



## **LAKEVIEW AT BRANDYWINE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM (NWP)**

**EMERGENCY NUMBER 9-1-1**

**NON-EMERGENCY NUMBER 301-352-1200**

*Community members only serve as the extra “eyes and ears” of law enforcement. Report observations of suspicious activities to law enforcement. Never take action on those observations. Trained law enforcement will take action based on observations of suspicious activities.*



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## **CITIZEN PATROLS**

The Lakeview at Brandywine Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP) will use Citizen Patrols on foot or in vehicles to keep our community safe. Two or more individuals, often from the same family, patrol during designated tours of duty and may detect suspicious activity not noticed by stationary observers. Lost children, stranded motorists, stray dogs, damaged street signs or traffic signals, and automobile accidents are often discovered by citizen patrols. Lakeview volunteer patrol members should be trained by law enforcement. It should be emphasized to the Lakeview volunteers that we do not possess police powers and we shall not carry weapons or pursue vehicles. The Lakeview volunteers are cautioned to alert police or deputies when encountering strange activity. NWP volunteers should never confront suspicious persons who could be armed and dangerous. NWP volunteers should carry mobile phones and use flashlights during night patrols.

## **OBSERVATION SKILLS**

Most people go through the day without even noticing everyday events. However beginning to recognize what is normal around you is the first step in recognizing what is not normal. Although law enforcement officers are trained observers, sometimes they find it difficult to explain to citizens what

## Observation Techniques



In order to understand how to properly observe people, vehicles and incidents that may affect us, we should begin by learning what types of things to observe. You should pay attention to things like:

- Physical setting – Specific location, time of day, day of week
- People – What do they look like? (height, weight, ethnicity, gender, etc.) How many are there?
- Specific items – What is important?
- Routines – Did you notice any recurring patterns or routines? How often did they occur? Who was involved?



to report and when to report it. While patrolling the streets, officers get used to looking for activities or events that seem out of place or are not part of the regular or ordinary routine. Officers may not be able to articulate specifically what is unusual, but they are keenly aware that something is awry. Officers sometimes refer to this phenomenon as a “sixth sense” or “street smarts,” and they instinctively know when something is not right and they should investigate. Community members should know they have the ability to recognize unusual events as well. It is a matter of practicing Observation Skills to make them stronger.

One of the keys to a successful Neighborhood Watch program is recognizing the importance of using good observation skills to keep your neighborhood safe. Practice looking at pictures of people to know how to describe them. Clothing is important, but look for things that cannot be changed, like skin or eye color, tattoos, scars, moles, height and weight. Properly observing vehicles is similar to observing individuals. You always begin with the basics, such as the make and model of the vehicle. Identify the vehicle as a Ford, Chevrolet, Dodge, Honda, Mercedes, Volvo, etc. Then identify the both the type of vehicle (such as an SUV, pickup truck, etc.), as well as the specific model if possible (such as Corolla, Accord, Expedition, etc.) To remember license plates: write it on paper, on your hand, or even scratch it in the dirt! License numbers are useful only if they are correct. Never hesitate to say, “I’m not sure”. With a vehicle description, even a partial license plate can be valuable.

### WHAT IS SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY?

All too often citizens are confused about what they should report and why, so it is important to train citizens through a variety of reporting activities. After reviewing this section, participants will be able to advise citizens specifically on the appropriate who, what, when, where, and how of reporting. Often citizens ask officers “Why should I get involved?” or “How am I going to benefit by reporting suspicious activity?” Although the answers may seem obvious, it must be clearly communicated to the public that they are an essential component in protecting our communities. Sometimes our citizens receive mixed signals regarding what to report and when to report it. Other times they simply do not know what is expected of them. It is important to learn specific definitions and details to provide Watch volunteers with clear and concise information. Begin with defining “suspicious activity.” Officers should know the definition of suspicious activity and be able to properly communicate this definition to Watch members and other concerned citizens. Suspicious activity can refer to any incident, event, individual or activity that seems unusual or out of place.

The effectiveness of the police and sheriffs’ offices efforts is enhanced by active participation on the part of citizens. By calling to report

### *Suspicious Activity*



A stranger loitering in your neighborhood or a vehicle cruising the streets repeatedly.

Someone peering into cars or windows.

A high volume of traffic going to and coming from a home on a daily basis.

Someone loitering around parks or secluded areas.

Strange odors coming from a house, building or vehicle.

Open or broken doors and windows at an unoccupied residence.

Someone tampering with electrical, gas or sewer systems without an identifiable company vehicle or uniform.

Persons arriving or leaving from homes at unusual hours.

Multiple persons who appear to be working in unison and exhibiting suspicious behaviors.

Signs of forced entry or tampering with security or safety systems.



suspicious persons or activity, you not only aid the police, but you also make your community a safer place to live. Some people fail to call because they are not aware of activities that might be suspicious. Others may notice suspicious activity and hesitate to call for fear of being labeled a “nosy neighbor”. Still others take it for granted that someone else has already called. Always report suspicious activity and all crimes because police don’t know there’s a problem unless they are told.

## KNOWING WHAT AND HOW TO REPORT

There are four general categories to consider when determining what to report:

- Suspicious activities
- People and vehicles
- Illegal activities
- Unusual events or incidents, dangerous situations

By reporting these types of activities and situations, citizens can make their communities safer and more secure, reduce violence, minimize victimization, reduce crime, and improve the overall quality of life. Community members must also be instructed on how to report suspicious activity. To report suspicious activities, crimes in progress or possible terrorist activities, simply:

### WHAT AND HOW TO REPORT:

- Suspicious activities, people watching vehicles
- Illegal activities
- Unusual events or incidents
- Dangerous situations
- Dial 9-1-1 and call the police department or sheriff’s office.
- Tell the call taker what happened and the exact location.
- Provide a detailed description of individuals or vehicles.
- Remain on the phone and stay calm.
- Be prepared to answer follow-up questions.

## When to Call 911



- Medical emergency (examples: chest pain, extreme shortness of breath, uncontrolled bleeding).
- Motor vehicle accident.
- Fire.
- When a life is in danger.

### When Not to Call

- The power is off.
- Asking for directions to the hospital.
- Asking for telephone numbers of others.
- Requesting to speak with a particular officer.
- Inquiring as to the time and day.
- Inquiring about community activities and locations.