

When to Call 911

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When to call 911

- From the time that 911 was first conceived, to the training we give children at schools today, we are taught that 911 is only for emergencies. This is not the case. 911 is a powerful tool that you can use to alert the police of crimes in progress, suspicious activity, or anything else out of the ordinary.



When to call 911

- Reasons to call 911
 - Suspicious activity
 - Sound of glass breaking
 - People looking in windows
 - Out of place characters in your area
 - A person needing help
 - To report a crime in progress
- Reasons not to call 911
 - To locate a phone number
 - To report a crime not in progress
 - To report violence you see on your television
 - To ask for William Shatner

When to call 911 scenario 1

- You are at home it is approximately 10PM, and you look out to see a male and female arguing in the front yard. They are not physically hitting each other.



When to call 911 scenario 1

- Answer, Yes: A good example of this is a recent call to which I responded. Upon arriving I observed a white male leaving. Contact was made, and the subject fled. Upon apprehension, narcotics were discovered. A call to his probation officer saw him revoked.



When to call 911 scenario 1

- Subject did not work
- Subject had Methamphetamine
 - Where did it come from?
- Chances are subject was generating income off of illegal activities
 - Car Larcenies
 - Burglaries
 - Robberies



When to call 911 scenario 1

- Subject was not arrested for:
 - Breaking into cars
 - Burglarizing homes
 - Robbing individuals
- Subject was arrested because someone picked up the phone and called 911 on suspicious activity



When to call 911 scenario 1

- Subject could not have been contacted without call
- No probable cause to stop subject without call
- Call granted me reasonable suspicion to contact subject
 - The description of white male in his 40's with a thin build
 - His fleeing elevated circumstances
- Constitutional Rights protect you from search and seizure
- You empower the police department, which is why we stress calling 911



When to call 911 scenario 1

- The real kicker:
 - Subject was not involved in the disturbance
 - Subject on Probation for drugs, a call to his probation officer saw him revoked



Broken Window Policing

- Crimes are solved on the small level
- We get bad guys on calls relating to other situations
- Examples
 - Codes violation
 - Tampering with utilities
 - Disturbances
 - Suspicious Activity



When to call 911 scenario 2

- During a block watch meeting I was confronted by a female who had called the police on individuals presumably smoking marijuana around a tool shed behind her apartment complex. Police responded, suspects hid, police did not locate. Since the female did not wish to be contacted, police cleared the call.
- Question, should she continue to call?



When to call 911 scenario 2

- Answer, Yes: Although female was very disappointed in the fact that the suspects were not confronted, and arrested. She did advise that previously, she noticed them at the shed all the time, she has not seen them since calling. This was a span of almost a month.
- Question
 - Was this a failure of the block watch program?



When to call 911 scenario 2

- Answer, No: Although the “bad guys” got away, they learned a valuable lesson. People are watching and people are calling. These subjects have not returned, but if they do, she stated she will call again. Hopefully next time they would be caught.



When to call 911 scenario 3

- Cars were continually getting broke into. Police were called, they would get there too late. Extra Patrols were requested police would come by, but never catch the bad guys. Larcenies continued for weeks, and still no arrests.
- Question, Should we give up, and just accept what is happening?



When to call 911 scenario 3

- Answer, No: Watchers continued to call, until one night call came out, and officers were almost in the area. They pulled in as suspects, who were stealing gas, were pulling out. Suspects arrested for stealing gas, and placing it in styrofoam cooler (rocket scientist). There have been NO reported larcenies in the lot since this call!



When to call 911 scenario 4

- You are home alone. It is 3AM and you are sound asleep. Your doorbell rings. You keep the lights off, and walk to the front door to find that no one is there. Do you call 911?



When to call 911 scenario 4

- Answer, YES.
- 3 AM is a weird time to be ringing a doorbell. To top it all off, if it was that important to ring the doorbell, would it not be important enough to wait for the person to answer the door? Also, you do not need to be contacted, at the very least let the police know that it happened, this way in case we are looking for someone, we know where they might be.



When to call 911 scenario 4

- Individual that experienced this is not a member of neighborhood watch. She did advise me that she later talked to some of her neighbors, and over the past few weeks there have been reported larcenies from automobiles, as well as some fencing material taken from a yard. Does this now change your answer on whether you would call 911?



When to call 911 scenario 5

- You are part of a block watch group. You and your neighbors know that there is a house on your block that is possibly involved in illegal activities. You see a car at the residence two mornings in a row that does not seem to belong there. Do you call the police?



When to call 911 scenario 5

- Answer, Yes. Information related to the comings and goings of individuals at drug houses is important to us being able to do our job. Some of the time, depending on the house, we can make exceptional ground in ongoing cases. If it is an ongoing case, we may have you relay the information to us in other means.



When to call 911 scenario 5

- This was a real scenario which unfolded last week. A new block watch group has had a problem with a drug house. A concerned neighbor called in a suspicious auto. Officers responded, and found the car was stolen. Spikes were used to flatten the tires, the suspect was taken into custody. A firearm in the car, as well as past convictions will see this offender off the streets for many years
- Had this call not been made, officers probably would not have made contact at the residence. It was the phone call which empowered us to react.



Food for Thought

- Police officers can conduct self-initiative activity. We do get lucky from time to time, and build our own leads. Suspicious activity calls, general calls for service, and inside information allow us the ability to conduct our job in a much more efficient manner.
- We can guarantee this, if you do not call 911 Nothing will happen.



Food for Thought Cont.

- It is better to call 911 and have nothing wrong, then to not call and have something wrong.
- If you have to think to yourself, “should I call 911.” The answer is probably, “Yes.”
- If it is important enough to call your block captain, it is probably important enough to call the police
- If it is in progress, you need to call the police.



In Conclusion

- Remember that the police department is the countries largest necessary evil. We are given restrictions, and rightfully so, to protect your civil rights from violations. We are a tool of the people, and need you (the people) to help us to solve crimes, and bring people to justice. Being a part of neighborhood watch, being an active member in your community is the best way you can perform your civic duty to accomplish this. Report what needs to be reported.

