



OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE  
SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA

*Working together for a safer community  
La sécurité de notre communauté, un travail d'équipe*

Neighbourhood Watch

# Member Guide



[www.ottawapolice.ca](http://www.ottawapolice.ca)

**NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH** is a program to help neighbours watch out for neighbours. It aims to get citizens involved in discouraging and preventing crime at the local level. The ultimate success of Neighbourhood Watch depends largely on a commitment to cooperate between area residents and the police — and more importantly, between residents themselves.

The program thrives on mutual aid. Your neighbours know who you are, what type of car you drive, and may be the first to notice a burglar at your door or window. A police officer patrolling your community may not recognize a stranger in your yard — but your neighbour will. The Neighbourhood Watch program builds on these facts. By simply getting to know the neighbours around you, you'll be well positioned to recognize someone or something that's suspicious.

When neighbours work together, they can combat crime in their area the most effective way — before it starts. Neighbourhood Watch encourages active participation in crime prevention. As part of the Program, you can learn how to:

- make your home less inviting as a target for thieves;
- how to participate in Operation Identification, an engraving program to mark your valuables; and
- how to recognize and report suspicious activity in your neighbourhood.

**Let's work together to prevent crime.**



## Watch Structure at a Glance

Neighbourhood Watch provides the structure to work with your neighbours. It operates to educate participants on the principles of deterrence and detection. The program depends on a communication network organized with various levels of participants — Watch members, Block Captains, Watch Coordinators who are part of Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators' Associations (NWCAs), the Ottawa Neighbourhood Watch Executive Committee (ONWEC) and the Ottawa Police.

Each Watch generally selects from among its members a Coordinator and several Block Captains to help the Watch run smoothly and to facilitate communication to and from Watch members.

### Watch Members

Watch members are the backbone of the Neighbourhood Watch program. Your duty is to look after your own best interests and those of your family and neighbours.

Responsibilities include:

- availing yourself to the information and services provided through the program;
- remaining alert to the occurrence of any suspicious activity and reporting it promptly to the police, then to your Coordinator or designate;
- maintaining a satisfactory standard of security in your own home;
- looking after near-neighbours' homes or property during their absence, if requested to do so;
- attending any general meetings of the Watch; and
- being a good neighbour — the kind you would like to have living next door to you.

*“Participating in Neighbourhood Watch offers very little change in lifestyle for those involved. Rather, it provides a means to meet your neighbour, as well as a vehicle for making your neighbourhood a safer place to live.”*

## **Block Captains**

The Block Captain is principally responsible for monitoring a set of approximately ten homes within a Watch.

Duties include:

- welcoming new neighbours, informing them about the program and inviting them to join;
- setting an example by adopting appropriate home security measures, and being a good neighbour;
- maintaining an accurate list of members in his or her area of jurisdiction and advising the Coordinator of any changes;
- reporting incidents of crime or attempted crime to the Coordinator after ensuring the police have been advised;
- inform residents of break and enters or other threatening activities that have occurred in the area;
- appoint assistant/alternate to take over during absences;
- distribute information pertaining to the Neighbourhood Watch program; and
- communicating the views of Watch members to Coordinators during Watch meetings.

## **Watch Coordinators**

The Coordinator is principally responsible for the entire Watch, and serves as the Watch's contact with the Police Service — primarily through the local Community Police Centre (GPC).

Duties include:

- attending coordinators meetings;
- organizing general Watch meetings and meeting regularly with Block Captains;
- promoting Neighbourhood Watch at other community events;
- recruiting Watch members and Block Captains;
- initiating Ottawa Police Service Auto-Dialer (OPSAD) messages for the Watch;
- disseminating information to Block Captains; and
- arranging for Watch signage.

## When to Call Police

One of the hardest things for Watch members is to learn to trust their instincts. If it looks suspicious — don't hesitate — call police. Some people fear that raising a false alarm will reflect poorly on them. Not so. It's okay to inform police about something that “looks a bit fishy,” and let them take it from there.

Look at the other side of the coin — how would you feel if you didn't call to report your suspicions, and, as a result, failed to prevent a criminal act in your neighbourhood? How would you feel if a neighbour failed to prevent a criminal act on your property?

Even when a crime has already been committed, some people are still reluctant to inform the police. Maybe they think it's not worth the hassle to report some graffiti or a stolen snow blower; maybe they're too embarrassed to admit that they lost money to a disappearing driveway paving salesman or a smooth-talking telemarketer. But these are exactly the sorts of crime that your neighbours and your Community Police Centre (CPC) officer should be made aware of. You can state that you don't want police to visit your home as a result of the call. If you don't want to call the police, then at least inform your Block Captain or Coordinator. If people are informed about crimes being committed in their neighbourhoods, they become more vigilant and are less likely to be victimized.

Typical criminal activities that may occur in your neighbourhood include:

- break and entry into homes, motor vehicles, garages and sheds
- vandalism or destruction of property
- public disturbances
- family violence
- child abuse
- fraud
- physical or sexual assaults
- illicit drug transactions
- thefts of all kinds, including outdoor equipment and bicycles.

One of the better accomplishments of Neighbourhood Watch has been the elimination of vandalism and rowdiness within well-operated Watch areas.

# How to Report a Crime or Suspicious Activity

Whether you're calling to report a crime in progress or just something that arouses your suspicion, remember the following Do's and Don'ts:

## DO

- identify yourself as a Watch member;
- be prepared to describe the persons, vehicles or circumstances as fully as possible;
- ask for an "incident" number to facilitate a follow-up inquiry at a later date;
- record the time and date of your call;
- keep the suspects and incident under surveillance from a safe distance until police arrive;
- make a second call if the activity gets worse; and
- inform your Block Captain or designate when time permits.

## DON'T ATTEMPT APPREHENSION OR PURSUIT

**DON'T ATTEMPT TO CONFIRM YOUR SUSPICIONS** by approaching a home or vehicle where a crime may have taken place, or may still be in progress. Go immediately to a safe distance, call 9-1-1 and wait for the police. If you approach the scene of a crime, you may encounter a dangerous criminal, or destroy useful evidence. For example, Police Canine Unit tracking dogs can only follow the trail of the last person who was on the scene.

**Make the Right Call!**

Every call is important, but not all calls are life-threatening, and not all calls are police emergencies. Whatever the case, we're here to help. You have a role to play: "Make the Right Call."

**9-1-1**

Life-threatening  
Emergency or  
Crime in Progress

**230-6211**

TTY  232-1123

Other Emergencies

**236-1222**

Community Police  
Centres and all  
other enquiries

# How the Police Respond to Calls for Service

The Ottawa Police Service has three categories of calls (see page 5 for contact information):

- **Priority 1 calls (911)** — urgent and/or life-threatening situations, including crimes in progress. Police strive to respond to these calls within 15 minutes, 90 percent of the time.
- **Priority 2 calls** — urgent but not life-threatening situations. The service standard here is expressed as an average response time of two hours or less
- **Priority 3 calls** — Community Police Centres and all other enquiries. Here, the response is within 24 hours.

The Police Service also has alternative responses — those responses that do not include dispatching officers, such as taking reports over the phone or referring calls to the Neighbourhood Officers, School Resource Officers, or Community Police Centre Officers.

Emergency situations are any crime in progress, and can include the following:

- Assault
- Break and Enter/Burglary
- Fire or Explosion
- Gun shots
- Homicide
- Odour of Gas
- Person with a Weapon
- Police Officer in Trouble
- Purse Snatching/Robbery
- Serious Injury
- Serious Vehicle Accident
- Suspicious Person
- Suspicious Vehicle

Non-emergency police situations include:

- Graffiti
- Lost or Recovered Property
- Minor Vehicle Accident
- Narcotic Information
- Some Thefts
- Traffic Conditions and Parking
- Vandalism

The police don't have responsibility for handling some non-emergency situations, such as animal control, by-law enforcement, property standards and neighbourhood noise. The City of Ottawa upholds several by-laws to protect your health, safety and peace. The By-law Services Branch handles many of them. Watch members can report a possible by-law violation by calling the **City of Ottawa's 24-hour Call Centre at 580-2400**.

# Home Security Survey

Make sure your home is not an easy target for criminals. The following survey is designed to help you identify security problems in your own home. You (and all members of the public) can take advantage of the Ottawa Police's **Home Security Inspection Program** where, at your request, police representatives will visit your home (house, condo, apartment, etc.) to provide a free safety audit — assessing ways to make your home safer. Contact your local **Community Police Centre** for more information.

## DOORS:

**Yes No**

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does door have 180-degree peephole?                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are locks that can be opened from inside at least 40 inches from glass? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are entrance doors solid core?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do they have bolt locks?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If hinge pins are outside, are they non-removable?                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does door securely fit doorjamb?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is doorjamb tightly fastened?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is strike plate securely fastened to doorjamb?                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does bolt extend sufficiently into strike plate?                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have locks been re-keyed since you moved in?                            |

## WINDOWS:

**Yes No**

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have double hung windows been pinned?                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do metal windows have auxiliary locks?                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Can windows left open for ventilation be secured?                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do basement windows have auxiliary locks?                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do curtains or drapes fully cover windows?                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is window air conditioner secured from inside?                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you use roll shutters or other window products (e.g., protective film)? |

## GARAGE/ SHED

**Yes No**

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does door close tightly?                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does overhead door have a track padlock? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is padlock of high quality?              |



- | <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is door hardware of high quality, installed without screws showing? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you keep overhead door closed and locked when not in use?        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you remove vehicle keys when garage is locked?                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Can garage light be turned on from inside?                          |

**EXTERIOR:**

- | <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are shrubs cut below window level?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are tree limbs cut above window level?                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is residence number clearly visible from street?                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Can mailbox be locked?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is front door well lit?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is back door well lit?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you use motion detectors with exterior lighting?                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are bicycles, mowers, ladders kept inside?                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you engraved property (Operation Identification) and put on stickers?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you removed any ornamental stones that could be used to break a window? |

**VACATIONS:**

- | <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you stop deliveries?                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you set light timers?                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is your yard taken care of?              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you arrange for mail to be picked up? |

**ADDITIONAL CHECKS:**

- | <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If you have a gun, is it kept secured?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you keep most of your cash in the bank?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you keep a list of all valuable property, credit cards and serial numbers?               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you keep this list in a safe place?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you avoid displaying valuables to strangers?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you memorized emergency telephone numbers (see "Make the Right Call" on inside cover)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have an alarm?   |

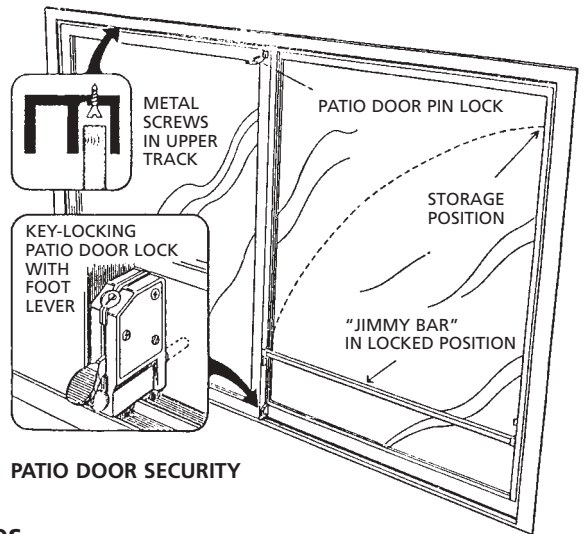
# Exterior Door Security

## Door construction

Hollow core and glass doors are not very secure. Ideally, all exterior doors should be solid wood or laminated wood core construction at least 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick. The doorframe should be of solid or laminated wood or metal.

Glass doors should have a burglar resistant wire mesh or tempered safety glass installed. This precaution should be observed for any glass panels near or in a door that would allow a burglar to reach in and open the door.

Sliding glass patio doors are often easily lifted out of their frame. To prevent this, self-tapping screws should be installed in the upper track. This will fill the space between the upper door and track and make it impossible to lift the door out of the track. This is neither difficult nor expensive. Patio doors may also be pinned — use "jimmy bars" or locked with a commercial lock available for patio doors.



**PATIO DOOR SECURITY**

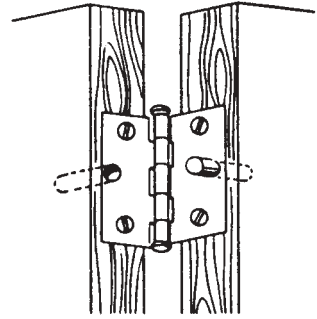
## Hinges and strike plates

Exterior doors and hinges on the outside will provide burglars with easy access to your home. They have only to remove the hinge pins and lift the door out of its frame. This situation can be corrected three ways:

1. Have the door removed and the hinges remounted on the inside of the frame so the door swings inward.
2. Install a set of non-removable hinge pins.
3. Install a locking pin in the existing hinge plate as follows:
  - remove the centre screw from each plate of both the top and bottom of the door hinge;
  - insert a "headless" screw or bolt into the door jamb through the hole in the hinge plate, leaving 1/2" protruding; and
  - drill a hole 3/4" deep through the opposing hinge plate into the door.

Once this is done, the pins in the doorjamb will penetrate the opposing hole in the door. The door will be held in position even if the hinge pins are removed.

Doorframes should be as strong as the door itself with a securely mounted strike plate. It should be ideally attached through the frame into a wall stud by sufficiently long screws. Door guard plates are useful in resisting entry by means of a knife, screwdriver or celluloid strip.



**INSTALLING A  
LOCKING PIN**

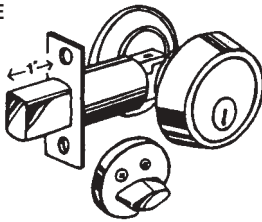
**Don't rely on key-in-the knob locks!** Although these are very common locking devices, they provide little security and are an invitation to even the most inexperienced burglar. It's often the entry point in many burglaries.

### Deadbolt locks

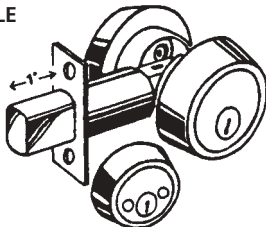
A good quality deadbolt lock with a 1" throw (see illustration) that affixes securely to the door with hardened steel bolts provides excellent security. All key-in-knob locks should be replaced with deadbolt locks for all entrance doors.

Deadbolt locks are available with single and double cylinder opening. The double cylinder locks are operated by key only on both sides. It's designated to provide additional security on doors where a glass window is within 40 inches or arms length of the inside door lock.

**SINGLE**



**DOUBLE**



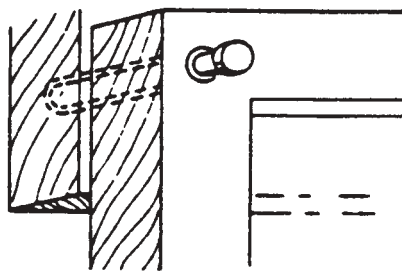
### **Fire safety warning:**

*Double cylinder deadbolt locks are extremely hazardous if the door they secure is to be used as a fire or emergency exit. You may need to consult with Ottawa Fire Services for alternatives in your particular door security situation.*

# Window Security

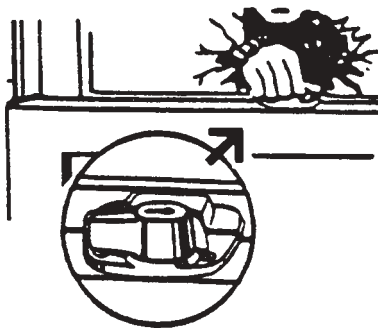
Windows provide little security. Although a burglar hesitates to break the glass, most window locks can be pried open with ease. Here are a few suggestions to appraise and possibly upgrade your current security.

1. **Most windows** — Nearly all types of windows can be pinned for security. Commercial pins are available, but large nails are just as effective and substantially less expensive. Simply drill a  $\frac{3}{16}$ " hole through the inside window frame and into (but not through) the outside frame. A nail or pin can then be placed in the hole to secure the window.



WINDOW PINNING

2. **Double hung windows** (those that slide up) — these can be secured by pinning, or by a commercial lock similar to the one illustrated.



ADD A LOCK

3. **Sliding aluminium windows** — these can also be secured by pinning a commercial lock or a “jimmy bar”.
4. **Basement windows** — special attention should be paid to securing these windows — they are a common point of entry for burglars. Pinning, commercial locks or “jimmy bars” can be used. Also, be aware that basement windows hidden by bushes or trees provide burglars an ideal place to work unobserved. Such windows should be replaced with Plexiglas, glass block or Lexan, or reinforced with decorative security bars. As well, seldom used basement windows should be permanently secured (unless needed as an emergency exit).

## Alarms

Alarms should always be used in addition to other security measures, and not be the only security measure. Alarm systems should be carefully chosen — there are many types of systems at various prices. When choosing an alarm company, its best to start by getting quotes from at least three different companies. Ensure that you're comparing the same components of the system, such as number of contacts, detectors, whether you are buying or leasing the system, monitoring fee, length of the contract, their false alarm policy, etc.

Be aware that there are municipal by-laws in effect for false alarms. For more information about the False Alarm Reduction By-Law, contact the Ottawa Police Alarm Management Section at 236-1222, Ext. 2531 (weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) or visit the Police Web site at [www.ottawapolice.ca](http://www.ottawapolice.ca)

## Operation Identification

Operation Identification is an effective and proven deterrent to theft. Offered through your local Community Police Centre (CPC), the program is designed to discourage theft of personal property. A personal identification number, usually driver's license number, is marked onto possessions. These items are then readily identifiable by the property owner and the police.

Personal property can be engraved, marked or etched. Items with smooth hard surfaces such as electronic goods, bicycles and power tools may be engraved in an obvious location. Items such as china, clothing, in particular coats and paintings, may be marked with an indelible marker. Glass items may be etched with an etching pencil. A professional, such as a jeweller, should engrave silverware and jewellery.

A photographic and written inventory of all marked items should be kept. The inventory should include how and where the item was marked along with manufacturer's serial numbers for each specific item.

## OPSAD

The Ottawa Police Service Auto-Dialer (OPSAD) is a computerized system designed to contact households and businesses via the telephone and deliver voice messages. The program enhances communications between the police and the public by providing timely and localized crime and crime prevention information.

You must register for OPSAD by submitting a completed registration form available from your Block Captain or through your local CPC. It's a free service. Once your contact information is added to a database, you'll be notified of occurrences such as a break & enters, missing persons, emergencies or any other situation where information sharing can help improve safety or reduce crime.

When the OPSAD makes a phone call, you simply listen to a recorded message and use the information to your best advantage. The message is always repeated twice, and OPSAD calls only happen between the 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.

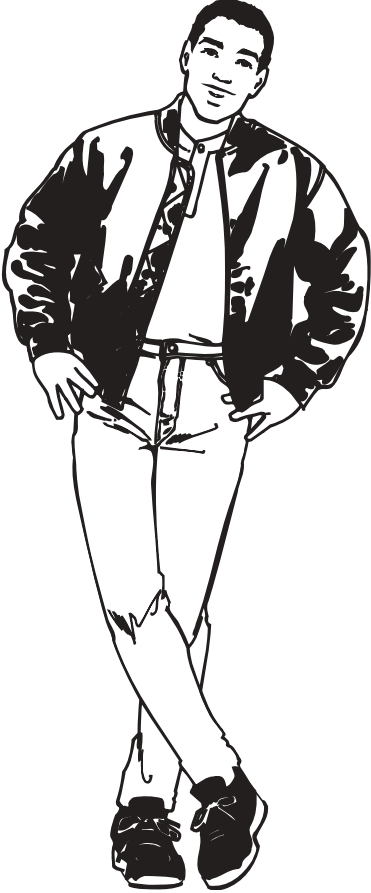
## Other Resources

Want to know more about Crime Prevention? Contact your local Community Police Centre. See the "Red Pages" in the Ottawa telephone directory or visit the Police Web site at [www.ottawapolice.ca](http://www.ottawapolice.ca) for a full list of Ottawa Police services and contact information.


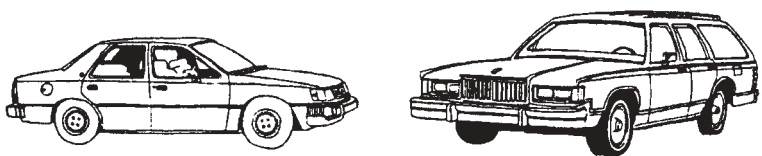
To make sure your home is not an easy target for criminals, ask for the pamphlet called *Crime Prevention at Home*. You can also take advantage of the Ottawa Police's Home Security Inspection Program where, at your request, police representatives will visit your home (house, condo, apartment, etc.) to provide a free safety audit — assessing ways to make your home safer.



# Suspect and Vehicle Identification

<b>Sex – Sexe</b> <input type="checkbox"/> male <i>homme</i> <input type="checkbox"/> female <i>femme</i>	<b>Age</b> <i>Âge</i>	<b>Height</b> <i>Taille</i>	<b>Weight</b> <i>Poids</i>	<b>Race</b>
<b>Hair – Cheveux</b> (colour/style) (couleur et coupe)	<b>General Appearance</b> <i>Apparence générale</i> 			<b>Hat – Chapeau</b> (colour/type) (couleur et genre)
<b>Eyes – Yeux</b> (glasses) (lunettes)				<b>Coat</b> <i>Manteau</i>
<b>Complexion</b> <i>Teint</i>				<b>Shirt</b> <i>Chemise</i>
<b>Jewellery</b> <i>Bijoux</i>				<b>Trousers</b> <i>Pantalons</i>
<b>Scars/marks</b> <i>Cicatrices et marques</i>				<b>Shoes</b> <i>Chaussures</i>
<b>Tattoos</b> <i>Tatouages</i>				<b>Tie</b> <i>Cravate</i>

# Identification d'un suspect ou d'un véhicule

Facial appearance <i>Tête et visage</i>		List Facial details <i>Traits du visage</i>
	Skin/hair colour – <i>Couleur de la peau et des cheveux</i>	_____
	Hair texture and style <i>Texture des cheveux et coupe</i>	_____
	Wrinkles <i>Rides</i>	_____
	Shape of eyebrow <i>Forme des sourcils</i>	What the suspect said <i>Propos du suspect</i>
	Size and shape of eye <i>Dimension et forme des yeux</i>	_____
	Ear size and shape – <i>Dimension et forme des oreilles</i>	_____
	Cheeks (full or sunken) <i>Joues (rondes ou creuses)</i>	Tool or weapon seen <i>Outils ou armes que vous avez remarqués</i>
	Nose – <i>Nez</i>	_____
	Mouth and lips <i>Bouche et lèvres</i>	_____
	Facial hair <i>Barbe, moustache, etc.</i>	_____
Neck and Adams apple <i>Cou et pomme d'Adam</i>	_____	
Vehicle – <i>Véhicule</i>		
		
Colour <i>Couleur</i>	Make <i>Marque</i>	Model <i>Modèle</i>
Licence # <i>N° d'immatriculation</i>		Body style <i>Type de carrosserie</i>
Damage/rust <i>Dommages et rouille</i>		Antenna <i>Antenne</i>
Bumper sticker <i>Affichettes</i>		Wheel covers <i>Enjoliveurs de roues</i>
Direction of travel <i>Direction empruntée</i>		# of passengers <i>N<sup>bre</sup> de passagers</i>





## Block Captain

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Coordinator

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Notes

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_


**Make the Right Call!**

Every call is important, but not all calls are life-threatening, and not all calls are police emergencies. Whatever the case, we're here to help. You have a role to play: "Make the Right Call."

**9-1-1**

Life-threatening  
Emergency or  
Crime in Progress

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TTY  232-1123  
Other Emergencies

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Community Police  
Centres and all  
other enquiries