



To organize and support community partnerships to prevent crime and the fear of crime

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Community Foot Patrol

A guide for crime prevention practitioners and volunteers

Office of Neighborhood Involvement Crime Prevention Program
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This manual has the following purposes:

- To support the initial training of newly-forming Community Foot Patrols
- To help train new members joining an already-established Community Foot Patrol
- To consult when questions arise about the procedures and policies of Community Foot Patrol

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Программа по Предотвращению Преступности имеет сотрудника, который говорит на Русском языке. Пожалуйста позвоните нам по #503-823-4000, если Вы нуждаетесь в наших услугах на Русском языке.
El Programa de la Prevención del Crimen tiene un miembro que habla español. Llame por favor al número principal 503-823-4000 si usted necesita los servicios en español.

Introduction to Community Foot Patrols

What is a Community Foot Patrol?

A Foot Patrol is a trained group of volunteers organized to increase the safety and livability of their neighborhood. They walk their neighborhood streets, parks, or schools to deter crime and report incidents and problems, rather than sit back and hope that someone else will take care of any crime or livability problems. Foot Patrol members are actively and directly involved in solving those problems in a community-based, non-confrontational manner. Foot Patrols collaborate with the City's Crime Prevention Coordinators, police, neighborhood coalitions and associations, schools, parks personnel, and area businesses to help make sure that neighborhood problems receive a prompt and effective response. A Foot Patrol is a great way to meet like-minded people, contribute to your community, and get some exercise too!

Purpose of Foot Patrols

Community Foot Patrols have several purposes:



- ***To help reduce crime and the fear of crime*** by providing a visible presence as a deterrent to criminal activity. Having concerned patrol members actively watching sends a message in the neighborhood that crime will not be tolerated. Criminals don't wish to be observed, so the presence of alert, trained volunteers can deter and prevent some crimes. Additionally, residents begin to feel a sense of safety knowing that neighbors care and are concerned about the safety and security of the area.

- ***To report suspicious or illegal activities.*** The police and crime prevention staff rely on patrols to tell them about crime incidents and suspects. These patrols can provide timely information which can prevent crime from occurring or help apprehend criminals.

- ***To report livability problems.*** A Foot Patrol is in a good position to notice and report graffiti and other vandalism, abandoned vehicles, illegal dump sites, camping, evidence of drug dealing or manufacturing, street drinking, and other liquor violations.

- ***To promote positive communication and relationships*** within a neighborhood. Community Foot Patrols provide an avenue for neighbors to get to know one another and build a sense of community.

Types of patrols

Community Foot Patrols are, by their nature, walking patrols. Being on foot makes it much easier to notice detailed information about the environment or an event than one could notice driving in a car. For this reason, and others, the City does not encourage or support driving patrols. On rare occasions, it may be appropriate to start a bike patrol. For example, if a patrol is desired in an area that is mostly traveled by bicycle, such as a bike path, it would make sense to patrol it by bicycle. However, these situations are rare. It is almost always most appropriate to patrol on foot.

Foot Patrols typically operate in one of four different environments: residential areas, business districts, parks, or school grounds. Sometimes these areas overlap and a patrol may operate in two environments; the most common combination is residential and business. Different patrol settings may call for some differences in organization and operation due to the different crime and livability issues that may be present and the agencies that might respond to these problems.

- *Residential area patrols* usually work on reducing drug dealing, burglaries, thefts, and vandalism.
- *Business district patrols* are often oriented toward reducing drug dealing, prostitution, and alcohol-related problems.
- *Park patrols* are focused on reducing criminal activity in parks, such as vandalism, camping, speeding, sexual activity, drug sales or use, alcohol violations, and other misuse of park facilities. In establishing park patrols, additional steps need to be taken in co-operation with Portland Parks & Recreation.
- *School patrols* are organized to patrol the school grounds and immediate surrounding area to eliminate vandalism, drug dealing, speeding, or the presence of adults who may endanger children. In establishing school patrols, additional steps need to be taken in co-operation with the school district.



Roles within a Foot Patrol

Foot 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.

Roles of partners

While community members are the people who do the actual patrolling, they partner with others to achieve the best results. Without exception, Foot Patrols partner with and receive technical assistance from crime prevention staff and police. Depending on the location of the patrol and the specific issues at that location, other partners may also be appropriate.

Crime Prevention Program Coordinators

Employed by the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, Crime Prevention Program Coordinators (CPPC) are professional problem-solvers, educators, and community organizers on issues of crime and public safety. Every part of Portland has an assigned CPPC. CPPCs provide the initial training to patrol members, and often provide follow-up training as well; provide advice and assistance to the patrol such as information about resources and crime patterns; help coordinate responses to chronic problems; and serve as a central repository for patrol records.

Police officers

These could be district officers, who respond to radio calls; Neighborhood Response Team officers, who work on long-term problems; or members of specialty units such as the Gang Enforcement Team, the

Drugs and Vice Division, or the School Police. Police receive, review, and respond as necessary to incidents reported by the Foot Patrol. They can assign an officer to attend patrol trainings or meetings.

Neighborhood Watch Organizers

These are community members who lead a Neighborhood Watch. A Neighborhood Watch is a way of organizing residents of a block to make the block more resistant to crime, and better able to respond to crime if it occurs. Often, people who are interested in Neighborhood Watch are interested in Foot Patrol, and vice versa. Many times, people are involved in both. Some Foot Patrols are outgrowths of a specific Neighborhood Watch. If Neighborhood Watches exist in the patrol area, for mutual safety and effectiveness the members of each group communicate with each other about any incidents or problems in the area.

Neighborhood coalitions and associations

Neighborhood coalitions are organizations which provide support and technical assistance to a group of neighborhood associations. It may be appropriate to notify the neighborhood association and/or neighborhood coalition of any problems that are witnessed on a patrol. These organizations have a certain amount of clout because they represent the residents of an area, and can sometimes direct resources or attention to a problem.

Business owners, business associations, and Business Watches

These can be very effective partners for a business district Foot Patrol. Like the neighborhood associations and coalitions, business associations may be able to direct resources or attention to a problem. Business owners often give their emergency numbers for a patrol to call if they see any problems at their building. Some business owners are willing and able to make physical improvements on their building that may help deter crime, such as adding lighting. Business Watches are networks of businesses in a specific area organized to prevent and better respond to crime. They are obvious allies for a business area Foot Patrol, in the same way that Neighborhood Watches are allies for a residential area Foot Patrol.



Parks & Recreation staff

A park Foot Patrol would regularly communicate with the Portland Parks & Recreation security manager, the Park Rangers, the park district maintenance manager, and/or the staff at community centers, which are often located in parks. Depending on the location and the problem, once they are made aware of a problem any of these staff members may be able to take action that could help deter or eliminate problem activity in a park. Especially during the summer months, activity in parks picks up and requests for services and patrol by the parks bureau increases. The Parks Bureau employs Park Rangers who patrol the parks and assist in keeping the parks safe and livable. Park Rangers write park exclusions and work with the Police, neighbors, and patrols in keeping the parks safe and secure.

School staff

A school Foot Patrol would communicate with that school's principal, the school district security manager, and/or maintenance and custodial staff to help address problems that are detected on school grounds.

Other possible partners

There are other city staff and community members that may be appropriate partners for a Foot Patrol, such as the City's graffiti abatement coordinator or noise control officer, or the office of transportation, or a religious leader of a congregation in the patrol area.

Success stories

There are multiple Community Foot Patrols operating in Portland. Here are some of the successes they have had in reducing problems in their neighborhoods:

The Mt. Tabor Park Foot Patrol has 27 active volunteers who conduct as many as 33 patrols per month at the very popular Mt. Tabor Park in Southeast Portland. The group also helps by picking up litter and providing information to park visitors. Over the years this patrol has been very successful in reporting criminal activity, educating visitors on how to keep their cars safe from vandalism, reporting graffiti and working with the police and park staff to address suspicious activity. This committed group of individuals has increased the trust of the neighbors, police, and visitors to Mt. Tabor Park.

At Argay Park in Northeast Portland, a history of drug activity in the park prompted neighbors to form the Argay Park Foot Patrol. More recently, the park has experienced a spate of racist graffiti, and the patrol has been instrumental in getting it reported and cleaned up quickly. The patrol uses their patrol sessions to pick up litter while they watch for any further crime and nuisance problems. They often encounter neighbors in the park who thank them for what they are doing and say that they like using the park because it feels safe and clean.



Starting a Foot Patrol

Talk to your Crime Prevention Program Coordinator about your interest in starting a Foot Patrol. He or she can give you some pointers on the first steps, which include:

Recruiting volunteers

People with a vested interest in the potential patrol area (stakeholders) are your best resource for potential volunteers. Your CPPC can assist in publicizing and marketing the effort to the public. Places to recruit potential members include: Neighborhood or Business Watches; neighborhood or business associations; congregations; and civic organizations. Effective recruitment techniques might include press releases, newsletters, posters, and announcements at meetings. Think about the stakeholders in your area, where they gather, and how they communicate. It's a good idea to gather as many interested people as possible before holding the first training. Twelve is a good target number for starting a new Foot Patrol. If you have fewer people, but they are very dedicated, it can work out just fine too.



Selecting a patrol area & time

In choosing a patrol area and the time the patrol will occur, consider the following: residents' complaints or concerns; crime patterns in the area; existence of Neighborhood Watches or Business Watches; identified problem locations; safety of patrol members; and natural borders.

Making arrangements with partners

If you have decided to have a Foot Patrol that is focused on a park, you will need to make a connection with Portland Parks & Recreation. They have their own criteria for volunteers that need to be met. Since parks attract young children, Portland Parks & Recreation requires a basic background check for those doing volunteer work in the parks.

Similarly, Foot Patrols that are focused on schools will need to make a connection with the school district and the principal of the school. If the Foot Patrol will operate in an area with an active Neighborhood Watch or Business Association, it makes sense to connect with these groups. Your CPPC can help you with any of this.

Arranging training for patrol members

Once you have recruited a group of volunteers, the CPPC will provide the initial training for the group. An outline of the initial training can be found in the addenda of this manual. Talk to your CPPC about a date, time, and location for this first training.

Patrol logistics & procedures

Once a Foot Patrol has formed, they are ready to start patrolling their area. What follows is an explanation of the logistics and procedures of conducting a patrol session, and maintaining a Foot Patrol over time.

Preparing for your patrol

Dress appropriately

- Dress for the weather, for comfort, and for easy movement. A fanny pack or pockets will be the best way to carry any personal items you want to have with you. Carry as little as possible for easy movement.
- When patrols form, they select identifying clothing that all members must wear while on patrol. Most patrols opt for reflective vests, which can be purchased for a fairly low cost at sporting goods stores, safety supply stores, or bike shops. Some patrols have tee-shirts or jackets printed. If paying for the patrol's identifying clothing may be a problem for any member, consider approaching a local business and ask them to donate to your patrol, or talk to your CPPC for other ideas. No member should be excluded for an inability to purchase the vest or shirt.

Meet up with your fellow patrol members

- At least two people must be present for a patrol to go out. One person should never patrol alone for safety reasons. At night or in areas which have been experiencing significant crime problems, it is recommended that three or more people go out together on patrol.
- Meet up with the other patrol members in a spot that makes the most sense for everyone. This might be a member's house, an area business, a community center, or wherever the patrol equipment is kept.

Bring or pick up the necessary equipment

- Each member must carry a notebook & pen for recording incidents or conditions that need to be reported, and be equipped with a flashlight if the patrol is in the evening. The flashlight enables you to see your patrol area better, and allows the police to find you more easily if you need to summon them. The group must have at least one cell phone with them on patrol so they can call 911 or the non-emergency number if necessary.
- Usually, patrol members supply their own flashlights, notebooks, pens, and cell phones and bring them along the day of the patrol.
- Some patrols prefer to share this equipment and leave it in a central location for the patrol to pick up each time they go out. A local business that is open long hours may be willing to store the equipment, and the group could start and end the patrol at the business.
- If it is the case that few or no members of a patrol own cell phones, speak to your CPPC about the situation. A patrol really must have a cell phone with them when they are out patrolling.



Select your patrol area for the shift

- Identify which areas of the neighborhood you want to patrol, being sure to discuss any particular areas where the patrol may need to be especially alert. Select a route that is within the boundaries that your specific Foot Patrol has selected. Preplan your route and the amount of time it will take to do the patrol. All the members should begin and end with a preplanned destination. If members cannot walk the full route because of time or physical constraints, the Foot Patrol needs to discuss how this will impact the patrol for that day or evening.

Check in with the police

- Notify the police that the patrol is heading out. They need to know the area that will be patrolled, how many patrol members are going out, the time the patrol will end, and the cell phone where the patrol can be reached.
- As of this writing, only Central Precinct has desk clerks 24 hours per day. For this reason, Central Precinct will take the calls from Foot Patrols who are headed out on patrol and convey the information to the appropriate officers anywhere in the city. The number for Central Precinct is 503-823-0097.
- Notifying the police is important both for the safety of patrol members and the knowledge of police officers who are working in the patrol area. If the Foot Patrol needs to call the police, it can speed their response time and understanding of the situation if the police already know that a patrol is happening in the area.

Conducting your patrol

Walk your area

- Walk through your patrol area, looking for any situations or conditions that need attention. Patrol members should stick together for the entire time that they are on patrol.
 - Neighbors are often curious about what the Foot 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 Foot 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. See addenda section of this manual for information about personal safety. Personal safety is paramount. There is no need to endanger yourself EVER.
- Keep your demeanor cool-headed and non-confrontational. It is not the Foot 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 cars are involved, try to get license plates. If the suspects leave, note the direction in which they travel.



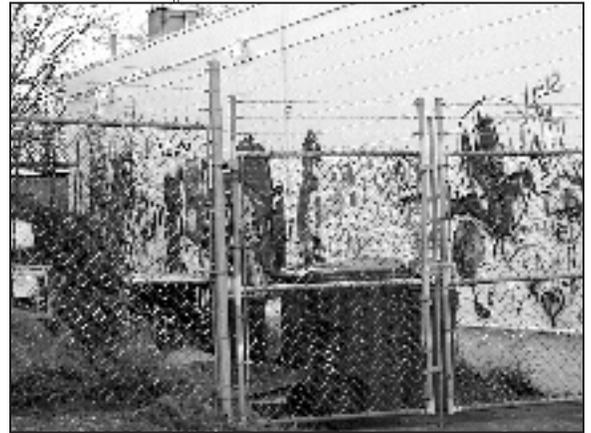
- Call 911 or the non-emergency number, as appropriate. See addenda under “Calling 911, non-emergency, and other resources.”

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 the addenda under “Calling 911, non-emergency, and other resources” for some commonly-needed phone numbers. If you are unsure to whom you need to report a problem, call your CPPC for advice.

Wrapping up a 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.
- 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 was noted, someone needs to call the graffiti hotline or make an online report.
- If the group shares equipment that is stored in a central location, return the equipment to its storage place.
- Do something nice for yourself. You deserve it. You are making an important contribution to your community!



Patrol organizer tasks

Scheduling

- The scheduling of patrols varies greatly depending on the number of volunteers and their schedules, geographic size of the area patrolled, and safety considerations.
- Some patrols can have regularly scheduled times. Patrol volunteers are informed when the patrol goes out and they come if they can. The patrol goes out if there are enough volunteers for a patrol. A minimum of two members must patrol at one time.
- The times the patrol wants coverage can be divided into shifts. Volunteers then sign up for a particular weekly or monthly shift, or as they have time.
- Another way of scheduling is to have an open calendar. Volunteers sign up for the time that is most convenient for them.

Record keeping

The patrol organizer keeps the following records for the patrol, and makes sure that the CPPC has current copies:

- Patrol area map
- Updated patrol roster, including emergency contact information for each member. Some patrols like to set up a phone tree or email list serve so they can get information to the whole group quickly if needed.
- Patrol logs: patrol logs will include dates and times of patrols; volunteers on the patrol; and any significant events or calls for service.

In addition to assisting with monitoring of neighborhood problems over time, the reason for this documentation is to provide a record of active volunteers and volunteer hours. This can provide

the basis for volunteer recognition, patrol recognition, and support requests for donations or grants for the patrol.

Follow-up training and meetings

An active Foot Patrol often has members join after the initial training that happens when the patrol forms. The crime prevention program coordinator (CPPC) will be happy to train new members of the Foot Patrol and do refresher trainings for people who are already members. Or, when a Foot Patrol is experienced and established, the Foot Patrol organizer may do these trainings. The CPPC can provide the Foot Patrol organizer with materials to conduct the training.

It's a good idea for active Foot Patrols to set up regular meetings for members to discuss what they are seeing on patrol. The CPPC or a police officer will be able to attend some of these meetings. Meetings are a good time to discuss how more members might be recruited, or any procedural decisions that need to be made. They are also a good time to have a short training on a topic of interest to members of your Foot Patrol that would help them better understand trends in crime in their neighborhood. For example, additional training in liquor violations, gang activity, or domestic violence may be helpful. Talk to your CPPC about additional training you would like to have. He or she may be able to provide the training, or help you find a trainer on the topic.



Addenda

Frequently Asked Questions

Can we have a driving patrol?

It is far easier to see and respond to problems in the neighborhood when on foot. When you are driving, your attention should be on safely driving the car. When you are on foot, you can devote your attention to the neighborhood itself, which is the purpose of a Foot Patrol. For these reasons, the City does not encourage or support driving patrols.

Can my children come along on patrol?

For practical and safety reasons Foot Patrol members need to be focused on watching their surroundings, rather than taking care of the needs of a child. Also, the Foot Patrol cannot be as flexible and mobile if accompanied by a child. Lastly, there is the potential that Foot Patrols could be confronted by people who are belligerent and angry. Remember, criminals don't like to be watched and in rare instance may confront a Foot Patrol. For this reason, Foot Patrol members may not bring their minor children on patrol with them.

Can I bring my dog?

For the same reasons listed above, we recommend that you leave your pet at home when you are on patrol. However, we are aware that some people like to combine their patrolling with their dog's daily walk, and would have difficulty fitting in two walks. If you have a very well-trained dog who you know will not distract you from patrolling, and the other members of the Foot Patrol are comfortable patrolling with you and your dog, you may go ahead and bring your dog.

Can I bring a friend or a potential new patrol member?

Yes, as long as that person is briefed on the basics of participating in Foot Patrol prior to going out. A good way to do this is for a current patrol member to go over the volunteer agreement form with the person, making sure that they understand that Foot Patrol is a non-confrontational activity. Having people come along for "walk-alongs" is an excellent way to recruit new members of the Foot Patrol. If a person is going to join the patrol on a regular basis, they need to be provided with the training, and need to sign the volunteer agreement form.

Can minors be part of the patrol?

Community Foot Patrol members must be 18 years of age or older.

What if we don't have access to cell phones?

If no members of the Foot Patrol have cell phones that can be used on patrol, talk to your CPPC. He or she may know about a way to get cell phones donated to your Foot Patrol.

What if I have a concealed carry permit? Can I bring my gun? What about pepper spray?

Even if you choose to carry a weapon for self-protection in other cir-



cumstances, you may not do so while patrolling with your Foot Patrol. If you insist upon carrying your weapon with you at all times, Foot Patrol is not for you. There are other ways you can serve your community if you are interested. Speak to your CPPC for ideas.

Can we arrest or detain someone until the police arrive?

Civilians who try to detain or arrest criminals risk injury, death, and lawsuits. Police officers are paid and trained to make arrests. Foot Patrol members should stay a safe distance away from a situation and wait for the police to arrive and determine if arrests need to be made.

What if we see family violence?

Many people who witness a disturbance between romantic partners or family members feel like the situation is “private” and should be ignored. Nothing could be further from the truth. If you see violence, or a situation that could soon become violent, no matter the relationship between the people involved, 911 should be called. While the people involved in family violence may feel embarrassed if attention is called to their situation, violence should never be ignored. Ignoring violence hurts the whole community.

Can we distribute brochures or flyers while we patrol? Can we pick up litter as we patrol?

Yes. Just keep in mind that your ability to move easily and quickly is important, so you don't want to carry so much with you that it impairs this ability.

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Outline of Foot Patrol training

Crime prevention staff will train Foot Patrol members with assistance from the police and other resources as appropriate.

1. Classroom training

- Discussion of specific neighborhood problems that have led to the desire for a patrol
- Overview of purpose of Community Foot Patrol
- Patrol procedures
- Identifying suspicious activities
- Calling 911, non-emergency, and other resources
- Reporting livability problems
- Patrol logistics: scheduling, record keeping, equipment
- Personal safety while on patrol
- Selection of patrol leadership
- Filling out volunteer agreement, and if needed, background check forms for Portland Parks & Recreation or the school district

2. Initial patrol with crime prevention staff and/or police officer

- The CPPC or a police officer (or both) can accompany the group for an initial patrol of the area, pointing out problem spots and answering questions.



also on the Office of Neighborhood Involvement website and can be downloaded by anyone who would like a copy. The website is located at www.portlandonline.com/oni. Follow the links for Crime Prevention.

Additional training may be arranged upon request. For example, training about a specific type of crime may be appropriate.

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Calling 911, non-emergency, and other resources

(This section adapted from Bureau of Emergency Communications brochure)

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 some-



one wanting to report a crime which occurred a few hours, 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 down an alley, 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)

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 the phone book, call information at 411.



If you have a complaint or question regarding a service provided by the City of Portland or Multnomah County, call the city/county information and referral line at 503-823-4000.

If you have a general question regarding police services or are unsure whom to call with your non-emergency question, call the Police Bureau information line at 503-823-4636.

If you want to report graffiti, call 503-823-4TAG (4824).

If you want to report a possible liquor law violation, call the City's liquor licensing specialist at 503-823-3092 or the Oregon Liquor Control Commission at 503-872-5070.

If you want to report a pattern of excessive noise, call the City's noise control office at 503-823-7350.

You can also report graffiti, liquor, and noise problems online at www.portlandonline.com/oni.

If you want to report an animal problem, call Multnomah County Animal Control at 503-988-7387.

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Protecting your personal safety while on patrol

It is important that, while you are on patrol, you take measures to protect your personal safety. Participating in Foot Patrol is very rarely dangerous, but it is certainly true that criminals do not like to be watched while they commit crimes. Sometimes they confront Foot Patrol members. Below is a discussion of some basic principles of personal safety that you can apply to your activities on the Foot Patrol and other parts of your life as well.

Trust your intuition, and act on it

Your intuition is your internal alarm system that tells you when there is something wrong in your environment. Your intuition may tell you that something is wrong even before you detect the problem through sight, sound, smell, or touch. You may experience intuition as a feeling of dread or doubt, or through physical sensations, such as tightness in the stomach, hair standing on end, or a racing heart. When your intuition tells you that you are in danger, take action! Often, people try to talk themselves out of what they feel (“Don’t react. Maybe you’re wrong. You don’t want to look foolish.”), but this is rarely a good idea. Instead, do something to make the situation safer for you and the others on Foot Patrol with you. You could reduce your isolation by walking into a store, or you could cross the street and go the other direction to get away from a situation. If you are face-to-face with a dangerous situation, you can use de-escalation techniques to try to keep the situation calm until you can escape.

Deal with a situation at the lowest & calmest level possible

For optimal safety on your Foot Patrol, it is best to deal with a potentially dangerous situation as soon as it is recognized as such. At the earliest sign of danger, remove yourselves from the situation if possible. There is no reason to wait around to see if your suspicions are confirmed. If something feels bad, it probably is bad, and you don’t need to endanger yourself to “make sure.”

If you are unable to leave the situation right away, you can use de-escalation. De-escalation is a method of calming down a situation or another person. When you are facing an agitated, angry person, the calmer you can get them, the safer it is for you.

- ***Calm yourself.*** Breathe slowly and deeply. Tell yourself, “I can handle this. I’m going to be OK.”
- ***Display a confident & calm demeanor.*** Make some eye contact, but with a soft gaze, not an intense or constant stare. Keep your face neutral. Keep your posture calm and relaxed but alert. Don’t make any sudden movements.
- ***Position yourselves for safety.*** Stay at least two arm-lengths away from a potentially dangerous person, or position yourselves behind a barrier if possible. Keep your hands free and in front of your body. Look for escape routes.
- ***Use your voice to calm the potential assailant.*** Keep your voice calm, firm, low, slow, and even. Use short, simple sentences. Avoid complex logic; agitated people cannot understand compli-



cated concepts—they are thinking at a very simple level.

- *Say things that will help you establish rapport* with the potential assailant. Listen actively. Use “uh-huh” and nod. Listen for content and emotion. Really listen to what the person wants and needs. Acknowledge their feelings, agree with them, and empathize (even if you don’t really feel that way). Project sincerity. “It looks like we startled you when we came down the alley. I’m sorry. We didn’t mean to.”
- *Avoid escalating behaviors.* Examples: ignoring, making threats, hurtful remarks, arguing, commanding, shouting, interrupting, personal space invasions, threatening gestures, obscenities, self-righteous attitude, taking away their dignity. Remember, in a dangerous situation you don’t need to be right; you need to be safe.

Recognize the strategies that assailants commonly use & pre-plan your defense

There are some common strategies that assailants use against the person/people they attack or harass. Here is a description of how these common strategies might be used against your patrol group in a street situation, and what might help in each case.



Assailant strategy: *Isolation*

It is much easier for an assailant to attack someone who is isolated and alone, and the assailant is less likely to be caught.

What might help: *Stay connected with others*

- You have a built-in buddy system with Foot Patrol, so you’re never alone.
- Identify some safe places to go for help when you are out on your route, e.g. stores, bars, supermarkets, fire stations, police stations.
- Use the patrol’s cell phone to make a call. This shows that help is not far away.
- Having checked in with the precinct means there are people out there who know where you are.

Assailant strategy: *Surprise*

Physical surprise: Assailant hides behind something and jumps out, or approaches very quickly. Psychological surprise: When someone we never expected to be violent is violent. This is often the result of stereotypes about who is/is not a criminal based on race, income level, educational level, neighborhood, etc.

What might help: *Be hard to surprise*

- Stay aware of surroundings. This means visual awareness (look all around you), and auditory awareness (listen to what’s going on around you).
- Respond to gut feelings about behavior rather than stereotypes about appearance.

Assailant strategy: *Intimidation*

Intimidation can be very obvious (pointing a weapon, saying something threatening) or more subtle (leaning over someone, clenching jaw muscles, angry facial expressions, putdowns, etc.) Sometimes assailants try to intimidate people into not making any noise during an assault or not reporting an incident. Assailants are often “power

trippers,” who try to make others feel small and powerless so they can feel big and powerful by comparison.

What might help: *Try to show that you are not afraid, even if you are*

- Breathe slowly and deeply, and tell yourself you’re going to be OK, that you handle the situation.
- Respond in ways that maintain your dignity and do not escalate the interaction. This could be as subtle as standing up straight, making some brief eye contact, and trying to calm someone down.

Communicate with your fellow patrol members.

Before going out with your fellow patrol members, it’s a good idea to have an agreed-upon way of handling incidents, so that you don’t have to figure it out in the moment.

- Some patrols set up a code word for dangerous situations. For example, a word could be selected to mean, “This is dangerous and we need to leave now.”
- Some patrols arrange in advance who will do what in an emergency situation. The person with the best verbal skills could be the one that tries to calm down the situation. Another person could be the one who calls 911.



Before patrol

- Meet up with patrol partners
- Take cell phone, notebook and pen, flashlight
- Wear identifying clothing
- Before leaving on patrol, call Central Precinct

After patrol

- Report any livability problems noted during patrol to the appropriate place
- Store any shared equipment
- Make a log entry
- Call your CPPC if any significant events happened during the patrol

Foot Patrol organizer(s)

Name

Phone

Address

Email

Frequently used phone numbers

Emergency police, fire, medical 9-1-1

Non-emergency police 503-823-3333
Non-emergency criminal activity or "cold" crimes where the suspects have left

Central Precinct 503-823-0097
To check in prior to going on patrol

City/County Info & Referral 503-823-4000
Info about city and county services and depts

Portland Police Info & Referral 503-823-4636

Drugs & Vice Division 503-823-DRUG
To report a possible drug house

Child Abuse Hotline 503-731-3100

Traffic Safety Line 503-823-SAFE
To report chronic traffic safety issues at a specific location

Graffiti Hotline 503-823-4TAG
To report graffiti and initiate clean-up

Animal Control 503-988-3066

Noise Control 503-823-7350

OLCC Hotline 503-872-5070
To report problems with liquor license establishments

Abandoned Autos 503-823-7309
Abandoned cars on public streets

Parking enforcement 503-823-5195
Illegally parked cars, blocked driveways

Neighborhood Mediation 503-823-3152
Mediation for neighborhood disputes

Neighborhood Inspection Team 503-823-7306
To report nuisances & housing code violations

Vector Control 503-988-3464
To report rodent infestations, mosquito breeding grounds

Mental Health Crisis Line 503-988-4888

Street maintenance hotline 503-823-1700

Online reporting of noise, nuisance, graffiti, and liquor issues www.portlandonline.com/oni

