



LINCOLNWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT

6900 N. Lincoln Avenue, Lincolnwood, IL 60712

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Robert LaMantia
Chief of Police

Reporting Suspicious Persons and Activities

We must all work together in an effort to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods. One way we can accomplish this goal is to encourage neighbors to watch out for each other to reduce criminal opportunities. The Lincolnwood Police request that you stay observant and aware of persons and events in our neighborhood. We must learn to recognize happenings of a suspicious nature and overcome any reluctance we might have in reporting these incidents to the Lincolnwood Police.

All too often, we develop an attitude that "what does not affect me directly is of no concern of mine." Such apathy only serves the criminal. This does not mean that one must become a part of a vigilante group. It does mean that we must do our part in reporting suspicious activity that may pose a problem within our neighborhood. By reporting suspicious conduct, a resident may have prevented a traumatic event, or aided the police in the arrest of an offender. Residents should report suspicious activity, and avoid the tendency to ignore or disregard their instinctive feelings. Do not worry about "bothering" police. Do not worry about being embarrassed if your suspicions prove unfounded.

What is suspicious activity?

Events that seem out of the ordinary or that you feel should not be occurring. Some people fail to call the police simply because they are not aware of what might be suspicious. Knowing your neighbors and their habits will make it easier for you to recognize and report suspicious activity. You know better than anybody else what is normal for your street.

Recognizing suspicious persons: Obviously, not every stranger who comes into your neighborhood is a criminal. Legitimate door-to-door sales and repair people appear in residential areas frequently, however criminals disguise themselves as these workers to commit crimes. Stay alert to the activities of all nonresidents. You can protect yourself by checking the identification of solicitors, utility workers, and repair men prior to allowing them to enter your home.

Sometimes something that starts out looking suspicious has a very normal explanation. Usually though, if you trust your instincts and watch for a moment, you will be able to tell. Time and accuracy of information are critical in reporting crime or suspicious activity. Dial 911 to report life-threatening incidents or crimes in progress, and use the non-emergency number, 847-673-2167, for crimes that have already occurred. Your call

could save a life, prevent an injury, or stop a crime. The information you provide will be kept confidential. You do not need to give your name, although it is helpful. If you do not want the responding officer to contact you just advise the dispatcher.

Do not attempt to apprehend a person committing a crime or to investigate a suspicious activity!!

Recognizing Suspicious Persons:

- People going door-to-door in a residential area and one or more of the subjects going into the back or side yard. A person going door-to-door could be looking for homes to break into.
- Someone waiting in front of a house when the homeowners are absent.
- Someone forcing entrance to or tampering with a home or vehicle.
- A person running carrying items of value. (TV or stereo) A person concealing something under their clothing.
- Persons offering items for sale at a very low price.
- Persons coming to your door with unusual requests, especially if yours is the only home approached.
- A person exhibiting unusual mental or physical symptoms (person may be injured, under the influence of drugs, or otherwise needing medical attention).
- Heavy traffic to and from a residence, particularly if it occurs on a daily basis (drug dealing, vice, or fencing stolen property).
- Someone looking into windows or parked cars.
- A stranger sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child.
- A person or persons loitering on your street or around playgrounds or clubhouse.
- Persons being forced into vehicles.
- Persons wearing or carrying bloody clothing.
- Persons making a quick change of vehicles.
- Someone running, especially at night, could be fleeing a crime scene.
- A person with a weapon.
- Person or persons wearing clothing, bandannas, caps, or other attire that spells trouble.

Recognizing Suspicious Vehicle Activity:

Vehicles in the following situations may be, but not limited to, involved in crimes and should be reported to the police.

- Vehicles moving slowly and without lights or following an aimless or repetitive course.
- Vehicle being loaded in front of a residence.
- Apparent business transactions conducted from a vehicle.
- Abandoned vehicles parked on the street.
- Person detaching mechanical parts or accessories from a vehicle especially at night.
- Objects thrown from a vehicle, especially while traveling at a high rate of speed.
- Vehicles parked or occupied, containing one or more persons, especially at an unusual hour.
- Unknown vehicle parked in a neighbor's driveway.

- Loitering around parked cars.

Recognizing Suspicious Sounds:

All of us recognize the sound of an explosion as one that is “out of the ordinary” for our neighborhood. What about some other more subtle sounds? Suspicious sounds may only last a few seconds. They may be so fleeting that you begin to doubt if you actually heard them or not. Here are a few examples of sounds that should be more closely monitored and reported.

- Gunshots
- Alarms
- Breaking Glass
- Loud music
- Pounding
- Unusual dog barking
- Screams for help, continuous screaming, or screaming and cursing
- Loud or unusual noises
- Sound of your doorbell, and then nobody being at the door

Other Things to Think about:

- Continuous repair operations at a home – stolen property being altered.
- Open or broken windows and doors.
- A beam from a flashlight in a neighbor’s home.
- Unusual odors.
- Items that accumulate in garages, storage areas, or on property especially if the items are in good condition but not in use.
- Finding drugs or drug paraphernalia in the area (syringes, pipes).
- Homes where extreme security measures seem to be taken.
- Graffiti

If you are interested in information about an awareness presentation, security survey or a Neighborhood Watch Program please contact Sgt. John Walsh with the Lincolnwood Crime Prevention Unit at 847-673-2167 or E-mail us at crimeprevention@lwd.org.