
WHAT IS SUSPICIOUS?

"Am I witnessing a crime?" Most of us have found ourselves wondering this at some time or other. However, because we are not really sure, we tend to ignore what we have just seen; and hoping it wasn't so, we continue about our business.

No Police Department 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.

Some people fail to call the police simply because they are not aware of what seemingly innocent activities might be suspicious. Others may notice suspicious activity and be hesitant to call for fear of seeming a "nosey neighbor" or a "crank." Still others may take it for granted that someone else has already called. Call the police immediately about all suspicious activity and do it yourself - anonymously if you wish. Don't worry about being embarrassed if your suspicions prove unfounded.

Think what might have happened if you didn't call!!

SO HOW DO I IDENTIFY A SUSPICIOUS PERSON AS SUSPICIOUS?

Let's Start With: **"PEOPLE AREN'T SUSPICIOUS, BEHAVIOR IS"**

Although we all say "suspicious person", it is in fact their behavior that is suspicious.

The following are some 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 he were looking about furtively, as if he were being observed or pursued. Possible significance - he is fleeing the scene of a crime.

STRANGER CARRYING PROPERTY

If this occurs at an unusual hour or location, and especially if the items are stereo equipment, office machinery, laboratory equipment, carrying a locked bicycle, does this person appear to be carrying something inside their clothing? This behavior is suspect. Possible significance - the subject is leaving the scene of a robbery, burglary, or theft.

PERSON GOING DOOR-TO-DOOR IN AN OFFICE BUILDING OR IN A RESIDENTIAL AREA

One leading crime statistic is theft of unattended property from unsecured offices. If you see anyone alone, or with others, moving through your office, or office building call the Provost Marshal's Office (PMO, 7114) immediately. Thieves often look like they belong here, but if they wander in and out of offices, or are seen moving slowly down hallways trying doors, they may be looking for an opportunity to steal. We commonly leave offices and buildings unlocked and valuables unattended when we are gone 'for just a moment' and, in doing so, we make it possible for ourselves to be victimized. 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 remains in the front while this occurs. **Possible significance** - they are 'casing' a house to burglarize or are burglarizing a house.

PROPERTY IN VEHICLES

This is not suspicious unless the property is of an unusual nature: television sets, stereo equipment, un-mounted tape decks, or auto parts. Possible significance - stolen property.

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 a person is seen detaching mechanical parts or accessories, call PMO immediately. While the person's behavior may be appropriate, you are more likely to be witnessing a burglary, 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. A complete description of the vehicle and occupant(s) is crucial and must be relayed to a law enforcement agency immediately.

CERTAIN MOVING VEHICLES

Suspicious if it is moving slowly and running without lights, or if its course appears aimless or repetitive. **Possible significance** - 'casing' buildings to burglarize, kidnapping, or surveillance for a future terrorist event.

EXHIBITING UNUSUAL MENTAL OR PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

A person seen in an environment where he/she doesn't belong or "fit in" may seem suspicious. Non appropriate attire, unable to hold meaningful conversation, or focus on a particular subject. Possible significance - the person may have been injured in an accident, is under the influence of drugs or medications, or otherwise needs medical or psychiatric assistance.

UNUSUAL NOISES

If you hear gunshots, screaming, sounds of combat, an explosion, abnormally barking dogs, or anything suggesting foul play, danger, or illegal activity, call PMO immediately.

DESCRIBING A SUSPICIOUS PERSON OR VEHICLE

A good description of a suspicious person or vehicle play a major role in the ability of responding officers to identify the right person to stop or the right vehicle to investigate.

MAINTAIN HUMAN DIGNITY AND CASE INTEGRITY

Do not verbalize your personal conclusion of the suspicious person/behavior to all passersby. The behavior may be a result of mental illness, an accident, stroke, drug interaction, missed medication, Alzheimer's, cultural differences (differences in social norms), variations in communication (i.e. sign language), etc. The possibilities are endless and not always the fault of the person displaying the behavior. Don't start a panic or impede on an investigation by allowing yourself to get caught up in the moment. Leave investigations and diagnosis to the professionals in that field. Never become complacent, but continue to be aware and report any suspicious person's behavior. Always maintain your professional demeanor and the dignity of all involved.

If a suspicious item is received through the mail, DO NOT OPEN IT! Even though a package bomb received through the mail is designed to explode upon being opened, there is always the chance of an accidental premature explosion. The package should not be handled or moved any more than necessary. Attempt to verify the contents with the addressee.

A bomb can be enclosed in either a parcel or an envelope. Its outward appearance is limited only by the imagination of the sender. However, mail bombs have some unique characteristics, which may assist in identifying suspicious mailings:

Unprofessionally wrapped packages	Distorted or foreign handwriting
Homemade address labels	Cut-and-paste lettering
Irregularly shaped containers	No return address
Peculiar odor	Buzzing, ticking, or sloshing sound
Excessive postage	Unusual or unevenly distributed weight
Name or title of addressee may be incorrect or misspelled	Endorsements such as "personal", "private", "rush", "do not delay", etc
Foreign mail, air mail and special delivery	Misspelling of common words
Incorrect titles	Excessive weight
Lopsided or uneven envelope	Protruding wires or tinfoil
Excessive securing materiel (tape, string)	

If you have reason to believe a letter or parcels is suspicious, do not take chances or worry about possible embarrassment if the item turns out to be innocent. Instead, contact your supervisor, the PMO (7114), the security office (3312/3308), etc.