



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

Sheriff Curtis L. Landers
225 W. Olive Street
Newport, Oregon 97365
(541) 265-4277
Fax (541) 265-4926

TIP OF THE WEEK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Sheriff Curtis Landers
541-265-0654
lcsheriff@co.lincoln.or.us

RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING DRUG ACTIVITY

Drug activity exacts a significant toll on everyone in our society, not just drug abusers, their families and friends. This problem can contribute to homelessness, crime, problems at school and the workplace, as well as healthcare costs. Some of the impacts include:

- Illness from short & long term drug use; injury or death from overdoses.
- Increased crime and fear of crime causing people to withdraw from community life.
- Traffic hazards due to impaired driving.
- Abuse and neglect of children, seniors and pets; aggravation of domestic violence; assaults and drug-related homicides.
- Damage to property from neglect, contamination, fires, explosions and theft of services such as electricity and water.
- Contamination of natural areas.
- Livability impacts such as trash, noise and other issues.

There are a number of signs listed below that indicate drug activity at a location. When there are only one or two signs, the explanation may not be related to illegal activity. For example, frequent visits to a house may be attributable to a large and sociable family or a resident who is operating a legitimate business out of the home.

Getting to know your neighbors and the routines of the neighborhood will help you better define what is going on and understand the activities in your neighborhood. When you observe a number of the following activities present at a location, this may reveal that you are seeing illegal drug activity.

Possible signs that in combination may indicate drug sales:

- There are numerous short visits to the location by people in vehicles, on bicycles and/or on foot.
- Money or small packages are exchanged.
- The suspected dealer approaches parked vehicles, pedestrians or bicyclists and engages in brief encounters with the driver, passenger or pedestrian.
- Cars frequently drive slowly by the location.
- Visitors park their cars a few blocks away and walk to the location.
- Visitors bring personal property such as electronic devices and leave without them.
- People appear to be acting as lookouts. For example, one person may wait outside while another enters the home.
- Occupants and/or visitors display behaviors that may include aggression, hyperactivity, paranoia, irritability or other odd behaviors.
- Shades or blinds are constantly drawn even though a house is occupied.
- Unusually extensive security measures are taken at a house.
- Visitors knock on a neighbor's door mistaking it for the suspicious house.
- Drug paraphernalia is found at or near the location, such as: very small zip-lock plastic baggies; small bundled or twisted pieces of cellophane; small pieces of balloon; hypodermic needles and needle caps; small glass vials or pipes; or small pieces of Brillo pads.
- The neighborhood is experiencing elevated levels of crime in the surrounding area, such as burglaries, car prowls and identity theft.

Any information you can provide to the authorities that will prevent further drug activity is absolutely helpful. The following are a few details that will ensure your anonymous tip is as effective as possible. If you have the information, try to include:

- The address where you suspect drug activity
- Full names of the people you suspect
- Related vehicles' color, make, model, license plate
- When people come and go, how long they stay, how often they appear
- Information about any packages being exchanged
- If the location is a house, provide the name (or names) of people living there
- Are there children? Dogs?
- Is there anything else authorities should know about the location?

Suspicious activity alone does not mean the police can shut down an alleged drug house. Only after law enforcement has gathered enough reliable information about a problem location will they possibly be able to obtain a search warrant to enter the premises and look for evidence that could lead to prosecution.

For more information and tips, visit our website at www.lincolncountysheriff.net and "Like" us on Facebook at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office – Oregon.