

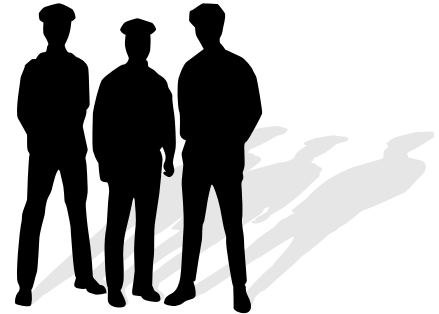
Chapter 10

TO SERVE AND PROTECT?

THE POLICE WON'T TALK TO US

Frequently managers or property owners complain that the police don't stop at the office or report to them why they were at the property. There are some very legitimate reasons why.

- Some problems are so minor, the officer may not feel it warrants reporting. For example, a couple has a verbal dispute, as many people do, but no one is hurt; the situation is minor, and there is no reason to "air the dirty laundry" to the neighbors.
- Though it may be the manager who walks up to the officer asking about the call, the officer may not feel it is appropriate to disclose the information. It is also possible the officer isn't certain the person is really the manager.
- Many times the officer is in a hurry to clear the call and get on to the next one that is waiting. Domestic calls take a lot of time in and of themselves, and officers are always being criticized about their response time by the next person who is waiting. The time it takes to locate a manager (and re-tell the whole story) can easily amount to 15 minutes, a half-hour or more. This is especially true when the manager has a lot they want to say to the officer as well.
- Some officers feel the manager isn't going to follow through anyway. Though it may be hard to believe, there are property managers that are nosey. They never follow through with the appropriate notices; they just want to know everybody's business.



If a police officer knows the property manager actually follows through with an appropriate course of action, there is greater incentive to talk with the manager. The officer really doesn't want to have to keep coming back for the same problem over and over again.

Meet with the officer, even if you have to call the dispatcher to schedule an appointment. When the officer arrives, let them know you are an active member of the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM and you are willing to work with the police. Meeting the officer is the first step.

Keep in mind, one officer works day shift, one works the afternoon shift, and one works the midnight shift. Also, other officers fill in on the regular officer's days off! It could take a while to meet them all.

PRIVACY LAWS

There is another very key issue to be addressed. That is the issue of privacy laws. A police officer cannot stop by in person, or leave a card in the office telling you the "who, what, when, where, why and how."

The officer is more likely to give you a case number, and as a matter of public record, you can request a copy of the police report. Always try to get the case number if you get nothing else. While the officer may not be able to give you the names of the persons involved, they may be able to give you the unit number they went to.

One of the benefits of being a **fully certified member** of the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM is that you can contact the Crime Free Coordinator to discuss police calls to your property.

*THERE ARE VERY STRICT
PRIVACY LAWS THAT
PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF
RESIDENTS...EVEN THE
RESIDENTS THAT BREAK
THE LAW.*



HOW TO APPROACH THE OFFICER

If you see a police officer at one of your rental units, don't interfere -- stay back. The situation may become very volatile at any moment. The officer may order you to stand back for your own safety.

If you are certain things are settled, you can get the officer's attention and introduce yourself as the manager and ask to see the officer when they are through with the call. The less you say at this point, generally the better. Stand at a safe distance, but wait for the officer. Don't go back to the office.

When the officer is finished, let them know you are working with the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM, and get a case number. Sometimes, a case is not drawn up and no report will be written. The officer will let you know.

If the officer is able to give you more information, it will help you follow through with the necessary steps you must take. If not, get a copy of the report. Let the officer know that you do plan to follow through, and you would appreciate working with them in the future.

ESTABLISHING MORE

If a property manager has a **serious** problem with crime, they may choose to consider some type of security officer to patrol the property. This could be an effective way to solve serious problems with residents.

A HIGH POLICE PRESENCE WILL DEMONSTRATE TO THE RESIDENTS THAT MANAGEMENT IS SERIOUS ABOUT ADDRESSING PROBLEMS.



REQUESTING "EXTRA" PATROL

Frequently managers will call requesting "extra" patrol. While it never hurts to ask, it may not help either. There are many, many multi-family developments in Aurora. Many more properties than we have patrol officers. One thing they all have in common is, they want extra patrol visits through their property.

Then there are the industrial parks and office buildings. They all want extra patrol, too.

And don't forget the managers of the shopping centers that call the police looking for extra patrol because a customer had a purse stolen, or a car was stolen from the lot. There are more stores than there are patrol officers.



And, of course, there are thousands of residents that want extra patrol in their residential neighborhoods. Everyone wants to see more police patrols in their neighborhoods.

There are still others that feel the police ought to spend more time writing tickets for speeders and people who don't use turn signals. There just aren't enough police officers to fill all those needs.

Unfortunately, the police officers cannot provide security for everyone who asks. Even if they could visit the property a couple of times per day, the likelihood that they would be at the right place at precisely the right time is very slim. The best efforts will include officers that can spend hours at the property. Obviously that would not be possible. We will make every effort to work with you and your residents to address your problems and work toward a solution.

NARCOTICS SURVEILLANCE

Property managers will also call the police requesting a narcotics detective to set up surveillance on a resident they suspect of using drugs. While managers are aware the detectives are not sitting by the phone hoping somebody will call soon, managers may also not realize how many cases the detectives are actively working either.

Narcotics detectives are highly trained and do excellent work because they have methods that work so well. Typically, they rely on a person to introduce them to a suspect whenever possible. If they can get close to an operation, they are more likely not only to make an arrest, but also to arrest several people. If the quantities are high, they are likely to get prison time for the offender. The higher up the supply line that they penetrate, the more

successful the operation.

The end user is not going to get the prison time or produce all of the other results the detectives are after. They want the "bigger fish to fry." They work the more serious cases. There are more calls than the police have detectives. It is a matter of prioritization.

MANAGEMENT SURVEILLANCE

You should call to report the drug activity, because you may be providing the very key information the police have been looking for. You should also document other behaviors associated with the drug activity, and serve the appropriate notices. **There are usually a string of other evictable offenses that managers overlook, trying to prove somebody is into drug activity.**

Rarely have property managers confronted residents with their suspicions, yet they call the police. When asked why they haven't confronted the resident they say, "I don't have any proof." Think about that. **The police need a whole lot more proof than the manager does. The police can't do anything without the proof either.**

IF YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH PROOF TO EVICT A SUSPECTED DRUG DEALER, THE POLICE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH PROOF TO ARREST THEM EITHER.



Why can't the police just watch and get the proof? There just isn't enough time or available detectives. The better question is "Why don't the property management teams watch the resident and get the proof?" It is much easier for those who live and work on the property to watch what is going on. They know who lives at and belongs on the property; the police don't. Because management needs a lot less proof than the police do, they will get faster results civilly.

Setting up video cameras or recording license plates may provide clues, but they may also spark retaliation from the resident. Whatever action is taken, safety should always be foremost.

“BUT I’M SCARED!”

Because the potential for danger is there, **property managers should be more selective and forceful with prospective residents.** If policies are not strictly stated in the beginning, they will be harder to enforce in the end. Prevention is the key.

Most residents will stop drug activity if they find out the manager is onto them. The reason most people continue this activity is because they know the manager is afraid to confront them. Even if the police arrest a resident, you will have to evict them and others on the lease. They will come back awaiting trial in most cases.