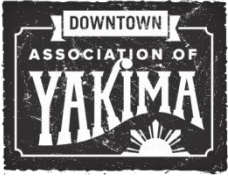


Reporting Suspicious & Criminal Activity



The Downtown Association of Yakima (DAY), established in 2015, is a non-profit group dedicated to the revitalization of downtown. As a Washington State certified Main Street Community, DAY follows a proven 4-point approach with the goal of strengthening the revitalization and health of our urban core.

**P.O. Box 1549
Yakima, WA 98907**

509-576-6772

**director@
downtown
yakima.com**

Suspicious activity can be defined as any person or behavior that causes alarm. Discuss with your neighbors any suspicious activities or individuals you have noticed on the block.

Below are some actual examples of neighbors taking action upon seeing what they considered to be suspicious activity.

- At 3am a woman saw a car pull up to an elderly neighbor's home. One man left the car and disappeared around the corner while a second man stayed behind the wheel with the lights off and the car's engine running. The woman called 9-1-1 and the police apprehended the first man breaking into a gas station on the next block.
- Early one Sunday morning a neighbor noticed a man walking down the street looking into each vehicle as he passed. A few seconds later the neighbor heard the sound of breaking glass. The neighbor called 9-1-1 and the man was apprehended a few blocks away with several stolen car stereos.
- A woman saw a young man knock on her neighbor's front door. When nobody answered the man went around the side of the house. The woman immediately called 9-1-1 and the man was caught burglarizing her neighbor's house.

What to Look For

Some suspicious activity may not be as obvious as the previous examples. Additionally, what is considered suspicious on one block may be normal activity on another. Keep in mind that what is not normal for your block could be an indication of a crime about to happen. Other examples of suspicious activity include:

Concerning Vehicles	Possible Activity
Slow moving vehicle without lights	Possibly casing neighborhood
Vehicle being loaded with valuables if parked by closed business or residence	Possible burglary in progress
Person detaching mechanical parts or accessories from vehicle	Possible theft or vandalism in progress
Locked vehicle that someone is attempting to forcibly enter	Possible theft of car or contents in progress
Someone being forced into vehicle	Possible kidnap, assault, attempted sexual assault, domestic violence

Concerning Persons	Possible Activity
Going door to door, especially if one or more persons goes to the rear of the house	Casing, possible burglary in progress
Loitering in front of house or business, especially if site is unoccupied	Possible burglary
Person running carrying items of value, i.e. TV, stereo	Possible suspect fleeing scene of theft
Sounds of a fight – screaming or yelling, sounds of breaking furniture or glass	Possible domestic violence assault, sexual assault
Persons offering items for sale at low price	Possible trying to sell stolen items
Persons coming to your door with unusual requests such as money for gas or a locksmith, or donations for a charity but the person carries no official looking materials	Possible casing house or attempting an entry for robbery

If your intuition tells you something isn't right, dial 9-1-1 or the non-emergency number and report your suspicions. It's better to discover that nothing is wrong than to let a crime occur.

If there is an ongoing problem with crime at a location, your Crime Prevention Program Coordinator can give you forms to help you log the information. Logging helps establish patterns in the activity which makes effective response easier, and can help police get search warrants for locations with serious problems.

Describing Suspect, Vehicles, and Activities

When you call the police or make entries into a log, how you describe what you have seen is very important. Your information will allow any responding officer(s) to know specifically what they are looking for and where to look for it.

Describing Suspects

Take note of gender, race, age, height, weight, hair, complexion, scars, tattoos, glasses, facial hair, clothing, and anything else that would help police find the person. If you don't have time to note all of these, pay the most attention to things the suspect cannot change. They can quickly change out of their clothing, but they can't remove a tattoo or scar, or change their weight.

Describing Vehicles

The license plate is the most important piece of information. Take note of the license plate and the direction in which the vehicle was traveling. Then note color, make, year, body style, and any other identifying characteristics such as dents or bumper stickers.

Describing Activities

Give as much detail you possibly can. For example: *"I saw a person take a small orange colored object out of their mouth and hand it to another person. The second person handed the first person money. The first person folded the money in half and put the money in the right front pocket of their pants. The second person put the orange packet in the left front pocket of their jacket," is much more useful than: "I saw a person dealing drugs."*

Accurate Terminology

When calling 9-1-1 it is important to be as clear and accurate as possible about what you are observing. In order to be effective you should have working knowledge of the terminology used by police and the 9-1-1 call takers to prioritize crime. To say "I've been robbed!" when in fact you were the victim of a burglary may have an effect on how the police respond. Below is a list of commonly used terms to describe criminal activity:

<i>Crime</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Assault	Causing injury or attempting to cause injury to another person.
Burglary	Unlawful entry of a structure with intent to commit a felony or any theft. (Note: a residential burglary is theft from a dwelling. Non-residential burglary is theft from a business, a detached garage or any other non-dwelling.)
Car Prowl	Theft from an automobile, not the theft of an automobile.
Larceny	Theft of property other than by burglary or robbery (pickpocketing, shoplifting, etc.).
Robbery	Taking or carrying away of another's property forcefully or with imminent threat of force with intent of permanently depriving rightful owner of the property (e.g. a stick-up, mugging).
Sexual Assault	Forced or nonconsensual sexual activity by one against another (not limited to rape or to women).
Vandalism	Destruction or defacing of property.

Calling 9-1-1, Non-Emergency, and Other Resources

(This section adapted from Bureau of Emergency Communications brochure.)

When to Call 9-1-1

Call 9-1-1 when it is an emergency and a prompt response is needed. Call 9-1-1 if it is a life-threatening situation or something is occurring at the time of the call. A fire, medical problem, assault, fight, traffic accident, or any situation that could result in loss of life or major property loss should be called in to 9-1-1.

What Happens When You Call 9-1-1

When you call 9-1-1, a call taker will ask you a series of questions which they are trained to ask. Keep your answers as short and direct as possible. Questions may include: What happened? What is the location? Where are you calling from? What is your name? Please do not assume the call taker has this information in the computer. All facts need to be verified to ensure that your emergency is handled as quickly as possible.

When You Should Stay on the Line

While you are on the phone with the call taker, he or she can send your call to the dispatcher. Staying on the line with the call taker does not interfere with the ability of the dispatcher to send help and it will not delay the response. The call taker may need you to stay on the line to help direct emergency personnel to the right location or to provide additional assistance that can help ensure your emergency is handled correctly. If it is possible, do not hang up the phone until the 9-1-1 call taker says it is okay to hang up.

What Should You do if You're Put on Hold?

If you call 9-1-1 and reach a recording which states that all lines are busy, stay on the line. Your call will be answered as quickly as possible. If you hang up and redial, you will lose your place in line and a call taker will receive the message that someone from your phone called 9-1-1 and then hung up. The call taker then is required to attempt to call you back; meanwhile if you are calling to 9-1-1 again, two call takers are now attempting to respond to your call.

When to Call the Non-Emergency Number

The non-emergency number is 509-575-6200, available M-F, 8am-5pm. Using the non-emergency number keeps 9-1-1 available for true emergencies. 9-1-1 call takers receive non-emergency calls often; most frequently the call is from someone wanting to report a crime which occurred a few hours, or even a few days ago. This ties up valuable resources that should be reserved for true emergencies. Some examples of when you call are:

- When you are taking out your garbage, in the bushes you find a wallet or a pile of mail that appears to be stolen.
- When you look out your front window, you see some people on the street who are behaving suspiciously and you would like to have the police check them out, but no obvious crimes are being committed and no one is in danger.
- You return home after work and find that someone has stolen your lawnmower out of your shed at some point during the day.

When Not to Call Either Number

Often people call 9-1-1 or the non-emergency if they want to know road conditions, report an animal problem which does not involve a vicious animal, report a power outage, or are having trouble finding a phone number in the phone book. When you need information, or if you are making routine business inquiries, you should not use either the emergency or non-emergency number. If you cannot find a number in the phone book call 4-1-1. If you have a complaint or question regarding a service provided by the City, call the City/County information and referral line.