



Suspicious People

One of the most effective tools we, as police officers, have for fighting and preventing crime is you, the people of our community. In many cases you know far better than we do who belongs in the areas in which you work and who doesn't. There are far more of you than there are of us, thus you are better able to observe areas constantly that we may only be able to pass through occasionally while on patrol. If you see someone hanging around without a purpose, or someone who appears to be trying doors and "casing the place," call us immediately so we can check on them. Likewise, if you see someone doing something you know is illegal, or find an unauthorized person in a secured area, call the police right away. The sooner you call us, the sooner we can get to you, and the better our chances of locating the person you observed. In many cases a quiet conversation with a police officer may be all a would-be criminal needs to deter him/her from acting. It also gives us information which may prove useful in later investigations.

If you observe a suspicious person, try to get the best possible description of him/her you can. Start at the top and work your way down noticing as many distinguishing features as possible. Essential information for us includes gender, race, complexion, height, weight, and hair color. Jewelry, hats, facial hair, and shirts with logos also help us identify a suspect as we are responding to your location. In addition to describing the person, note the direction of travel if s/he leaves the area before you can call us. If the person approaches a vehicle, try to get the license plate number. Whatever you do, don't confront a suspicious person yourself. Although most of the criminals we encounter on campus are generally not aggressive, you can never be sure how a person will react when caught; there is no sense risking your own safety and well being over a would-be thief. Calling the police is a much better option; responding to your calls is what we are here for, so don't ever be afraid to call us. The only thing we ask of people reporting suspicious person(s) is that they be able to articulate **why** the person they are calling about is suspicious