

## What is a suspicious person?



No police agency can function effectively without the concerned assistance of responsible citizens. We are depending on you to call us and tell us whenever you observe suspicious persons, activities or motor vehicles. Call the police immediately about all suspicious activity, anonymously if you wish. Don't worry about being embarrassed if your suspicions prove unfounded. Think about what might happen if you don't call!

### **SO HOW DO I IDENTIFY A SUSPICIOUS PERSON?**

Let's start with: "PEOPLE AREN'T SUSPICIOUS, BEHAVIOR IS." Although we all say "suspicious person", it is really their behavior that is suspicious. Suspicious behavior is sometimes difficult to define, but it is one of those things that most people say they "know it when they see it." It is something that is out of place, not quite right, or just makes you feel 'weird' about it.

### **SIGNS AND BEHAVIORS THAT MAY BE SUSPICIOUS:**

#### PERSON RUNNING

Does this behavior indicate someone being in a hurry or does it have a heightened sense of urgency or tension about it? It would be suspicious if the person was looking about secretly, as if he were being observed or pursued.

#### STRANGER CARRYING PROPERTY

A person with suspicious behavior might be carrying items that do not fit in with what a person is doing (i.e., a man carrying a crowbar while walking down the street). Or, a person might be carrying something at an unusual hour or a location that doesn't fit what they have. Does this person appear to be carrying something inside their clothing? This behavior is suspect. Ask yourself, "Could the person be leaving the scene of a robbery, burglary, or theft?"

#### PERSON GOING DOOR-TO-DOOR

One leading crime statistic is theft of unattended property from unsecured offices, vehicles, or residences. Thieves often look like they belong there, but if the person seems to be wandering or walking into areas they don't belong, this would be suspicious. People sometimes leave homes, vehicles, offices and buildings unlocked and valuables unattended when we are gone 'for just a moment.' This is a temptation that a thief won't pass up. If you see a person, or persons, going from house to house and then if one or more goes into a back or side yard, you may be witnessing a crime in progress. It becomes especially suspicious if one or more persons remain in the front while this occurs. Their partners may be breaking into the back of the home while they keep a lookout.

### PROPERTY IN VEHICLES

This is not suspicious unless the property is of an unusual nature: television sets, stereo equipment, several iPads, laptops, or auto parts.

### UNUSUAL ACTIVITY INVOLVING VEHICLES

- Any person forcibly entering a locked vehicle, especially at night and in one of our parking areas, is highly suspect.
- If an unknown person is seen detaching mechanical parts or accessories this could be considered suspicious. While the person's behavior may be appropriate, you could be witnessing a theft or malicious mischief crime in progress.
- If you observe one or more persons sitting in a parked car closely scanning the area around them, you may be observing lookouts for a burglary, robbery in progress, a crime being planned, or surveillance for a terrorist event.
- If you see someone being forcibly taken into a vehicle, you may be watching a kidnapping or domestic dispute. A complete description of the vehicle and occupant(s) is crucial and must be relayed to a law enforcement agency immediately.

### CERTAIN MOVING VEHICLES

This is suspicious if the vehicle is moving slowly and running without lights, or if its course appears aimless or repetitive. Could they be casing the area?

### UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR

- A person seen in an environment where he/she doesn't belong or "fit in" may seem suspicious. Examples might be non-appropriate attire, unable to hold meaningful conversation, or focus on a particular subject. A suspicious person is either one who is exhibiting suspicious behavior, or who is in an area or doing something that is not normal.
- Other unusual behavior may include nervousness, nervous glancing or other signs of mental discomfort/being ill-at-ease. This may include sweating or "tunnel vision." Repeated entrances and exits from a building or facility would be suspicious.
- Inappropriate, oversized loose-fitting clothes (e.g., a heavy overcoat on a warm day).
- Asking questions that are not common about the location of something, security measures, or availability of chemicals or other items.
- Attempts to conceal the face by turning away when someone approaches. (e.g., rapidly turn and pretend to be doing something)
- 'Hiding' in shadows or behind objects in an apparent attempt to keep from being clearly seen.
- Being evasive when asked a direct question, attempts to change the subject.
- Giving too many details that are unrelated to the conversation (e.g., when asked about what they are doing in a restricted area, they start talking about what they did when they got up in the morning, where they parked, everyone else they have visited or know, etc.)

### UNUSUAL NOISES

If you hear unusual noises such as gunshots, screaming, sounds of combat, an explosion, or abnormal barking by dogs in the neighborhood, please feel free to contact us to report your suspicions.