

REPORTING DRUG ACTIVITY IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Signs of Drug Activity

Any one or more of these activities may alert you that you have a “drug house” on your block.

- Frequent visitors in vehicles or on foot stopping at the residence day and night. People stay only a short time.
- Hypodermic syringes or other drug paraphernalia found in the area.
- Merchandise coming into the house under unusual circumstances such as during late hours and with unusual frequency.
- Strangers loitering on your block or in the neighborhood, such as near schools and parks.
- People asking you for drugs or offering to sell you them. Often neighbors get people mistakenly coming to their door asking for drugs on blocks where there is a drug house operating.
- Drug house residents or visitors coming out of the house holding small plastic packets.
- Money changing hands in exchange for small vials or packets.
- Apparent business transactions being conducted in a vehicle.
- People acting strange, showing unusual mental or physical symptoms.
- Noxious odors coming from or around the building, such as musty smells or chemical odors.
- All communities have unpopular residents. Obnoxious or peculiar

behavior, different lifestyles or ethnic origin does not mean the people are drug dealers.

What The Police Would Like to Know

- What makes you think narcotics are being sold?
- Which drugs are involved? Have you found any drug paraphernalia?
- When did the activity start and how long has it been going on?
- Have you reported the activity before? When and to whom?
- What is the address of the activity? Include the apartment number or description of location. Do you know the name of the people you suspect?
- What type of building is it (single family home, business, apartment, rental)? Do you know who the landlord is?
- Where on the property does the drug activity take place (e.g. at the front door, out the back window, in the alley or inside the house)?
- Do you know where the drugs are kept?
- What time of day and day of the week is the activity heaviest? Estimate the number of people in and out in a given hour. Do cars drive up to the house, or do people park and walk up? Have you noticed any kind of possible signal that alerts people the suspect is at home and has drugs to sell?
- What so the customers look like (typical sex, age, race,

clothing style)? A detailed description of each buyer isn't necessary, but an overview is helpful.

- What are the license numbers of the customer's cars? License numbers alone aren't enough for an arrest but are useful in an investigation.
- How many people live in the house? Are there any children? How old?
- Any dogs? What kind? How many?
- Any bars or other types of reinforcements on the windows or doors? What kind and where? Any alarm or security systems?
- Have you seen any weapons on the suspected dealers or their customers? What kind and how many?
- What so the suspected dealers look like (sex, race, height, weight, build, hair and eye color, hair style, facial hair, complexion, eyewear, distinctive clothing)? Be as specific as possible with your description.
- What type of car does the suspect(s) drive (make, model, year, style, license number, license state, exterior color, interior color, distinctive feature)?

HOW TO REPORT DRUG ACTIVITY

Don't assume the police already know, or that a neighbor will call. Don't assume one report is all that is needed. If the activity keeps on occurring, keep on reporting it. If the pattern changes, report

that change. All neighbors affected by the drug activity are encouraged to report.

To make a drug report call the Spokane Police Department's Narcotics unit. Officers are available to take reports and give information, Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.. Call 625-4010.

Your reports are very important whether you wish to get involved in the process of getting rid of a drug house or not. Most often an officer is not available to respond to a citizen report of drug activity immediately, however drug transactions seldom involve any danger to neighbors or bystanders. Also, drug deals are completed quickly and are often over before an officer can arrive. Reporting the activity to Narcotics and contacting Block Watch to help organize neighbors against the activity, is the best thing you can do.

You can report drug activity anonymously but it is more helpful if you will give your name and number in case other information is needed. It is more likely your situation will be worked if you identify yourself and express interest in working with police to rid your block of the problem.

Block Watch staff members are available to help you set up a meeting with your neighbors or make a report to Narcotics. Meetings can be held either on the block or away from it. Call Block Watch at 625-3303 weekdays.

The Gangs/Graffiti unit contact person is Sandy McIntyre at 625-4013.

The Spokane County Sheriff's Department Drug unit number is 477-4778. Their Gangs/Graffiti unit can be reached at 477-6910 – ask for Brad Richmond.

Spokane County Health Department staff person, Paul Savage is a good resource for additional information regarding Drugs and Meth labs.

Editor's Note: This article is based on information provided by Block Watch, 901 N. Monroe #320, Spokane, WA. (509) 625-3303

For more information call Narcotics Unit, 625-4010. To report a non-emergency, call Crime Check at 456-2233 and for emergency calls, dial 911.