

Calling 911

Call 911 for any crime that is occurring, or if anyone is in immediate danger. Remain calm and speak clearly. Give brief, specific answers. Each dispatcher is following protocol, be patient and give them the information they are requesting. Have addresses written down by the phone, your address and the drug house address. Give as many details as you can about the person or vehicle you are reporting, including the direction of travel. Stay on the line until the dispatcher ends the call.

What to expect when you call 911

- 1) The operator will answer the call with an operator number and ask you what you are reporting. It is the operator's primary job to determine the seriousness of your particular situation and what type of help will best meet your needs.
- 2) The operator will then need to confirm address and telephone number information and determine what jurisdiction you should be routed to.
- 3) Your call may be transferred. The operator will assist you by providing information to the proper authorities.
- 4) Depending on your situation, medical or police assistance will be sent as soon as possible.
- 5) Record the operator numbers and call outcome on your neighborhood activity log.

For additional information

Visit **Lead On America's** website at leadonamerica.org or contact your local law enforcement.

SOUTH ST. PAUL POLICE DEPARTMENT
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Nuisance Drug Premises

Community Awareness

What to do if you suspect drug activity in your neighborhood

Nuisance Drug Premises

Thank you for contacting Law Enforcement about a potential problem in your neighborhood.

In this brochure you will find basic information on nuisance drug premises, indicators for identifying a drug house and log sheets to track nuisance drug premises, what citizens can do and what law enforcement can do to combat this problem, and resources for more information.

Citizens have the power to enact change. Every citizen should be willing to take on the responsibility of protecting the welfare of their neighborhood and their community. Drugs are a community problem and the only way that the problem can be resolved is with an active and involved community. When the conditions warrant such actions, the Police can then come in and take those actions that are appropriate.

The information and contact that you have with law enforcement will be kept confidential. You can report incidents and ask not to be identified, but Law Enforcement needs the cooperation of concerned citizens to build viable cases. Signed statements carry far greater weight than anonymous tips.

Knowing what the law allows and what the authorities can and cannot do will save you a lot of frustration. Citizens must know and trust that law enforcement will handle the information given to them professionally and properly. It is equally important to know that the laws do not allow Law Enforcement to act on information of suspicion alone. If that were the case, drug houses could possibly be shut down immediately, but only at the sacrifice of our own freedoms.

The same Constitutional laws that protect law-abiding citizens also protect criminals. All citizens have the right to freedom from unlawful searches and seizures of their person, their vehicles, and their homes. The same rules apply to you as they do to the occupants of the 'drug house' in your neighborhood. Law Enforcement will be as aggressive as the law will allow in ridding neighborhoods of crime, but it must be done appropriately. It is important to understand that Law Enforcement's cases against these drug

- The house has different characteristics when traffic picks up, such as a new light is turned on, or a blind being left partially open, some kind of signal that they have drugs available.

Foot Traffic

- People parking away from the premises and walking in.
- Unkempt, disoriented or paranoid visitors or other neighbors.
- People carrying in tools or electronics, other items that may be used to sell or trade for drugs.

Change in Conditions

- Accumulations of trash or junk.
- Deterioration of the premises or grounds.
- Dismantling of vehicles, machinery, or other component items, that are not reassembled. Often the high gives them nervous energy to start projects but they don't have ability to concentrate enough to put things back together.

Characteristics

- Garage door never open.
- Blinds always closed or windows boarded up.
- Chemical containers being brought in/out, or left around the premises.
- Drug paraphernalia found in neighborhood.
- Lots of 1-5 gallon jugs around the premises.
- Chemical or caustic smells emitting from the house or vehicles.
- Rough lumber construction being carried inside, people will sometimes build interior rooms to conceal marijuana grow operations.

Occupants

- Diminished hygiene.
- Occupants go outside to smoke.
- Occupants never leave/don't work.
- Occupant is awake or sleeps for days at a time.
- Unattended/neglected pets.
- Children not being watched/cared for/not going to school.
- Parties.
- Lots of young/teenage visitors, especially when the occupants do not have children of that age group.

Surroundings

- Increased crime in the neighborhood, especially crimes of opportunity like vehicle thefts and prowls.
- Other neighbors exhibiting unusual behavior, frequenting the drug house, or defending the occupants.

Reporting Incidents

Generally, if you just have accumulated information to report, you can contact your local law enforcement agency or the officer designated to take drug house complaints. For any incident that is in progress or you need an officer to respond to, call 911.

Personal Safety

Personal Safety is your first priority. Most drug addicts and dealers commit other crimes. They are often suspicious, maybe even paranoid. They can be violent, or associate with other violent individuals.

Education

Educate yourself so you will know what to look for and what to watch out for. The more you know, the better you can protect yourself, and the better witness you will be.

Documentation

Documentation is the key to building a case against a drug house. Keep good, consistent records.

Accuracy

Accuracy is pivotal. The information you give to authorities must be correct and true to the best of your knowledge. Only give information you know to be true, there could be consequences to knowingly giving incorrect information. Bolstering a statement or a 911 call to get a higher priority response may put you in jeopardy of violating perjury laws. You could be called on to testify to your statements, so they need to be without embellishment or speculation.

Indicators

Certain activities are found to be common at drug houses. Generally one or two of these indicators do not mean you have a drug house in your neighborhood. And indicators are not evidence of a drug house. These are circumstances that accumulatively create a reasonable amount of suspicion that warrants further investigation. These are some of the indicators you can look for or that can be noted on a log sheet.

Traffic

- Vehicles stopping for short stays of 20 minutes or less, just long enough for someone to go in and make a buy.
- An inordinate number of vehicles.
- Cars left running with someone in the car while another runs inside.
- Suspicious vehicles, clean plates on a dirty car, damage consistent with stolen cars like punched locks.
- Influxes of increased traffic.

houses be legally sound. Without a legally sound case the drug house occupants are out of jail, back in your neighborhood, and scoffing at the system they beat.

Tangible, credible evidence needs to be collected in order to obtain a search warrant. Even after a search warrant is served, there are many processes that have to take place prior to trial; testing the drugs at a lab, preparing the case for trial. All of these things take time, sometimes months. And while all this is going on, the same suspects may be back at their house selling drugs again. And recent case law has further restricted some of the tools that law enforcement previously used to investigate drug houses. Law enforcement used to watch drug houses and stop people for legitimate traffic violations as they left. Law Enforcement was actually using the traffic violation to see if the people were involved in a drug trade at the house they had just left. Commonly, the stops would result in arrests, which would allow for a search of the person and their car. These searches would sometimes result in the discovery of drugs. If the suspect decided to cooperate with Law Enforcement, they could sometimes provide enough information to obtain a search warrant for the drug house. But the courts have deemed those stops, referred to as "pretext" stops, as unconstitutional, greatly inhibiting Law Enforcements access to much needed evidence.

Diligence is one of the most successful traits needed to combat a drug house. These problems will not be resolved overnight. It takes collaborative efforts of citizens, and public and private agencies to rid a neighborhood of a 'drug house'. There may be times when fear and frustration may make you want to just give up or move, but citizens must be committed to the long term in order to take their neighborhoods back.

Neighborhood Activity Log

Never place yourself in any danger trying to gather information. Always call 911 immediately if there is any reason to believe you or someone else is in danger **or that there is an in-progress crime being committed.**

Date	Start Time	Activity Description	License Number	Vehicle Description	# of Persons	Name or Description of Each Person	End Time	Other	Initial
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Filling out the log sheet:

Anytime there is a notable activity at the drug nuisance premises, it can be logged on this sheet. Use as many sheets as you need to accurately describe what you are observing.

Start with the **date** that the activity occurs on. The **start time** is when the activity is first observed, for example when a vehicle pulls in, when a person walks up, or when the occupant is out having a smoke in the middle of the night. Anything that is out of the ordinary or is typical, as described, as one of the "indicators".

Describe the **activity** and why you feel it is noteworthy. Use descriptive words. Note any emotional response you feel such as surprise or fear. Also include any physical responses you may have such as burning eyes from a chemical odor.

Record vehicle **license numbers**. Also write a **vehicle description**. Include the color, make, model, number of doors, damage or alterations to the vehicle, or stickers and where they are placed. Sometimes the license number will not match the vehicle described because an "L" looks like an "I" or because the plate is switched or stolen. Use as many lines as you need to describe each vehicle. Note the **number of people** involved in an incident or activity and **describe each person**. Include clothing descriptions; they often wear the same clothes for days at a time and may match other criminal activity reports.

Note the time the activity **ends**, the person leaves, the loud music stops, or the lights that have been on all night finally go out. Then in the **other** box, add anything relevant to the incident, such as, that you called 911, or the name of other witnesses to the incident.

Then **initial** the log sheet at the end of the incident so that Law Enforcement has an accurate record of who was witness to what. Try to keep the log sheets numbered and **sign and date** the bottom of each when it is full as you would any witness statement.

Remember to just record what you actually observe, not what you think is going on, otherwise the statement is not valid.