



Suspicious Activity / Terrorism Awareness

It is with the help of alert citizens that Lakeland Police can combat crime in our neighborhoods and increase potential terrorist and suspicious activity awareness. With the help of our community we can have eyes and ears in all areas. The police department cannot be everywhere all the time; that is why we depend on our citizens to contact us when they see suspicious activity in their area. This is also accomplished by enhancing our citizens' power of observation and encouraging mutual assistance by combining efforts of federal, state, and local agencies and our local residents.

Working together we can make a difference to improve and enhance the lives of our residents.

If this is an emergency, call 9-1-1 immediately.

What is "suspicious" activity and terrorism awareness?

Many times citizens are just told to be aware and not necessarily given specific direction. This leaves the possibility for misunderstanding and prejudices to surface. The below information will inform our citizens of what to look for and that their observations should rely on the unusual or suspicious activities and behaviors. Citizens should never use race or religion as factors for reporting suspicious activity.

The residents in the neighborhood know who belongs and when something seems unusual, out of place, or out of the ordinary. You may see or hear things that seem out of the ordinary for your neighborhood, these things may indicate suspicious or illegal activity. We rely on you to contact us when your instincts tell you something is not right.

Get to know your neighbors and your surroundings; then you will know when something is out of the ordinary. Encourage your family, friends and neighbors to get involved. Report any suspicious activity to the police right away.

What should you do if you see or hear something suspicious? Gather information without putting yourself in harm's way.

Description of suspicious activity

- Who was observed?
- What did you see happening?
- When did this happen?
- Where did this activity take place?
- Why is this activity suspicious?

Examples of suspicious or potential terrorist activity

- An unidentified person observed loitering near or in a facility for an extended period of time.
- An unidentified person(s) dressed in oversized or inappropriate clothing (e.g.-a long heavy coat in warm weather) that appears to be concealing something.
- An unidentified person(s) carrying an oversized backpack or a large suitcase.
- An unidentified person(s) asking specific questions about your business/facility (e.g., security related matters, etc.).
- An unidentified person trying to deliver a package or item to an office or to a specific person.
- An unidentified person(s) observed photographing, videotaping and/or sketching the exterior or interior of a facility.

- Any unattended backpacks, boxes, containers, luggage and/or packages in an elevator, hallway, lobby, restroom, snack bar or stairwell of a building.
- Any item that could be an improvised explosive device (e.g., items with visible wires, antennas, batteries, timing devices, metal or plastic pipe with each end capped or covered, etc.). **NOTE:** Untrained personnel should not examine or move a possible improvised explosive device (IED); the immediate area must be cleared pending the arrival of bomb squad personnel.
- Rental vehicles/trailers parked at or near the loading dock, or located in the parking lot without prior authorization.
- Any vehicle that appears to be overloaded or has any substance leaking from it.
- Any vehicle parked illegally or parked at an unusual location.
- Any type of vehicle that appears to be abandoned.

When reporting suspicious activity, complete information will help police address the issue quickly.

Tips on how/what to report to the police:

Description of a person

- Sex
- Race
- Age (approximate)
- Height (approximate)
- Weight (approximate)
- Build (thin, heavyset, muscular, athletic, etc)
- Hair (color, length, braids/dreads, pony tail, etc)
- Facial features (tattoos, moustache, goatee, etc)
- Complexion (light, dark, olive, medium, etc)
- Eyes (color, glasses)
- Features (tattoos, scars, limp, missing limb(s), etc)
- Clothing (head to toe, clothing type, color, hat, etc)
- Weapons (if any)
- Method of escape (vehicle type, direction of travel)

Description of vehicle

- Make, model, year
- Body type (2 door, 4 door, SUV, van, etc)
- Color
- Distinguishing marks (damage, missing headlight, missing taillight, hubcaps, body paint, stickers, etc)
- Passengers (how many people were in the vehicle)
- **License plate (very important if you can get this information, even a partial plate is beneficial)**

If you encounter suspicious activity in your neighborhood, DO NOT take any action yourself, contact the Lakeland Police Department.

You can report suspicious activity several ways:

- Contact Lakeland Police Communications Section at 863-834-6900
- Submit a tip online at tips@lakelandgov.net
- To the tips hotline at 863-834-2549

Remember, if it is an emergency contact 9-1-1.

Crime prevention is everyone's responsibility; one call can make a difference.