

SOME NOT-SO-OBVIOUS THINGS TO WATCH FOR

Not every stranger who comes into your neighborhood is a criminal by any means.

There are many perfectly legitimate door-to-door salespeople, repairpersons, or service people moving around Huntington Beach all the time. But, criminals do take advantage of this by assuming the guise of legitimate business representatives. After all, if a criminal looked like a criminal, no one would have any trouble spotting him or her.

Here are some situations involving people you might see and what their actions might mean.

- Someone is going door-to-door in your neighborhood. Watch for a while. If, after a few houses are visited, one or more of the persons tries a door to see if it is locked or goes into a back or side yard, it could be a burglar. Such action is even more suspicious if one person remains in the front when this occurs or if there is a car following a few houses away.
- Someone waiting in front of a house or business becomes suspect if the owners are absent or – if it's a business – the business is closed. This might be a lookout for a burglary-in-progress.
- Anyone forcing entrance to, or tampering with, a residence, business, or vehicle is suspicious anytime, anywhere.
- A person running, especially if carrying something of value, could be leaving the scene of a crime.
- Carrying property could be suspicious too, if it's at an unusual hour or in an unusual place, and if the property is not wrapped as if just purchased.
- A person exhibiting unusual mental or physical symptoms may be injured, under the influence of drugs, or otherwise needing medical or psychiatric assistance.

- Much human traffic to-and-from a certain residence is not suspicious unless it occurs on a daily or very regular basis, especially during late or unusual hours. It could possibly be the scene of vice activities or a “fence” operation.

Here are some things to watch for involving vehicles:

- Any vehicle moving slowly and without lights, or following a course that appears aimless or repetitive, is suspicious in any location but particularly so in areas of schools, parks, and playgrounds. Occupants may be “casing” for places to rob or burglarize, or they could possibly be drug pushers or sex offenders.
- Parked, occupied vehicles containing one or more persons are especially significant if observed at an unusual hour. They could be possible lookouts for a burglary in progress, even if the occupants appear to be lovers.
- Vehicles being loaded with valuables are suspicious if parked in front of a closed business or untended residence – even if the vehicle is a legitimate looking commercial unit. More and more professional thieves are taking the time and trouble to “customize” their vehicles with special signs in order to move more freely without suspicion.
- Apparent business transactions conducted from a vehicle, especially around schools or parks and if juveniles are involved, could mean possible drug sales.
- Persons being forced into vehicles – especially juveniles or females – may mean a possible kidnapping.
- The abandoned vehicle parked on your block may be a stolen car.

“Serving with Honor”

What is Suspicious?

OR

WHEN TO CALL THE POLICE



Robert Handy
Chief of Police
Huntington Beach Police Department

HELP THE POLICE HELP YOU

No police department can function effectively without the concerned assistance of responsible citizens. We are depending on you to call and tell us whenever you observe suspicious persons or actions.

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 but are hesitant to call for fear of seeming to be a “nosy neighbor” or a “crank.” Still others take it for granted that someone else has already called.

Call the Huntington Beach Police Department immediately about all suspicious activity – make the call yourself. Don't worry about “bothering” the police because that is why we are here. Don't worry about being embarrassed if your suspicions prove unfounded. Think, instead, about what could happen if you don't act.

INFORMATION MOST OFTEN NEEDED BY THE POLICE

- What happened?
- When?
- Where?
- Is anyone injured?
- Vehicle license number
- Vehicle description
- Direction of flight
- Description of persons (including clothing)
- When describing suspects, notice age, race, sex, height, and weight. Compare your height and weight with suspects. Pick out some unique characteristics which will help you identify suspects in the future, if need be.

BUT WHAT IS SUSPICIOUS?

Basically, anything that seems even slightly “out of place” for your area or for the time of day during which it occurs, may mean criminal activity.

Some of the most obvious things to watch for and report include:

- ❖ A stranger entering your neighbor's house when it is unoccupied may be a burglar.
- ❖ A scream heard anywhere may mean robbery or rape.
- ❖ Offers of merchandise at ridiculously low prices could mean stolen property.
- ❖ Anyone removing accessories, license plates, or gasoline from a car should be reported.
- ❖ Anyone peering into parked cars may be looking for a car to steal or for valuables left displayed inside the car.
- ❖ Persons entering or leaving a business place after hours could mean burglars.
- ❖ The sound of breaking glass or other loud explosive noises could mean an accident, housebreaking, or vandalizing.
- ❖ Persons loitering around schools, parks, secluded areas, or in the neighborhood could be sex offenders.
- ❖ Persons around the neighborhood who do not live there could be burglars.

OTHER UNUSUAL SITUATIONS YOU SHOULD REPORT

- ✓ Continuous “repair” operations at a nonbusiness location could mean stolen property being stripped, repainted, or otherwise altered.

- ✓ Open or broken doors or windows at a closed business or residence whose owners are absent could mean a burglary in progress or already completed.
- ✓ Unusual noises, such as gunshots, screaming, sounds of combat, abnormally barking dogs, anything suggestive of foul play, danger, or illegal activity, should be reported.
- ✓ While some, if not all, of the suspicious situations described could have innocent explanations, the Huntington Beach Police Department would rather investigate a crime-prone situation than be called when it is too late. Your call could save a life, prevent an injury, or stop a criminal act.

“HELP US HELP YOU”

***A project of the Huntington Beach
Police Department
2000 Main Street
Huntington Beach, CA 92648***

POLICE DEPARTMENT CONTACTS:

Emergency: **911**
Non-Emergency: (714) 960-8825
Information: (714) 960-8843
Website: www.hbpd.org

**POLICE – FIRE – MEDICAL
EMERGENCY:
DIAL 9-1-1**