

# Reporting Crime and Suspicious Activity



## No crime is ever too small to report.

Every crime should be reported. This is very important for several reasons:

- It helps investigators do their job, because more trends can be discovered.
- It gives a far more accurate picture of true crime in the city.
- It helps law enforcement in the field when they come into contact with a suspect in possession of possible stolen property.
- It shows criminals that crime is not tolerated, and is taken seriously.
- Don't assume that your neighbors have already reported a crime or that law enforcement already knows. Report criminal or suspicious activity each and every time it occurs.

## What phone number do you call?



**EMERGENCY**  
**911**  
**NON-EMERGENCY**  
**272-2400**

### Emergency Services vs. Non-Emergency Services

If you have an **emergency** please call **911**. An emergency can be:

- A medical emergency such as a heart attack or a traffic collision with injuries.
- A fire emergency if something is on fire.
- You see a crime in progress.
- You see someone attempting to commit a crime such as someone breaking into a neighbor's house or car.

### Non-Emergency Service – 272-2400

All non-emergency calls should be directed to the Palmdale Sheriff Station business line, **272-2400**.

### **DO NOT use 911 when reporting crimes such as:**

- A crime that already occurred and the suspects are gone, such as finding your car broken into.
- Suspicious activity occurring and you are not sure if a crime is being or about to be committed.
- Neighborhood nuisance issues such as a loud party.
- Illegal dumping.
- During a big emergency such as an earthquake, only use 911 if you are reporting a life-threatening emergency.

### **Things that might signal a crime:**

- Slow moving vehicles, vehicles without lights, and/or the course followed appears aimless or repetitive. This is suspicious in any location, but particularly in schools, parks, and playgrounds.
- Vehicles being loaded with valuables are suspicious if parked in front of a closed business or untended residence, even if the vehicle is a legitimate looking commercial unit – possibly even bearing a sign identifying it as a repair vehicle or moving van.
- Abandoned vehicles.
- Persons peering into parked cars or trying door handles on several vehicles parked in the area.
- Anyone removing accessories, license plates or gasoline from a car.
- Apparent business transactions conducted from a vehicle.
- Persons being forced into vehicles, especially if juvenile or female.
- Parked, occupied vehicles containing one or more persons that do not belong in the area.
- Property carried by persons on foot, especially questionable if the person is running.
- Property being removed from a residence whose owners are know to be absent.
- Someone going door-to-door in a residential area; if after a few houses are visited, one or more suspects

goes into a back or side yard. Even more suspicious if another waits in the front when this occurs.

- Open or broken windows at a residence whose owner is temporarily absent.
- Unusual smells coming from a location.
- Continuous traffic that comes and goes to the same location, usually staying for very short periods of time.
- Unusual noise, activity or screaming.

### **How to report suspicious activity or crime in progress:**

1. Call the appropriate phone number, either "911" or "272-2400."
2. Briefly describe the event (resist the desire to "tell a story"); state concisely what happened, where (location – address or nearest cross streets), when, and who was involved.
3. State if the crime is in progress or if it has already occurred.
4. Be prepared to provide as complete a description as possible of any suspects. Describe the suspect's sex, race, age, height, weight, hair color, clothing, and any distinctive characteristics such as facial hair, scars, tattoos or accents.
5. If there is a vehicle involved, describe the color, make, model, year, license plate, and special features such as stickers, dents or decals.
6. If the vehicle and/or suspect leaves the location, note the approximate time which direction they headed.
7. If you are calling to report a problem and the situation changes before the deputy arrives, call back and provide the updated information, this may change the priority level in regard to the response from the Sheriff's Department. For example: You initially reported loud noises, which sounded like people arguing at your next-door neighbor's home. Now you hear someone screaming, possibly thumps, bumps, or gunshots. The argument has definitely escalated and law enforcement needs to be advised of the change, which will determine their ability to respond appropriately. Anytime the original situation you called about changes, it is important that you call the station and provide updated information.

### **Can I report crime or suspicious activity anonymously?**

Yes. When you call "911" the address of the location of the phone automatically appears on the 911 Operator's computer screen. When you call the Palmdale Station business line (272-2400), the dispatcher has no information other than what you provide. Be aware that when you call from a cell phone, regardless of what number you dial, your location is not known to the operator. Regardless of the number you call, you may request to be an "anonymous informant."

Instead of being an anonymous informant, we recommend that you do the following when you call: provide your name and phone number BUT tell the dispatcher that you, "**Do not want the deputy to contact you in person.**" This means that the deputy will not come to your house. By following this process, it provides the Sheriff's Department the opportunity to contact you by phone in the event they need additional information, which may help them resolve the issue. Requiring additional information is a common occurrence, often when an informant calls they may leave out information that could be important to the deputy.

Ultimately, it is your choice if you choose to remain anonymous. The most important choice is to actually make the call and advise the Sheriff's Department of the problem. Give them the opportunity to handle the problem before it escalates or continues to the point that the quality of life for yourself and your neighbors has been adversely affected.

**If you have additional questions about reporting crime and suspicious activity, please contact the City of Palmdale's Neighborhood Services office at 661/267-5170, or the Palmdale Sheriff's Station at 661/272-2400.**



Department of Neighborhood Services

[www.cityofpalmdale.org](http://www.cityofpalmdale.org) · [neighborhoodwatch@cityofpalmdale.org](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@cityofpalmdale.org) or [crimeprevention@cityofpalmdale.org](mailto:crimeprevention@cityofpalmdale.org)