



“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.

"PEOPLE AREN'T SUSPICIOUS - BEHAVIOR IS!"

Here are some signs or behaviors that may be suspicious:

A person walking down the street, looking into vehicles, checking door handles, or looking into windows or garages.

A person running would be suspicious if he or she were acting sneaky, as if he or she were being watched or chased.

A person going door-to-door may be looking for an opportunity to steal. Criminals often give an excuse if you answer the door (e.g., asking if someone lives there, etc.) Do not open the door for strangers and/or persons you are not expecting. Tell them through your closed, locked door to leave your property. Watch to see if they approach other houses. Criminals sometimes pose as business solicitors in order to “case out” homes for burglaries.

Any person forcibly entering a locked vehicle, especially at night and in one of our parking areas, is highly suspicious.

One or more persons sitting in an parked car closely scanning the area around them may be lookouts for a burglary or robbery in progress, or for a crime being planned.

Vehicles moving slowly and running without lights or one that keeps passing the same area It could be casing a building or house to burglarize, someone pushing drugs or someone planning another crime such as a robbery, kidnapping or sex offense.

A person (especially a juvenile or female) being forced into a vehicle may be a kidnapping.

A person exhibiting unusual mental or physical symptoms may have been injured in an accident, be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medications, or otherwise need medical or psychiatric assistance.

Unusual noises including gunshots, screaming, sounds of fighting, barking dogs, or anything suggesting foul play, danger, or illegal activity.

Burglary - if when arriving home from work you find that your residence has been broken into, *don't touch anything*, call the police immediately.

If you are robbed:

- Cooperate fully. Remain calm and perform all actions slowly; sudden moves may panic the robber.
- Observe everything carefully. Try to remember the description of the suspect(s), including distinguishing features such as scars or tattoos; if they are right or left handed; and a description of any vehicle used.
- Write down as much of the information you remember as soon as possible to avoid confusion later.
- The first call you should make after the robbery is to 9-1-1, as soon as it is safe to do so. Report that a robbery occurred and stay on the line until the operator releases you, and answer all the questions as completely as possible.

If you witness one of these events or some other suspicious activity, call the Police Department immediately at **"385-5000"**. If it is a crime in progress and police are needed immediately, call **9-1-1**.

VIRGINIA BEACH POLICE CRIME PREVENTION UNIT

For more crime prevention tips, call 385-1006 or visit our website at vb.gov.com/dept/police.