

# Neighborhood Watch

**Take a stand against crime.**



## **Community Relations Unit**

315 Fourth Avenue  
Chula Vista, CA 91910  
619-691-5187

*Protecting today. Securing Tomorrow.*



## Observe and Report

### **Suspicious Activity List**

- Anyone forcibly entering a car or home
- Someone running from a home under unusual circumstances
- Someone carrying a weapon
- Someone screaming
- Stranger offering a child candy or some other gift
- A loiterer who doesn't belong in the area, especially at night
- Persons sitting in a car for a long period of time
- A person walking around with items that may have been stolen
- Persons looking into cars or windows of a residence
- Anyone knocking on your door with an unreasonable explanation
- Strange vehicles parked on property for several days
- A clean car with damaged or dirty plates
- The sound of breaking glass.

**Emergency and life threatening situations, call 911.**

**Non-emergencies, call Chula Vista Police Department Communications Center at 619-691-5151.**

# 10 tips on how to observe

## 1. Knowledge.

When you know who belongs in each home, unit, apt. etc.; their hours of work, and their automobiles, you can observe what is happening and become suspicious of anything that does not fit your neighbor's habits.

## 2. Secrecy.

Observe as secretly as possible. Do not make the suspicious person aware that you are watching them. Look out for your neighbors and be the eyes and ear of our police. Remember, you are the eyes and ears, **not** the strong arm of the law. **Don't confront a suspect.**

## 3. Observe at home.

Determine which locations are best for observing normal and suspicious activity. Ideal locations are upstairs windows, windows that face the street, and windows that allow you to observe your neighborhood areas.

## 4. Observe on foot.

Observe your surroundings as you walk, jog, or take your pets for a walk. Be alert to anything unusual taking place in the neighborhood.

## 5. Observe in your vehicle.

This takes you further from home and you must rely on your knowledge of suspicious activities and sounds. Be prepared to call the police if you recognize anything suspicious.

## 6. Be prepared.

Have binoculars, cell phone, flashlight, paper and pen readily available.

## 7. At night.

When observing at night, don't look directly at what you are observing. Look to the side, above, or below the subject and your vision will be clearer than looking directly at the subject.

## 8. Trust your judgment.

Recognize and understand what you are observing. When your instinct tells you something is wrong or about to happen, **call 911 immediately.** Don't hesitate.

## 9. Notes

Write down immediately what you see, including the time. If you remember something later, add it to your notes. Record the suspect's description and activity, license plate number, description of the vehicle, and other important notes.

## 10. Practice

You will learn a great deal in your Neighborhood Watch Program. Practice what you learn.

## Calling 911

- **Determine IF it is an emergency.**

Emergencies require IMMEDIATE police/fire/ambulance response such as a life or death situation or property is in the process of being stolen or jeopardized.

If it is NOT an emergency, call the local authority non-emergency number. **Chula Vista Police Department non-emergency number is 619-691-5151.** If it is an emergency, call **911**.

- **When you call 911...**

The first words you may hear are, "911, what is your emergency?"

- **Describe your emergency.**

Be specific as possible about WHAT is happening. For example, "We need police and paramedics NOW, 2 teenagers have been hurt in a fight."

- **Do NOT hang up until the operator tells you to.**

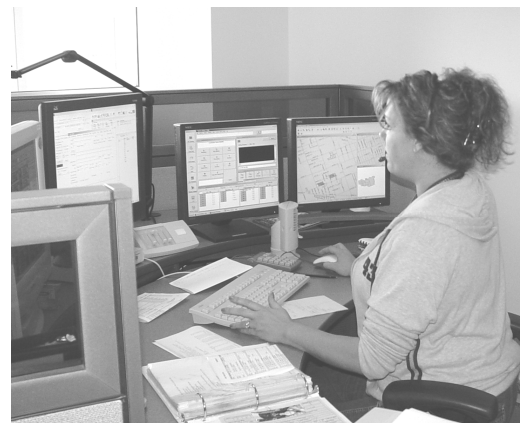
Follow the directions of the operator. They are trained for emergency situations and will guide you through the entire process with their questions and instructions. They may also be relaying information to dispatchers so help can get on their way to your location.

- **Provide the information asked.**

The operator will probably ask you for your NAME, ADDRESS, and PHONE NUMBER. What is happening? Is the crime in progress or about to happen? Describe the suspects. How many? Are they armed? What kind of vehicle? Direction the suspects are traveling? Responding quickly and accurately is important. Avoid unnecessary conversation.

## 911 Facts

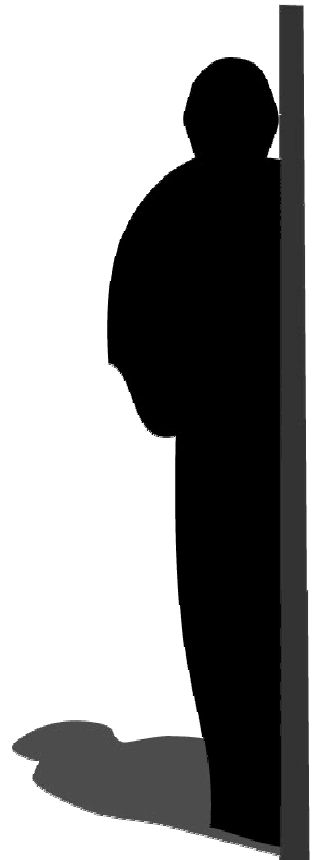
- You do not need coins when using a pay phone.
- Assistance is available if you speak different languages.
- Operators are trained to guide you through emergency procedures over the phone until help arrives.
- If you are hearing impaired, you can be connected to a TDD receiver.
- Your name, address and phone number will display to the operator for most landline phones (not so for cell phones).



# Recognizing Suspicious People

## A person, persons, groups of young people, adults or gangs.

- Gathering or loitering for an extended period of time
  - *Possible burglary, arson, or drug dealings*
- Behaving strangely
  - *Possibly on drugs or preparing to commit illegal activity*
- With any sort of weapon
  - *Possibly planning on any number of crimes*
- Carrying, concealing, or transporting anything unusual
  - *Possible burglar carrying stolen property*
- Looking into vehicles
  - *Possibly casing vehicles for theft of its contents*
- Wearing clothing, bandanas, caps, or other attire that spells trouble
  - *Possible gang activity*
- Selling or conducting business on property
  - *Possible drug dealing or selling of stolen property*
- Running, especially if carrying something of value
  - *Possible suspect fleeing crime scene*
- Running, especially at night, for no apparent reason
  - *Possible suspect fleeing crime scene*
- Creating any type of disturbance
  - *Disturbing the peace or covering up noise of some other activity*
- Going door to door, especially if someone goes to the rear of the unit
  - *Possibly casing the neighborhood*
- Loitering on property
  - *Possible burglar, sex offense, drugs or arson*
- Frequent visitors with short visits
  - *Possible drugs, vice or fencing operation*
- Offering items for sale at extremely low prices
  - *Possibly trying to sell stolen property*
- Older man with young females or teenagers in an unusual place or period of time
  - *Possible sex crimes*



# Suspect Identification

You must be able to give the police the best possible description of the suspicious person or subject. Take notes of suspects from the top to the bottom of their body. The most important identification features are sex, height, race, weight, scars, and approximate age.

- Height
  - *Try to provide height in feet and inches rather than “average”*
- Weight
  - *Build, posture, style of walk, any physical characteristics*
- Hair
  - *Color, length, wig, cap, hat, marking on the hat, ski mask, stocking mask, style of hat*
- Sex
  - *Male or female*
- Age
- Eyes
  - *Color, glasses*
- Race
  - *Complexion, nationality*
- Face
  - *Nose, lips, teeth, ears, hearing aid, anything out of the ordinary*
- Facial hair
  - *Mustache, beard, sideburns*
- Voice
  - *Language, accent, lisp, stutter, other speech characteristics*
- Scars
  - *Marks, tattoos, amputations, deformities*
- Right or left handed
- Weapons
  - *Gun, knife, club, or other weapons*
- Clothing
  - *Length and color of shirt, coat, jacket, necktie, scar, pants, skirt, gloves, shoes*
- Items
  - *Carrying a bag, back pack, fanny pack, duffel bag*



## Auto Theft/Entering Vehicle Security Tips

- Park in a well lighted area, lock your car and take the keys
- Don't leave valuables in the car such as purses, cell phones, CDs, clothing, electronics, etc. Keep everything out of sight.
- Don't keep the car's title in the car. Keep it at home or another safe place.
- Know your neighbors and the types of vehicles they drive.

## Vehicle Identification

Learn these tips to report suspicious vehicles.

### Kind of vehicle

- Car  
*2 door, 4 door, sports car, convertible, hard top*
- Van  
*Station wagon, mini-van, windowed or solid sides*
- Truck  
*Small or large, pick-up, flatbed, stake truck, boxed or cargo*
- Motorcycle  
*Small or large, sidecar, street or dirt bike*
- RV or SUV  
*How is it equipped?*

### Colors

- Single or two colors
- Color and shade: blue, midnight blue, powder blue, aqua blue, etc.

### Make

- Ford, Chevy, Mercury, Oldsmobile, Buick, Plymouth, Chrysler, Dodge
- Honda, Toyota, Nissan, Isuzu, Mazda
- BMW, Mercedes, Volvo, Fiat, Volkswagon
- Domestic or foreign if nothing else

### Model

- Bronco, Mustang, Thunderbird, Taurus, Camry, Accord, etc.

### Year

- If you know the year, great. If not, was it new, nearly new, a few years old, several years old, or really a wreck?

### License Plate

- Memorize the license plate number of suspicious vehicles. Write it down exactly as you observe it. Note state if out of state tag, tag colors, specialty tag, etc.

### Other features

- Bumper stickers, dents, bullet holes, broken windows
- Cellular phone, CB radio, antennas
- Lowered or raised front or rear vehicle
- Damaged in any way



*Write down your description while it's fresh in your mind!*

## Recognizing Suspicious Vehicles

- An occupied vehicle parked for a long period of time
  - *Possibly casing the neighborhood*
- A vehicle driving around the property repeatedly
  - *Possibly casing the neighborhood, operating as a point for drug dealing, a sexual offender waiting for their target, or a get-away vehicle*
- Strange vehicle loaded with valuables
  - *Possibly burglary in progress*
- Vehicle parked with engine running
  - *Possible get-away vehicle for burglary*
- Departing from a location at night without lights
  - *Possible stolen vehicle or get-away car*
- Driving recklessly or committing other serious traffic violations
  - *Possible stolen vehicle or get-away car*
- Vehicle in unusually bad condition with signs of recent accident, broken windows, or bullet holes
  - *Possibly involved in drive-by shooting or hit and run accident*
- Business being conducted out of vehicle
  - *Possibly selling stolen articles or drugs*
- Overloaded vehicle parked or driving on property
  - *Possible burglar*
- Persons removing mechanical parts or accessories from vehicle
  - *Possible stolen vehicle*
- Someone being forced into a vehicle
  - *Possible kidnapping, assault, or attempted rape*
- Odd property seen in vehicle such as televisions, stereos, weapons, etc.
  - *Possible stolen property*
- Locked vehicle that someone is trying to forcibly enter
  - *Possible theft of vehicle or contents in progress*
- Older children or adults not from the neighborhood loitering or bicycling randomly or repeatedly without a purposeful destination
  - *Possible theft*

## Recognizing Suspicious Sounds

Using your ears to detect suspicious activities is very helpful in combating crime. Sounds may only last a few seconds and may go undetected. Here are some sounds that require close attention and reporting.

- Screams for help
  - *Always assume the scream is real and someone desperately needs help. Call 911 immediately.*
- Continuous screaming
  - *Probably the result of someone being beaten, hurt, or mistreated. Call 911.*
- Screaming and cursing
  - *Probably a domestic violence incident with intent on hurting each other but not in a life threatening way. If you feel someone is in danger, call 911.*
- Gun shots
  - *Immediately call 911. Try to provide as much information as to the number of shots and location.*
- Alarms activated
  - *Fire, home burglary, or car alarms should be considered as real.*
- Breaking glass
  - *Immediately call 911. This is the most common method of forced entry into homes and vehicles.*
- Loud music
  - *Usually an annoyance that should be reported to Community Relations. Sometimes used to cover up sounds of other criminal activity.*
- Forcing, prying, or pounding sounds
  - *Determine the location and nature of sounds.*
- Dogs barking
  - *Continuous barking in an unusual manner is cause for alarm.*

**Trust your instincts.**

**Don't hesitate.**

**Call 911 immediately**

