

Conducting your Patrol

Citizen Patrols consist of a group of patrol members, one or two of whom are designated the patrol organizer(s). The patrol organizer is someone selected by the group to manage the patrol schedule and the records of the group, as well as serve as the main communication link between the patrol, its members, and its partners.

Walk Your Area

- Walk through your patrol area, looking for any situations or conditions that need attention. Patrol members should remain together at all times unless the members can remain in visual contact or radio contact across a parking lot.
- Neighbors may be curious about what the Citizen Patrol is doing. As long as the neighbors seem safe, be open and friendly! You are forming potential alliances with people who might want to join the Citizen Patrol or help your cause in some other way. Likewise, be friendly towards kids you may encounter. It's valuable for them to see that theirs is a community that cares about safety and livability and is hopeful for the future.

If you Encounter a Situation that Seems Criminal or Dangerous

- Protect your personal safety and that of the other patrol members. Personal safety is paramount. There is no need to endanger yourself EVER.
- Keep your demeanor cool-headed and non-confrontational. It is not the Citizen Patrol's job to arrest, detain, or confront criminals, even just verbally; that's what police are for. Your job is only to be the eyes and ears of the community and to record problems and report them to the appropriate people.
- From a safe distance, note exactly where the problem is happening and as many other details as you can safely gather. If safe, try to get descriptions of people and/or vehicles and license plate information. If the suspects leave, note the direction in which they travel. Call either 911 or the non-emergency number (503-823-3333) as appropriate.

Calling 911, the Non-Emergency Number and Other Resources

1. When to call 911:

Call 911 when it is an emergency and a prompt response is needed. Call 911 if it is a life-threatening situation or something is occurring at the time of the call. A fire, medical problem, assault, fight, traffic accident, or any situation that could result in loss of life or major property loss should be called in to 911.

2. What happens when you call 911?

When you call 911, a call taker will ask you a series of questions which they are trained to ask. Keep your answers as short and direct as possible. Questions may include: What happened? What is the location? Where are you calling from? What is your name? Please do not assume that the call taker has this information in the computer. All facts need to be verified to ensure that your emergency is handled as quickly as possible.

3. Why you should stay on the line:

While you are on the phone with the call taker, he or she can send your call to the dispatcher. Staying on the line with the call taker does not interfere with the ability of the dispatcher to send help and it will not delay the response. The call taker may need you to stay on the line to help direct emergency personnel to the right location or to provide additional assistance that can help ensure your emergency is handled correctly. If it is possible, do not hang up the phone until the 911 call taker says it is okay to hang up.

4. What should you do if you're put on hold?

If you call 911 and reach a recording which states that all lines are busy, stay on the line. Your call will be answered as quickly as possible. If you hang up and redial, you will lose your place in line and a call taker will receive the message that someone from your phone called 911 and then hung up. The call taker then is required to attempt to call you back; meanwhile if you are calling in to 911 again, two call takers are now attempting to respond to your call.

5. When to call the non-emergency number:

The non-emergency number is 503-823-3333, which you can dial 24 hours a day for non-emergency police help. Using the non-emergency number keeps 911 available for true emergencies. 911 call takers receive non-emergency calls often; most frequently the call is from a person wanting to report a crime which occurred a few hours ago, or even a few days ago. This ties up valuable resources that should be reserved for true emergencies.

Some examples of when you should call 503-823-3333 are:

- While your Patrol is walking in an area, you discover discarded property (such as a wallet or some mail) which may have been stolen.
- While your patrol is walking through a park, you see some people who are behaving suspiciously and you would like to have the police check them out, but no obvious crimes are being committed and no one is in danger.
- While your patrol is walking through a commercial area, you walk by a business after business hours, and it has not been secured (e.g. the door is hanging open and there are no employees around).

6. When not to call either number:

Often people call 911 or the non-emergency number if they want to know road conditions, report an animal problem which does not involve a vicious animal, report a power outage, or are having trouble finding a phone number in the phone book. When you need information, or if you are making routine business inquiries, you should not use either the emergency or non-emergency number.

If you cannot find a phone number in a phone book, you may call a free information line at any of the following numbers: 411 or 1-800-466-4411 or another provider.

If you See Situations or Problems that Can be Reported Later

- Again, note as many details as possible in your notebook.
- After the patrol, you will report the situation to the appropriate person. See Addendum “A” for commonly needed phone numbers. If you are unsure to whom you need to report a problem, contact your patrol organizer or Sheriff’s Office liaison.

Consider the following situations depicted in the below photos. Do you report these incidents? If so, to whom? What information will you report? If you’re waiting for a deputy or other responder to arrive, what do you do while waiting?



Completing the Patrol

- If the Patrol organizer is not present, decide who will contact them with the information they need to write a log entry. Or, if the Patrol's log book is in a central location, the entry can be made at the end of the shift by any of the Patrol members.

Key log book information should include: date, time and location of your patrol, Patrol members and any significant observations or activities.

- If any non-emergency events or conditions were noted on the patrol that need to be reported, decide who will make that report. For example, if graffiti or a large pile of litter was noted, someone needs to call the appropriate agency.
- If the group shares equipment that is stored in a central location, return the equipment to its storage place.
- **DO NOT FORGET TO SIGN-OUT** with Records. If you forget to sign-out, the Records Unit will try to call you. If this is unsuccessful a deputy may visit your home to insure that you're ok.
- Do something nice for yourself. You deserve it. You are making an important contribution to your community!