

Public Safety Fact Sheet

A publication of the Washington County Anti-Terrorism Advisory Committee

In response to recent world and national events, Washington County's police, fire and public works agencies, local governments, health officials and emergency managers have increased coordination and communication. The purpose of this effort is two-fold: to ensure an effective countywide response should a major public safety incident occur locally, and to provide residents with timely, consistent information on issues of public concern.

Increased vigilance can help detect basic types of criminal activities, as well as events designed to harm large numbers of individuals. The following information may help you decide what constitutes "suspicious" activity:

- Multiple sightings of the same person, vehicle, or activity inappropriate to the surroundings. Individuals may also exhibit behavior like staring or quickly looking away as you enter or leave facilities or parking areas;
- Individuals who stay at bus or train stops for extended periods while buses and trains come and go;
- Individuals who do not fit in with the surrounding environment because they are wearing attire that is not consistent with the location or season (e.g., heavy coat in the summer).

Keeping an Eye Out for Suspicious Activity (Topic #10)

Proximity to Facilities

The following activities can provide a "cover" for individuals wanting to observe public safety or government facilities, schools, hospitals, and other possible targets:

- Individuals who carry on long conversations on pay or cellular telephones;
- Individuals who order food at a restaurant and leave before the food arrives or who order without eating;
- Joggers who stop and stretch for an inordinate amount of time;
- Individuals sitting in a parked car for an extended period of time.

Observing Public Safety

Individuals intending to do harm may also attempt to gauge the alertness and reaction of law enforcement officers, fire crews, and security personnel by:

- Observing how emergency personnel respond to emergency situations (e.g., fire alarm) and drills;
- Making phone threats (e.g., bomb threat);
- Asking personnel at security checkpoints for directions or innocently attempting to smuggle non-lethal contraband through checkpoints.

They may also employ surveillance techniques such as:

- Drawing pictures or taking notes in an area not normally of interest;
- Showing interest in or photographing security cameras or guard locations.

If you see suspicious activity in or near your neighborhood or workplace, call Washington County Non-Emergency Dispatch at (503) 629-0111.