuse

## *“Suspicious Activity”*

### What Is Suspicious Activity?

The effectiveness of the Syracuse Police Department is greatly enhanced by participation of Neighborhood Watch Groups and their members. When you call to report suspicious activities or individuals you are not only helping the SPD you are making your community a safer.



Some people fail to call the police simply because they are not sure what justifies suspicious activity. Others notice suspicious activity and hesitate to call for fear they will be labeled "nosey". Identifying suspicious activity can be difficult and often comes down to making a “Judgment Call”.

The best rule of advice to follow when identifying and reporting suspicious activity is “If It Doesn't Look or Feel Right Call 911”. If someone is walking along minding their own business, keep a watchful eye on them. In most cases you will find the majority of people you encounter are not doing anything wrong. If someone or a group of individuals are walking through the community, looking at houses, looking in cars, appearing to have no purpose call 911. Remember, it is best to call 911 and have it turn out to be a false alarm rather than not call and a home is burglarized or someone is hurt.

### Obvious Signs

- A stranger entering a neighbor's house while they are away or it is vacant.
- Loud screaming or someone yelling for help.
- Someone trying to sell merchandise door-to-door at ridiculously low prices.
- Someone removing electronics, license plates, or other items from a vehicle.
- Someone peering into the windows of parked vehicles.
- Someone entering or leaving a business after hours.
- The sound of breaking glass or loud noises could mean an accident or burglary just occurred.
- Individuals loitering around schools, parks, and other secluded areas.
- An occupied motor vehicle parked at the curb with occupants who look suspicious and appear to be scanning the area around them.
- Transactions being conducted from motor vehicles.
- Individuals looking at houses, walking down driveways, trying to open windows and doors.
- Anyone forcing entrance to or tampering with a residence, business, or vehicle.
- Someone entering a home through an unlocked or broken window.
- Juveniles coming and going from a vacant property.
- Someone wearing or carrying bloody clothing.

### **Not So Obvious Signs**

- Door-to-Door salesmen who only visit one or two homes then try a door or window to see if it is locked, looks into windows, or goes into a backyard.
- Juveniles casually walking through a neighborhood looking into cars, trying door handles, going into backyards, etc.
- Someone exhibiting unusual behavior.
- People coming and going from a residence on a daily basis; especially during late or unusual hours.
- People taking a shortcut through a backyard.
- Vehicles driving slowly through a neighborhood making several passes down the same street.
- Vehicles parked in front of an unoccupied home or closed business being loaded with valuables, home furnishings, plumbing supplies, etc. It may even look like a legitimate commercial vehicle.
- Someone being forced into a vehicle especially if a juvenile or female.
- Abandoned vehicles parked on the street.
- A beam from a flashlight in a neighbor's home while they are away.
- Open or broken doors or windows at a closed business or residence.

### **Door-To-Door Sales**

Not every individual that comes into your neighborhood is a criminal. There are many perfectly legitimate salesman, repairmen, and servicemen moving around your neighborhood at all times. Unfortunately, criminals take advantage of this by assuming the identity of a legitimate business representative so they can gain your trust and access to your home. After all, if criminals looked like criminals no one would have any problem identifying them. Check the identification of all solicitors, repairmen, and even city officials who may be working in your neighborhood prior to allowing them access to your home. In addition, please remember, anyone selling door-to-door in the City of Syracuse is required by law to obtain a "Peddler's Permit" which must be displayed at all times. A sample of this license can be found on the Neighborhood Watch Groups of Syracuse website.

### **Information Needed by 911:**

- Who what, where, when, and why
- Is the crime "In Progress"?
- Is anyone injured?
- Descriptions of Persons: Age, race, sex, height, weight
- Description of Vehicle: License number, make, model, color, and direction of travel