

C.O.P.S. and S.C.O.P.E ...Landlord Resources By Ron Tussey

As a follow-up to the article I wrote in January 2003, I've been looking at ways we, as landlords, can really have an impact on crime and drug activity on our properties and in the community. It may be that our biggest obstacle is apathy. And why not feel indifferent when our busy lives are already packed-full and the problem seems so enormous? I think there is a tendency for all of us to "just call 911" and then get frustrated because "other people" don't seem to be doing "their job".

If we really want to see a difference however, the reverse of one's apathy is therefore action...is involvement.

Both the The Spokane Police Department and the Spokane County Sheriff's Department have community based policing programs in place and available to the community. It appears to me the simplest and quite frankly, the most effective thing we can do as landlords and managers is to get involved with our local C.O.P.S. substation or County S.C.O.P.E. station. Each substation for the Spokane Police has a uniformed Community Resource Officer (NRO) assigned to that substation along with various volunteers. S.C.O.P.E. Director Bonnie Abernathy informs me her substations are moving toward Sheriff's personnel being assigned to all S.C.O.P.E. offices as well. Each substation offers a monthly meeting you can attend to find out what's really going on in your neighborhood and often training and informational classes are also offered.

One officer shared with me his experience of Resident Managers not wanting Police cars on the property, presumably for reasons of "curb appeal", but we all know these same individuals will scream the loudest when they suddenly need the police and they don't see a patrol car arrive immediately upon calling 911. These NROs can be trusted allies to work in partnership with. Why not drop by your substation and introduce yourselves? Why not offer an invitation for coffee at your office? I guarantee you will get much better results by sharing information with an officer whom you know and that knows you then by any other means.

A handy pullout brochure has been attached to this issue for your convenience. The locations and phone numbers of all the C.O.P.S. substations are provided. For those living in the Spokane County, the location of Sheriff's S.C.O.P.E. stations are listed here.

- Central Valley (Veradale)
115 N. Evergreen 928-3807
- Deer Park:
316 E. Crawford 276-7848
- East (Otis Orchards)
4904 N. Harvard 922-3150
- Edgecliff
522 S. Thierman Rd 477-6345
- Espanola
23607 W. Manila Rd 299-7525

- Fairfield
302 W. Hastings Rd 477-6377
- Liberty Lake
22414 E. Meadowood 755-1143
- Newman Lake
25011 E. Trent Ave 266-4357
- North
9435 N. Newport Hwy 477-6377
- Spring Hill Grange
8717 N. Brooks Rd. 796-4582
- Trentwood
2400 N. Wilbur Rd. 927-9490
- University
10621 E. 15th 477-2582
- West Valley (Millwood)
3102 N. Argonne 477-0629

And then there is probably our biggest nightmare...the meth lab to discuss. I strongly urge anyone who has rental property to receive training in the recognition of a meth lab. This training is available to groups through the Spokane Police and Sheriff's Departments, through IERA and through the Crime Free Multi-Housing training that will be offered again on March 19-20, 2003. Please call 835-4573 for more information.

Once you know what to look for and think you have reliable information on the location of a lab, I recommend the following:

1. Avoid any contact with the materials and persons near the lab yourself.
2. Call Crime Check at 456-2233 to generate a report.
3. Make a call to your local NRO or SCOPE officer .
4. Make a call to the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) of the Spokane Police at 625-4010. If you live in the County, call the Investigative Support Unit (ISU) of the Sheriff's Dept. at 477-4778.

These are the undercover units that actually "bust" the labs and dealers. Please keep in mind that these units deal in clandestine type of operations, the world of surveillance and informants and "controlled buys." They will not be able to share information with you as to any on-going investigation. Just trust that your call will set things in motion.

In conclusion, I'm thinking that perhaps with a little education and cooperation, we really can make a difference. Let's try.