

What is Suspicious?

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CRIME PREVENTION

Overview

- What constitutes suspicious activity?
 - Identifying suspicious persons and vehicles
 - Property crimes in your neighborhood
 - Understanding Probable Cause and Reasonable Suspicion.
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But what is suspicious?

Anything that seems...

- *“out of place” for the area or the time of day*
- *When the mannerisms or demeanor of another are cause for alarm.*



Observing Activity While on Patrol

- Make note of your exact location.
 - Observe at a safe distance.
 - Be sure you have multiple routes that allow you to leave the area.
 - Take time to study the activity to determine if it is indeed suspicious.
 - Call 911 if the person exhibits behavior that could potentially result in the committal of a crime.
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Suspicious Behavior

Subjects walking through retail lots and residential areas, peering into car windows often with a vehicle trailing them.

Subjects knocking on doors and asking for someone who does not live at the residence.

Subjects who show a sudden change in behavior when you enter the area such as running, quick change in direction or possible concealment of an item.

Some More obvious examples:

- A stranger enters your neighbors house when they are not home
- A scream
- Anyone peeping into parked cars
- Sound of breaking glass
- Persons loitering or taking pictures around schools while they are in session
- Someone carrying large valuables down the street



Identifying Suspicious persons



Lets identify these



From your porch light

From surveillance footage

Suspicious vehicles

- Vehicles that may seem out of place for the time and neighborhood
- An occupied vehicle that stays parked for some time
- An unoccupied vehicle that no one claims



Be a cautious observer

- Never approach an unoccupied vehicle
- Never approach or confront the driver of an occupied vehicle
- If it doesn't seem right, just call it in as its better to be wrong than sorry.



Neighborhood Activity



Nighttime Neighborhood Activity

- More frequent in neighborhoods with inadequate lighting issues
- Primarily target parked vehicles with visible valuables inside
- Tend to be most active in the early morning hours



Prevention

- Illuminate your porch and driveway
Nightly
- If vehicles must be parked in the driveway, remove any items of value
- Do not leave your vehicles parked in the street



Daytime Activity

- Sixty two percent of residential burglaries happen during the daylight hours of 9 am and 3 pm

- 2009 Nat FBI Stats

- A burglar spends an estimated average of 8 minutes inside a residence after entry
- Front door kicks are a very common method of entry due to the absence of the sound of breaking glass.



Casing:

- Suspect monitors neighborhood traffic activity in effort to establish a time frame that identifies homes left unoccupied throughout the day.

- Primarily during early morning commute hours (7-9am).

- Be sure to monitor anyone who appears to be a neighborhood from a nearby park, vacant lot or school.



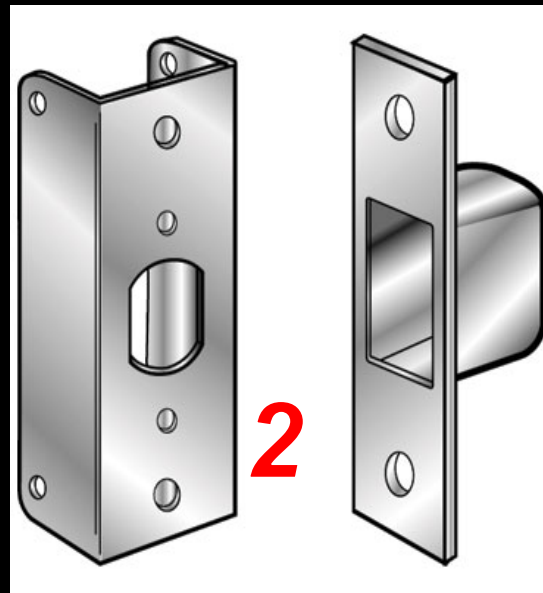
The Door knock:

- Typically the second stage of casing.
- The burglar is confident that the home is unoccupied but rings or knocks at the front door before forcing entry.
- If someone answers, they will simply state that they are looking for a particular person and leave.
- At this point, the subject has not committed a crime but call 911 regardless and ask for an officer to make contact with the subject.



Prevention Methods

3 cheap but effective tips



4" Steel Screws

**Reinforce
your**

Door and Hardware

Auxiliary

Window Locks

Where to look for suspicious activity

- House entry points- Day or night
- Retail parking lots- Day or night
- Dark doorways or porches
- In and around shrubs
- Inside vehicles (from inside your own vehicle)
- Parks and Schools
- Anywhere you can see

Property Neglect attracts criminal activity



You need your neighbors help

Making easy for them makes it hard on you

- Keep your garage doors closed when unattended - Yes even if your only gone 5 minutes
- Don't leave vehicles parked out in the street- You don't deserve it but you're asking for it
- If you have a house alarm use it- Even if it is not monitored



Understanding Probable Cause and Reasonable Suspicion

Common citizen complaint-

“ So I saw someone going door to door in my neighborhood.”

“I called 911 and when officers arrived, they talked to the guy and just left.”



Understanding Probable Cause-

Simple definition- A reasonable ground for supposing that a charge is well-founded - **Webster's**

Based on Case Law-“Probable cause exists if the facts and circumstances known to the officer would warrant a prudent man in believing that the offense has been committed.”

- The courts in Henry v. U.S. 361 U.S. 98



Understanding Reasonable suspicion –

Simple definition- An objectively justifiable suspicion that is based on specific facts or circumstances and that justifies stopping and sometimes searching (as by frisking) a person thought to be involved in criminal activity at the time .

- Based on Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Law ©2001

Based on Case Law- Reasonable suspicion is more than a hunch, but less than proof of wrongdoing by a preponderance of evidence.

- U.S. v. Sokolow, 490 U.S. 1, 7 (1989)



Question: *“So why call the police on a person who is behaving in a suspicious manner if the responding officers cannot do anything?”*

Assuming the subject did have criminal intent, simple officer contact or presence may deter the possibility of a crime occurring at that place and time.

Several arrests result in simple officer contact . Traffic stops due to a moving violation, often result in an arrest due to outstanding warrants.

Subjects are often able to provide a legitimate reason for being in an area at that particular time which eliminates reasonable suspicion.

Remember, programs such as Community Watch and Citizens on Patrol are primarily pro-active methods of preventing crimes before they occur. The goal is to simply show a visible presence, making it increasingly difficult to commit a criminal act without someone witnessing it .

Questions?

