

HOW TO OBSERVE

“We Look Out For Each Other” is the key to Neighborhood Watch success.

Observation, looking out for each other, is a skill honed through diligent practice. Watching includes both seeing suspicious activity and also listening for suspicious sound.

Here are 10 good tips on how to observe:

Knowledge

- 1 By knowing who belongs in each house, their hours of work, their automobiles, helpers who come into their homes regularly, you can observe what is happening in your neighborhood and easily become suspicious of anything that does not fit your neighbor's habits. This information should be available from your **Neighborhood Watch Institute (NNWI) Family Data Sheet Summary**.

Secrecy

- 2 Observe as secretly as possible. If something suspicious is happening, do not make the suspicious person aware that you are watching them. Look out for your neighbor — be the eyes, and the ears, of your local law enforcement agency. But remember, you are the eyes and ears, **not** the strong arm of the law. Don't confront a suspect — **Call your police or sheriff**.

At Home

- 3 Observe from your home. Whether you live in a house, a mobile home, an apartment or a condominium, you are the one determining which locations are best for observing normal and suspicious activity. Ideal locations for observing include, but are not limited to, upstairs windows, windows that face the street, windows that allow you to observe the alley, garages, back doors and your neighbors' yards.

On Foot

- 4 Observe on foot as you walk or jog through your neighborhood. Commit as much as your **NNWI Family Data Sheet Summary** to memory as you can. Memorize the check lists of Suspicious Activities and Sounds. Be alert to anything unusual happening in your neighborhood. Know your neighbors and your neighborhood. Practice what you have memorized by mentally reviewing what you know as you pass each neighbor's home.

Car or Bicycle

- 5 Observe by car or bicycle. This method of observation takes you further from your home and you must rely on your knowledge of **Suspicious Activities and Sounds**. Practice what is needed to report a Suspect Vehicle or Person. Practice license number memorization and the phrase, “**She Simply Could Not Have Had Any Really Good Early Warning About Him**” and its meaning. Be alert and be prepared to call your police or sheriff if you recognize anything suspicious.

Be Prepared

- 6 Prepare yourself by having binoculars, including night vision binoculars. These are especially useful in rural and low-lit areas. A cellular phone will be useful in some areas, a CB or radio in others. If you are patrolling, which many Neighborhood Watch groups do, these are especially important.

You are the eyes and ears, not the strong arm of the law.

At Night

- 7 When observing at night, don't look directly at what you are observing. If you look to the side, or above or below what you are observing, your vision will be more clear than if you looked directly at the subject. Also, prepare yourself by having a small, powerful flashlight, if you need to use it without arousing suspicion. Mag-Lite is an especially good brand.

Trust Your Judgment

- 8 Recognize and understand what you are observing. Practice observation techniques. Put them together with your ability to evaluate, deduct, organize your thinking and make judgments. Recognize when to call for help. When your judgment (instinct) tells you something wrong is happening or is about to happen, **CALL IMMEDIATELY - DON'T HESITATE.**

Notes

- 9 The written word, with dates, times and properly written notes, is crucial to your reporting and following up on the criminal activities of any suspects. First, your memory is clearer when you write down, immediately, what you see, logging the time of your notes. If you remember something else later, note it also, with the time. Record the suspect's description and activity, any license plate number of a vehicle, anything you might be called upon to report. Always keep a notebook and pen or pencil with you.

Practice

- 10 Practice. Practice. Practice. Like any technique, practice makes perfect. Use your head to assimilate all you are exposed to and evaluate what you see and hear. No athlete, no pilot, no bookkeeper, not anyone, can perform up to their utmost without practice. You will learn a great deal in your Neighborhood Watch training. Practice what you learn.

Suspect Something?

Call Immediately!

Don't Hesitate

RECOGNIZING SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES

What is suspicious and when do you call the police?

Suspicious activity is anything that looks like it could be connected with criminal behavior - someone casing a neighborhood, forcing open a door, grabbing a child; screaming or pounding coming from a nearby residence or apartment; of strong chemical odors coming from an inappropriate building, are but a handful of examples. If the activity is or appears to be threatening to property or people, **immediately** report the suspicious activity by calling 9-1-1. Time is critical in apprehending criminals. It is better to be overly-suspicious than to let a criminal get away.

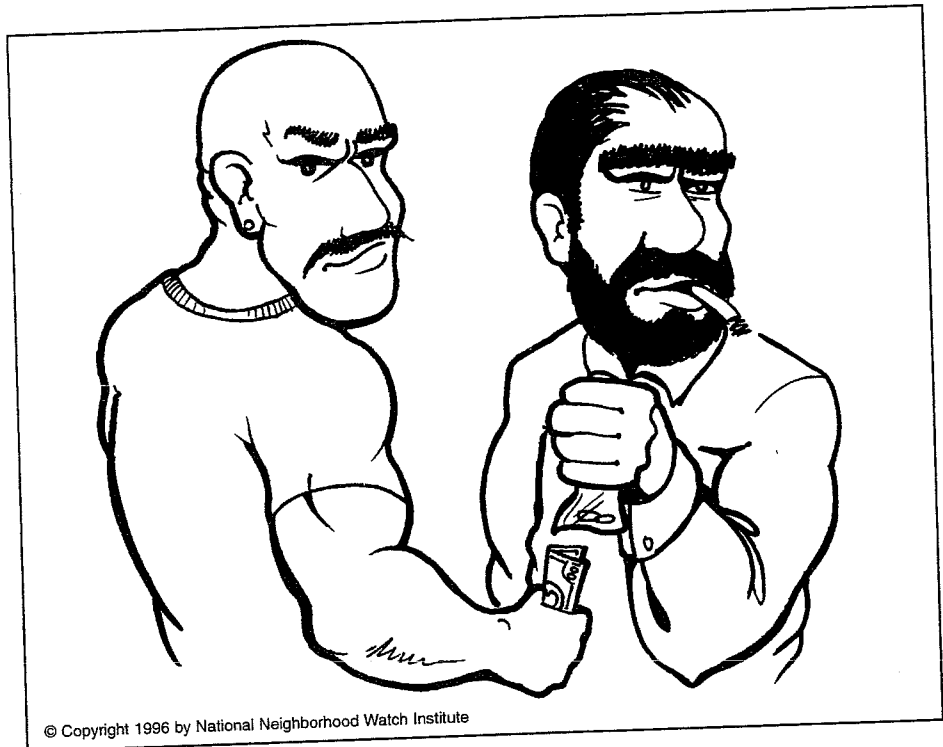
Following is a list of suspicious activities and the criminal activity that might be happening:

PEOPLE

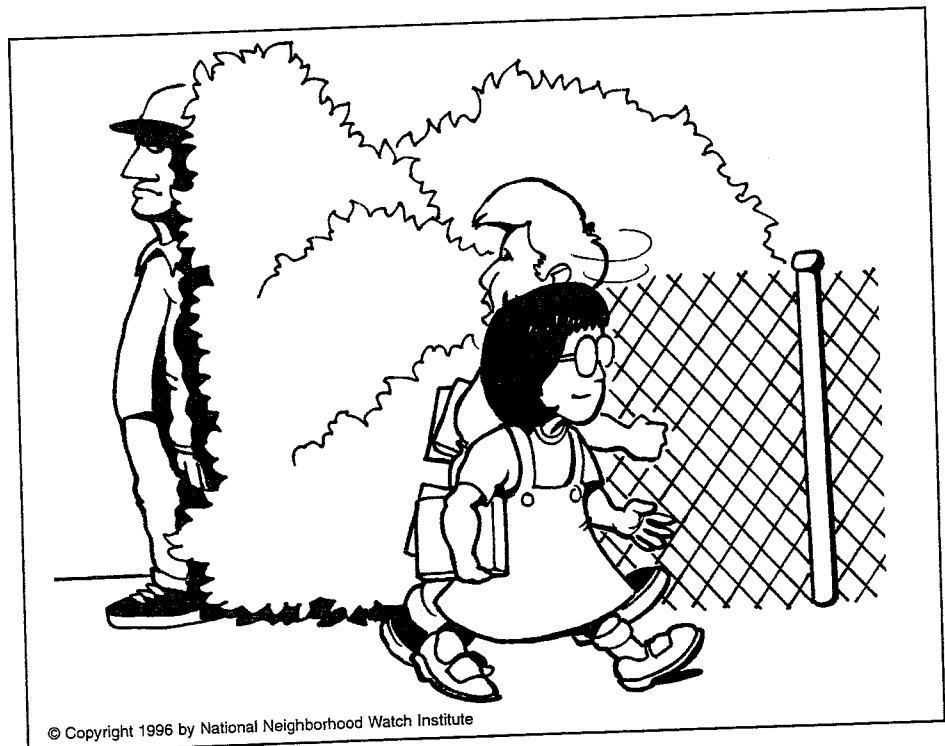
A person, persons, groups of young people, adult(s) or gang(s):

- gathering (loitering) for an extended or unusual period of time.
Possible burglary, arson, or drug dealing.

- behaving strangely.
Possibly on drugs or preparing to do some illegal activity.
- with any sort of weapon(s).
Possibly planning any number of crimes.
- carrying, concealing or transporting anything unusual.
Possible burglar carrying stolen property.



© Copyright 1996 by National Neighborhood Watch Institute



© Copyright 1996 by National Neighborhood Watch Institute

- looking into cars. *Possibly casing cars for theft of car or its contents.*
- wearing clothing, bandannas, caps, or other attire that could spell trouble. *Possible gang activity.*
- selling or conducting business on a street corner, park or other place where business is not licensed.
- running, especially if carrying something of value. *Possible suspect fleeing scene of crime.*
- running, especially at night, for no apparent reason. *Possible suspect fleeing scene of crime.*
- creating any type of disturbance. *Disturbing the Peace or covering up noise of some other activity.*
- going door to door, especially if someone goes to the rear of the residence. *Possibly casing the neighborhood.*

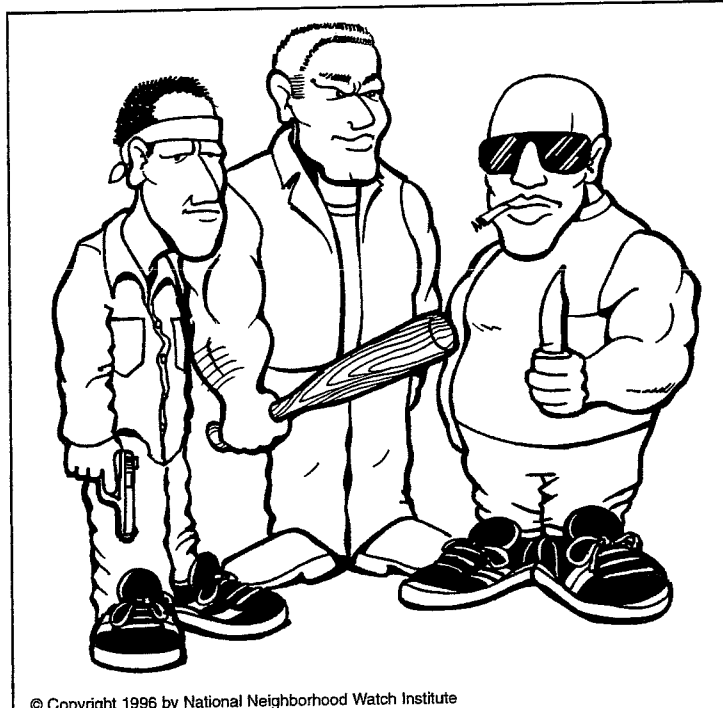
- loiters around schools, parks or on your street. *Possible burglar, sex offense, drugs or arson.*
- create much foot traffic to and from a particular place, short visits. *Possible drugs, vice or fencing operation.*

- offering items for sale at extremely low prices. *Possibly trying to sell stolen property.*
- An older man with young females or teenagers in an unusual place or for an unusual period of time. *Possible sex crimes of seeking*

sex or pimping (soliciting customers) for the youngsters.

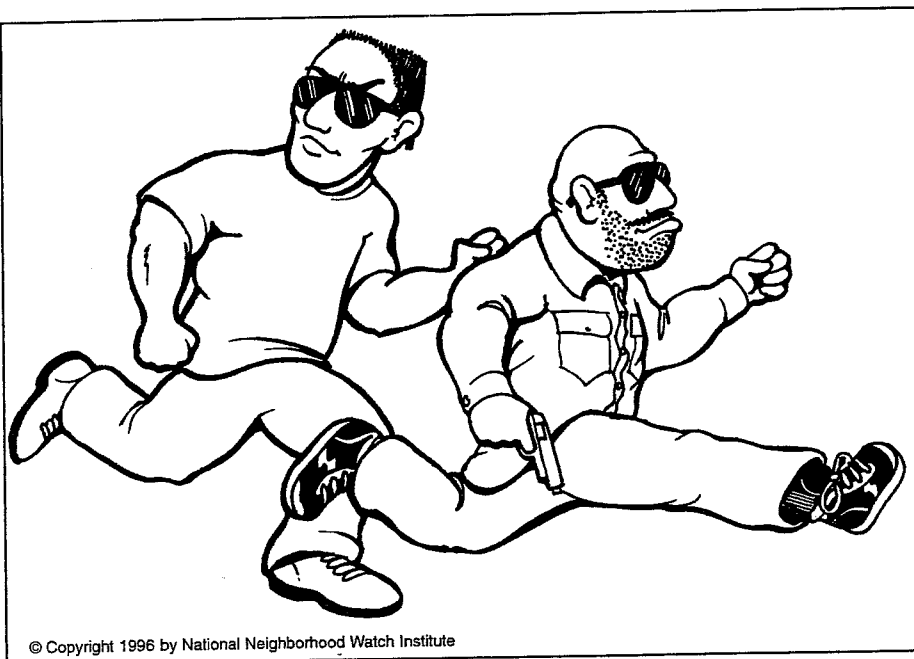
This list is endless:

Anyone doing anything that looks suspicious should be reported.



© Copyright 1996 by National Neighborhood Watch Institute

- screams for help. *Possible rape, medical emergency, robbery, assault or fire.*



© Copyright 1996 by National Neighborhood Watch Institute

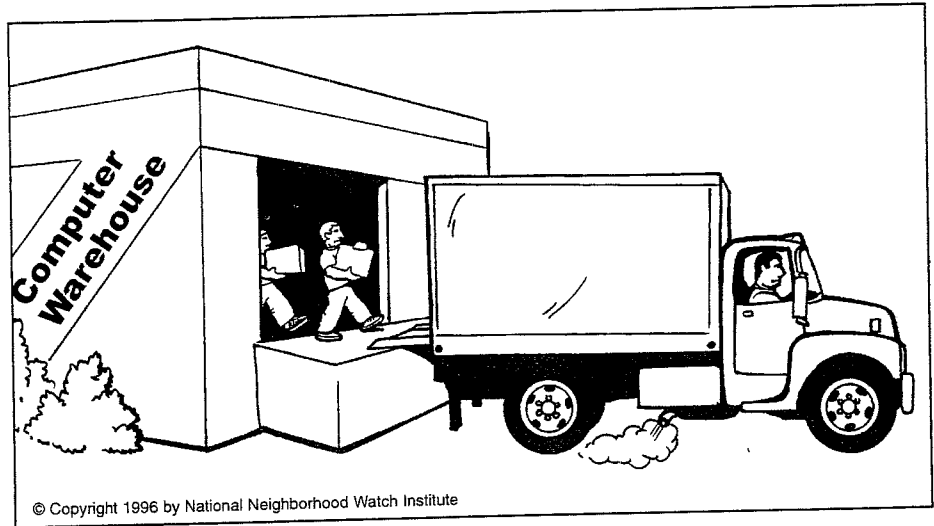
Trust your instincts.

Call Immediately!

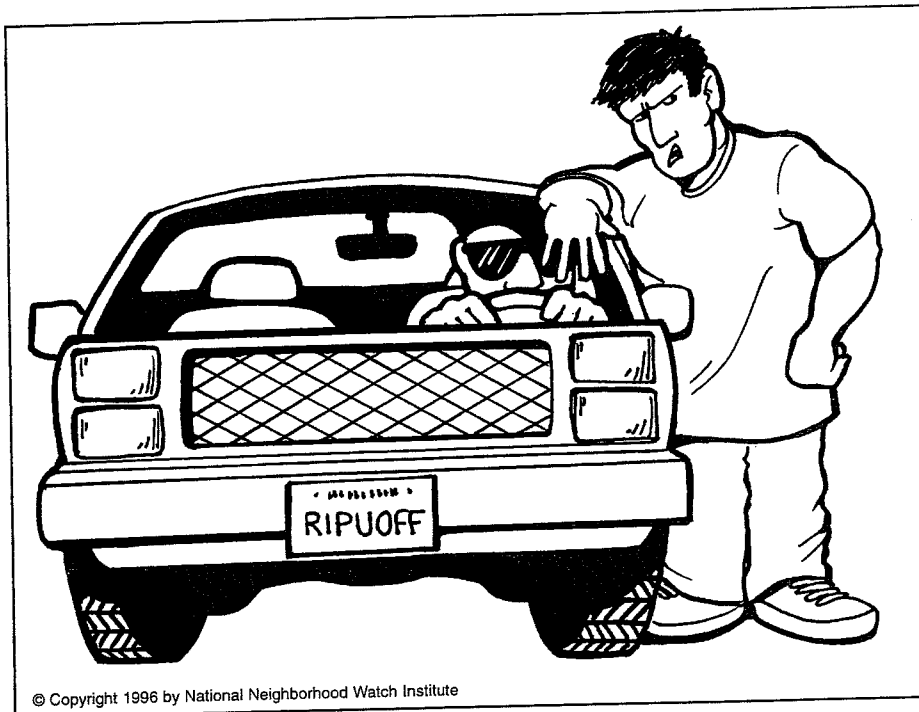
Don't Hesitate

VEHICLES

- An occupied vehicle parked for a long period of time.
Possibly casing the neighborhood.
- A vehicle driving around your neighborhood repeatedly.
Possibly casing the neighborhood, operating as a point for drug dealing, a sexual deviate or child molester waiting for their target, being a get-away car.
- Vehicle being loaded with valuables if parked by closed business or unoccupied house.
Possible burglary in progress.
- A parked car with the engine running.
Possibly get-away car for burglary.



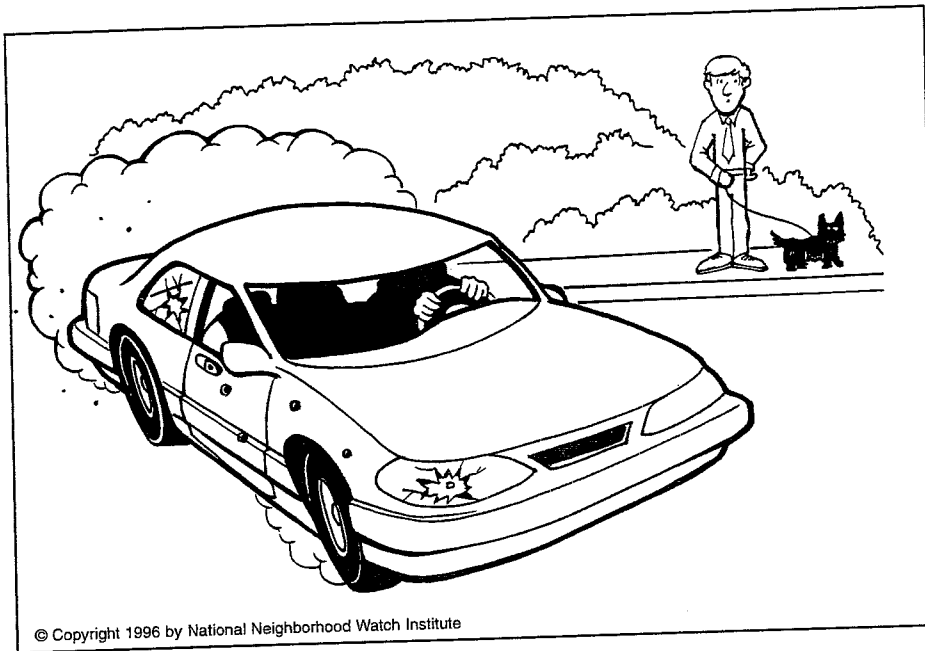
- traffic violations. Problems driving their vehicle, especially if it is an expensive model.
Possible stolen vehicle.
- The vehicle is in unusually bad condition, with signs of a recent accident, broken windows or bullet holes in the car.
- An over-loaded vehicle that is heavily weighted down, parked, or traveling in your neighborhood.
Possible burglar.
- Persons detaching mechanical parts or accessories from vehicle.
Possible theft or vandalism in progress.



- Abandoned vehicle parked on block.
Possible stolen vehicle.
- Someone being forced into a vehicle.
Possible kidnapping, assault or attempted rape.
- Odd property seen in vehicles, such as TVs, stereos, weapons.
Possible stolen property.
- Locked vehicle that someone is trying to forcibly enter.
Possible theft of car or contents in progress.
- Older children or adults, who are not from the neighborhood, bicycling randomly or repeatedly without a purposeful destination.
Possible theft of homes and/or garages.

- Departing from a location at night with its lights off.
Possible burglar, assault violation or robber.
- Driving in a reckless manner or committing other serious

- Possibly involved in drive-by shooting or a hit and run accident.*
- Business is being conducted out of the vehicle.
Possibly selling stolen items or drugs.



Here are three real life examples of what alert citizens, Participants in their Neighborhood Watch groups, actually did:

At 3 a.m. a woman was awakened by the sound of a car pulling up at an elderly neighbor's home. One man stayed in the car while a second disappeared around the corner of the house. Our Participant called the police who apprehended the second man breaking into a closed convenience store next to the neighbor's house, and his accomplice in the car was

apprehended minutes later. **No hesitation in making the call made the difference in this apprehension.**

A participant saw a young man knock on her neighbor's front door. Getting no answer, the man went around the side

of the house. Not recognizing the young man as an occupant of his neighbor's home, the Participant called the police. When the police arrived the young man was caught in the house burglarizing the Participant's neighbor. **No hesitation in making the call made the difference in this apprehension.**

The neighbor had just left to go shopping for a few minutes, leaving her garage door open. A Participant saw two teen-agers on their bicycles, who had been riding slowly through the neighborhood, enter the garage. She called the sheriff who apprehended the two youngsters minutes later as they were bicycling down the street with a box of auto tools stolen from the garage. **No hesitation in making the call made the difference in this apprehension.**

The message is the same in all three incidents!

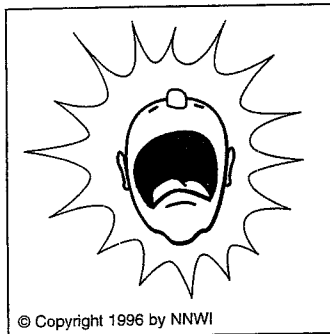
"We Look Out For Each Other!" is not only our motto - it is our call to action.

Don't hesitate. Make the call.



SUSPICIOUS SOUNDS

Using your ears to detect suspicious activities is very helpful in combatting crime. Sounds may only last a few seconds and may go undetected. Here are some sounds which require close attention, and reporting:



SCREAMS FOR HELP

Always assume the scream is real and someone desperately needs help. Quickly try to determine the location, source and nature of the scream and **immediately** call the police or sheriff. Heroes can be wounded or killed. Remember that apprehension is the job of your police or sheriff.

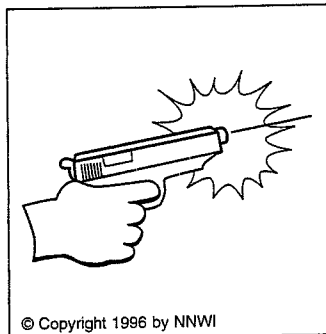
CONTINUOUS SCREAMING

This type of screaming probably is a result of someone being beaten, hurt or mistreated. Especially listen for victims cries of "Oh's" and "Ow's". Quickly try to determine the location, source and nature of the scream and immediately call the police or sheriff.

SCREAMING AND CURSING

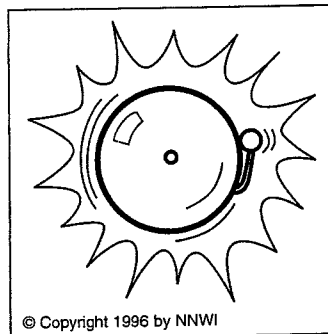
This type of screaming is probably a domestic violence incident

— between husband and wife, parent and child, two people who are intent on hurting each other but not in a life-threatening way. Determine the location, source and nature of the scream and call the police or sheriff.



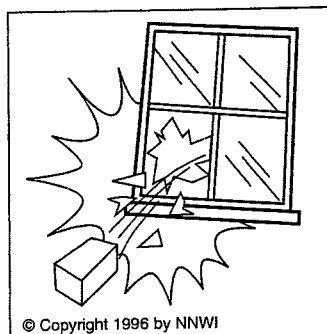
GUN SHOT SOUNDS

Immediately call the police or sheriff. Provide as much information as to the number of shots and their source (location.)



ALARMS ACTIVATED

Fire, home-burglary, business and car alarms must always be considered as real. Determine the location, source and nature of the alarm and call the police or sheriff.



BREAKING GLASS

If you hear the sound of break-

ing glass, **immediately** call the police or sheriff. This is the most common method of forced entry into a home, apartment or automobile.

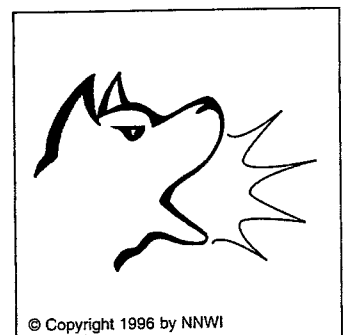


LOUD MUSIC

Loud music is usually an annoyance and you can report it as any other nuisance. However, it is often used to cover up other criminal activities. If you hear loud music covering the cry of a screaming person, **immediately** call the police or sheriff.

FORCING, PRYING OR POUNDING SOUNDS

If something is being forced, pried or pounded you should determine the location, source and nature of the sounds and if your suspicion is aroused, **immediately** call the police or sheriff.



DOGS BARKING

Continuous barking of a dog in an unusual manner is cause for alarm. Determine the location of the dog and call the police or sheriff.

SUSPECT IDENTIFICATION

Participants must be able to give law enforcement officers the best possible description of the suspicious person or suspect in identifying a suspect, work from top to bottom of their body. The most important identification features are sex, height, race, weight, scars and approximate age. These are the least likely to be altered by the suspect.

Height

Hair Color, Length of Hair, Wig, Cap, Hat, Markings on Cap or Hat, Ski Mask,

Stocking Mask, Baseball Hat, Style of Wear

Sex

Age

Eye Color, Glasses

Race, Complexion, Nationality

Nose, Lips, Teeth, Ears, Hearing Aid

Facial Hair, Mustache, Beard, Sideburns, Scars

Voice, Language, Accent, Lisp,

Other Speech Characteristics

Unusual Facial Features, Cleft Chin

Scars, Marks, Tattoos, Amputations, Deformities

Right or Left Handed

Gun, Knife, Club, or other Weapon

Clothing Length and colors of Shirt, Coat, Jacket,

Necktie, Scarf, Pants, Skirt

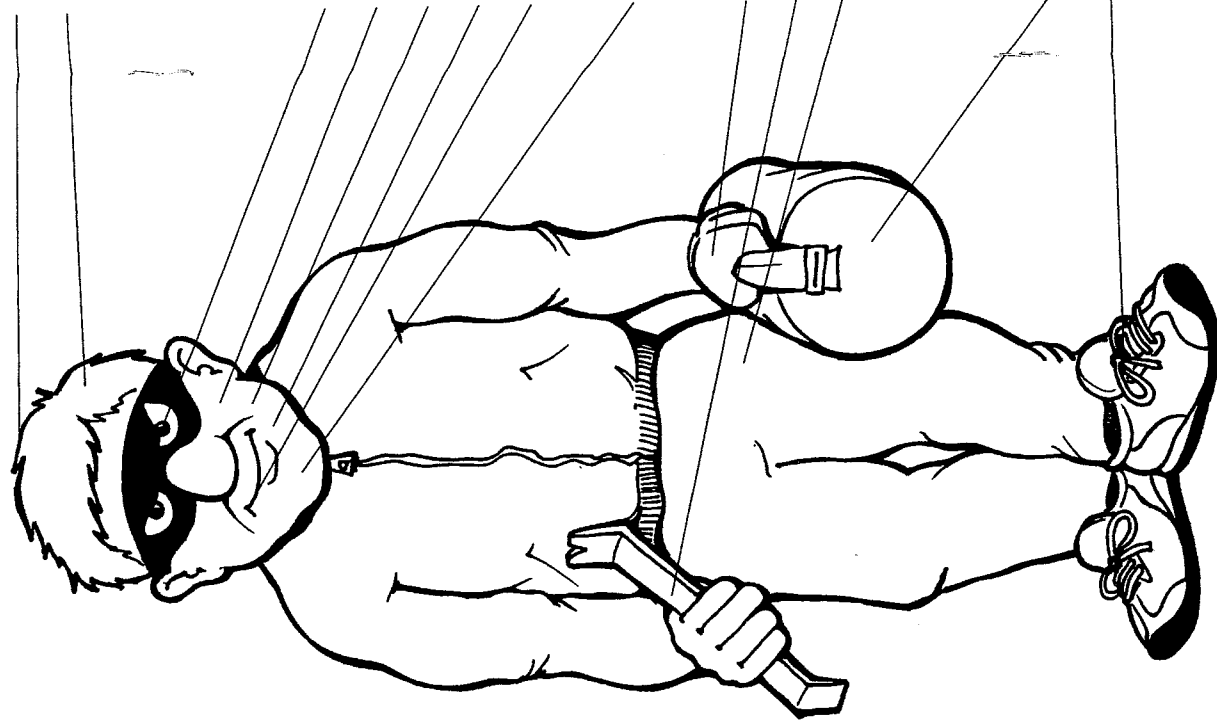
Weight Build, Posture, Style of Walk,

Any Physical Disabilities

Carrying a Bag, Back Pack, Fannie Bag, Duffel Bag

Gloves, Shoes - Colors and Types

Anything Else Unusual



© Copyright 1990 by National Neighborhood Watch Institute

A SIMPLE SENTENCE...

She **Simply** Could **Not Have Had** Any **Really Good Early** Warning **About Him**

...A REAL HELP

Keep repeating this sentence until you memorize it. Recall it at least three times a day. It will help you remember the 12 important aspects of the suspect's description. Practice it as you walk, jog, bike or drive and get this down pat.

She is to remind you of **Sex**

Simply is to remind you of **Scars, Mark or Deformities**

Could is to remind you of **Carrying Anything**

Not is to remind you of **Nose**

Have is to remind you of **Height**

Had is to remind you of **Hair**

Any is to remind you of **Age**

Really is to remind you of **Race**

Good is to remind you of **Gun or other weapon**

Early is to remind you of **Eyes**

Warning is to remind you of **Weight**

About is to remind you of **Anything unusual**

Him is to remind you of **Head Covering? Cap, mask, wig**

VEHICLE DETAILS

KIND OF VEHICLE

- Car – 2 door, 4 door, sports car, convertible, hard top, jeep, off-road
- Camper – style, on the back of a pick-up
- Van – station wagon, windowed or solid sides
- Truck – Small pick up, Large pick up, flat bed, stake truck, boxed cargo truck
- Motorcycle – small or large, side car, domestic or foreign, street, dirt
- Recreation or Sports Utility Vehicle - how is it equipped

COLORS

- Single color – two colors
- Color and shade of that color (Blue – Midnight blue, powder blue, aqua blue)
- Window tinting – rear and/or side windows, color of tint

MAKE

- Ford, Chevrolet, Mercury, Olds, Buick, Plymouth, Chrysler, Dodge?
- Honda, Toyota, Nissan, Isuzu, Mazda?
- BMW, Mercedes, Volvo, Fiat, Volkswagen?
- Perhaps you can only describe it as domestic or foreign – that's OK.

MODEL

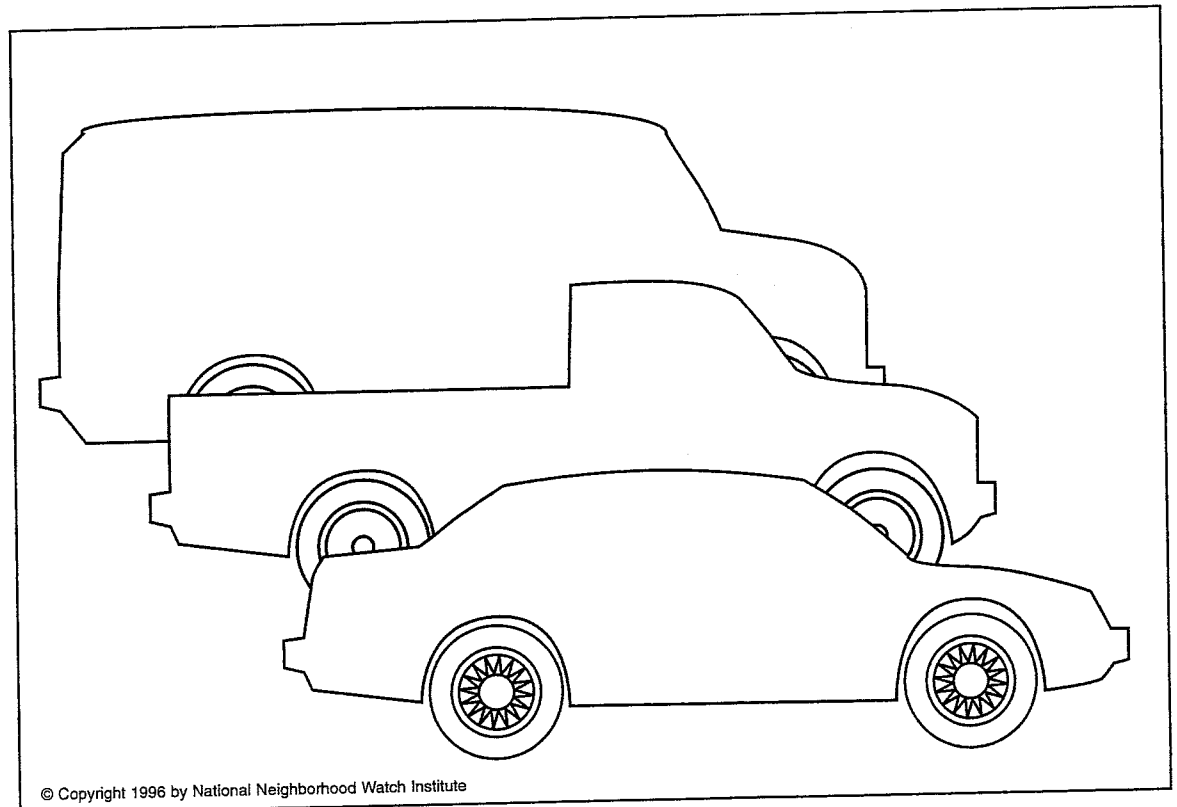
- Bronco, Mustang, Thunderbird, Taurus, Colt, Camry, Cutlass, Civic ???

YEAR

- If you know the year, great. If you don't, was it new, nearly new, a few years old, several years old, really a wreck?

OTHER FEATURES

- Any identifying bumper stickers, dents, bullet holes, broken windows?
- Did it have a cellular phone or CB?
- Was it lowered or raised from the standard production model
- Was it damaged in any way? Bullet holes? Been in a crash?



REPORTING A CRIME

If you know a crime is happening, or suspect that something suspicious or dangerous is going on, or even if potential trouble exists, do the following:

Determine if it is an
EMERGENCY.

An emergency requires
IMMEDIATE POLICE OR
SHERIFF, FIRE AND/OR
PARAMEDIC RESPONSE.

*Example: A person is facing a
life or death situation or prop-
erty is in the process of being
stolen or jeopardized.*

Immediately call 911 or, if that service is not available in your area, call your local law enforcement's emergency phone number. Put that **emergency** phone number on the back cover of this manual.

If the situation is **ROUTINE**, then do not tie up the emergency lines. Call the regular number of your local law enforcement agency. Put that **routine** phone number on the back cover of this manual. Remember, if you are in doubt, call 911.

WHAT, WHEN, WHERE AND WHO are the first four things you need to know to report a crime. **HOW AND WHY** are very important, but many times you don't know these answers.

When calling, here is what to provide, and what you may be asked:

FIRST You will be asked what is your emergency? Police, Fire or Medical?

What is your location, your name and phone number?
Are you in any danger?

WHAT is happening. Try to be as specific as possible, be factual, don't exaggerate.

Example: "This is an emergency. Two people have just been wounded and the gunman has fled."

WHAT is needed. Police or Sheriff? Fire Department? Paramedic?

Example: "We need police and paramedics now!"

WHEN is it happening. Is it now? Is it about to happen? How long ago did it occur?

WHERE is it happening?

Give the specific address and directions.

Example: "The shooting happened at the McDonald's at 123 So Main, in Albany."

WHO is involved? Quick descriptions of the victims and the perpetrators need to be communicated.

Example: "Two teen-age boys are wounded. The suspects were male (specify ethnic background), about 20 years old, black hair, (etc.) driving a blue Dodge van, license no. 3AdamBoyCharlie555, California plates"

Then **WAIT** for the operator's questions. Be as **specific** and **factual** as possible in answering them. Follow any instructions given you. If you have to gener-

alize about an answer, tell the operator that is what you are doing. Know the location you are calling from. Cooperate fully with the operator and the follow-up personnel who may contact you.

The same series of questions need to be answered when you are calling in a routine situation. A routine situation is one in which immediate response is not necessary, but does require police or sheriff attention. A stolen battery, stereo or cellular phone in your car does require attention, but not immediate response.

Your police or sheriffs department appreciates you acting as their extra eyes and ears. Sometimes your suspicions are unfounded. If you are wrong, they understand you will not always be right, but you will not be in trouble with them. As a good citizen and a Neighborhood Watch Participant, your job is to give them the information you base your suspicions on. It is their job to investigate what caused those suspicions. **CALL THEM ANY TIME** your suspicions are aroused. They are on the job 24 hours a day. **DON'T HESITATE - CALL!!**

Phoning in the emergency or routine call is the first step in rendering assistance and helping to stop crime. You may be asked to attend police line-ups, give interviews to law enforcement agents, and possibly asked to testify in court. As a Neighborhood Watch Participant, remember, you are acting as your police or sheriffs department's eyes and ears. You are making your neighborhood a safer place for you and your family.