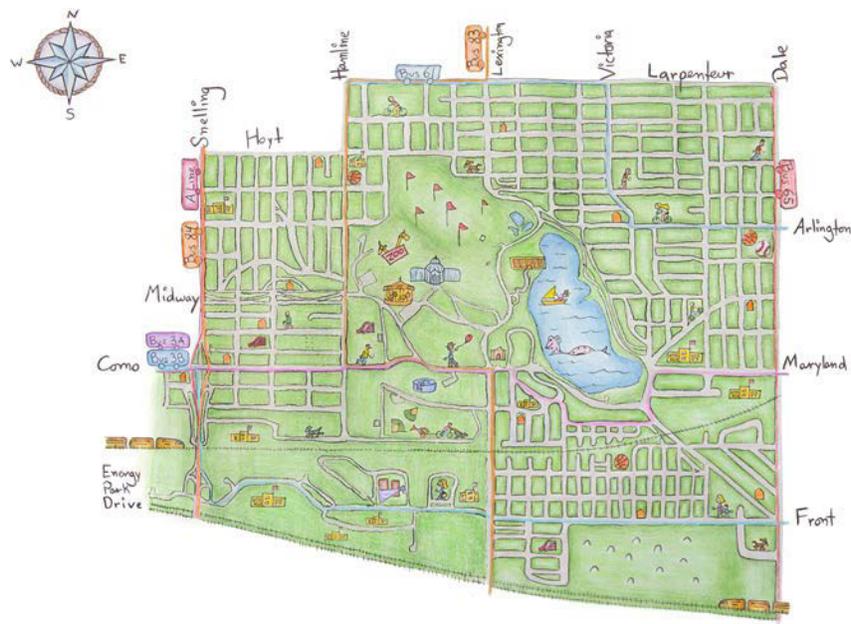


Building a better Como for all of us



Three steps
(and a lot of practical advice)
for a safe and enjoyable neighborhood

Only we can prevent crime

Step One

Police don't prevent crime. We do. It starts with knowing our neighbors and building better community. Here's how. (See Page 3)

Step Two

If we see (or hear) something suspicious, call the police. Immediately. Focus on behavior. We can't say, "This person is suspicious." But what they are *doing* certainly can be suspicious. Here's how to tell the difference – then do something about it. (See Page 5)

Step Three

To prevent crime, stop being clueless. Many crimes – burglaries, vehicle break-ins, auto thefts – are crimes of opportunity. We give criminals the opportunity; they take it. When criminals know there are opportunities, it makes our entire neighborhood more vulnerable. Here's how we become part of the solution, not part of the problem. (See Page 10)

Step One:

Be a diligent observer

Simple fact: Police don't prevent crime. We do.

Police can't be everywhere. If we want a safe neighborhood, it's up to us to look out for each other. It starts with knowing our neighbors. If we don't know who lives next door, or across the street, or across the alley, or across the hall, how do we know if they belong there? Or not? How do we know which cars are local? Or not?

One: Start with our block diagram.

- Photocopy the "Our Block" diagram on the next page. Piece them together, and adapt as many diagrams as you need so they match the configuration of where you live. Some blocks connect with neighbors across the street. Some connect with neighbors across the alley. Some do both.

Two: Write down addresses for all your neighbors.

- This helps you connect your block. Plus, it helps give police a specific address if it ever becomes necessary to call 911.

Three: Meet Your Neighbors.

- Go door to door. If you can, enlist a neighbor you already know to help you out.

- Introduce yourself. Explain what you're doing: that you're collecting contact information you all can use to watch out for each other.
- Try to meet and get the names of everyone who lives there – adults and children.
- Get a phone number to call and/or a number to text. Get an email if that works.
- If you want to go further: Get the make, model and descriptions of the vehicles they drive. The names of their dogs. Take pictures of each other. Anything that will help you connect more.
- Don't hesitate to share your information with them. Promise them they'll get a copy of the block diagram when it's done.
- Ask them to give you names of neighbors you haven't met yet – or to take a few minutes to introduce you directly.
- New to the neighborhood? A current block leader or organizer may come to your door, introduce himself or herself, collect your contact information, and add it to

the existing block diagram. Ask for a copy to hang on your fridge.

floor by floor rather than street by street.

Renters: Use this same approach where you live. Collect information

Our Block

Address:
Name(s):

Phone:

Street/Alley:

Address:
Name(s):

Phone:

Street/Alley:

Address:
Name(s):

Phone:

Street/Alley:

Building better community

Creating a formal block club or neighborhood watch is a great way to know our neighbors and look out for each other. But it doesn't have to be that structured: We can meet each other and build better community in more casual ways, too.

- Sit on our front porch or front lawn. Say "hi" to anyone who walks by.
- Clean up litter to keep our yards, street, and alley looking good. Well-maintained grounds can signal to criminals that this neighborhood takes care of itself.
- Shovel a neighbor's sidewalk (especially if they're a senior).
- Host a game night, bonfire, or "Flamingo Friday."
- Organize a cookie exchange or potluck dinner.
- Rake leaves out of the curb and gutter in fall; it helps keep the lake and river cleaner. (See www.comoacn.org to find out more.)
- Go for a walk – with or without a dog – even where there are no sidewalks.
- Put out chalk for children to use.
- Check on each other's homes when you're gone for the weekend or longer. Pick up papers. Pick up mail. Shovel snow.
- Organize – or attend -- a block party or National Night Out event.

Enjoy parties?

Block parties can be as simple as setting up a grill, chairs, and tables in someone's yard. Or we can get more official and get permits to close off the entire street or alley. (The full application is part of this packet.)

- A block party permit costs \$50.
- You've got to apply at least 60 days before your event.
- You've got to get signatures from at least 60 percent of your affected neighbors.
- If you're blocking a street or alley, you've also got to get barricades.

You can rent barricades from Public Works. Or, you can rent them for much cheaper from District 10; make your reservation by calling us at 651-644-3889 or emailing us at district10@district10comopark.org.

National Night Out

Hundreds of blocks in Saint Paul participate in National Night Out, which is always the first Tuesday of August. You can register your National Night Out event online at <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/police/national-night-out/national-night-out-registration>

Barricading your street for a National Night Out event requires the same permits as any other block party. (*But permits are not required if your party sticks to lawns and sidewalks.*)

Step Two:

We're in this together

Simple fact: If we see (or hear) something suspicious, do have to do something about it:

1. Pay attention.
2. Call the police.
3. Alert our neighbors.

(Note the order: Call police, then alert neighbors. If it worries you enough that it's worth sending a text or posting your concern on social media, it's worth calling the police first. Too many times, people second-guess themselves and don't call. Police will tell you: "Call. Don't worry about bothering us -- that's our job.")

What's suspicious?

People are not suspicious. But what they are doing can be.

People walking down the alley is not automatically suspicious. People walking down the alley looking into cars, trying to open doors, or walking into yards *is* suspicious.

Calling the police in the first case can be profiling. Calling the police in the second case is being smart. Don't focus on people. Instead ...

Focus on behavior.

Suspicious behavior is what it is; it doesn't matter who is involved. If you see something suspicious:

- Ask what's going on.
- Call it in.
- Take notes.
- Take pictures (if comfortable).
- **But:** Don't confront people; your safety is more important.

If you see a crime or suspicious activity, call 911 first.

"If you don't call it in, we don't know about it," police say. "If we don't know, it's like it never happened."

Calls help police track activity and patterns. That helps us get more patrols if necessary.

After you call – and only after you call – then go on social media if you have to. Always call first, post second.

Examples of suspicious activity:

- Someone loitering in your neighborhood without an apparent destination or reason.
- Someone clearly needs police, fire, or medical assistance.
- You hear glass breaking or an alarm going off.
- Someone is conducting what appears to be a business transaction from a vehicle.
- Someone is looking into yards, or trying to open doors or windows of a house, garage, or automobile.
- You see someone with a weapon.
- An abandoned vehicle is parked on public property for more than 48 hours without moving.

911 basics

- When you see a crime in progress, or see an obvious emergency (fights, fires, violence), call 911. (If it is unsafe for you to call 911, text 911 instead – be sure to give your location and the type of emergency.)

- If the situation is less obvious, call 911 anyway. Let the dispatcher decide if it's an emergency or not.
- Squad cars are dispatched based on a strict priority list. Your call is probably not the only thing going on, or the highest priority. Be patient.
- If you come across a burglary, theft or other crime that has already happened, you can file a report online at: www.stpaul.gov/departments/police/file-police-report

Just so you know:

- 911 calls from a land line go to a centralized Ramsey County dispatch center.
- 911 calls from a mobile phone to a statewide dispatch center first. Then they are re-routed to Ramsey County. That takes longer.
- The quickest solution: **If you're calling from a cell phone in the City of St. Paul, call 651-291-1111.** That connects you directly to Ramsey County dispatchers, who are connected directly to Saint Paul police.

Other police numbers

www.stpaul.gov/departments/police/emergency-notification-system

- Saint Paul non-emergency number: 651-291-1111
- Saint Paul Park Security: 651-646-3535
- Western District Police Headquarters: 651-266-5512
- Parking enforcement: 651-266-5585 or 651-291-1111 (Examples: When a car is parked illegally; blocking a driveway, alley, or sidewalk; or is parked on public property for more than 48 hours without moving.)
- Traffic enforcement: 651-266-5721 (Saint Paul Police have cars dedicated exclusively to enforcing speed limits, stop signs, and other traffic laws. If you want increased enforcement at a specific stretch of street or intersection, call 651-266-5721 to make your request. For best results, give them specific days, specific times of day, and the specific type of bad driving that you witness too often.)

Emergency Alerts

Residents and businesses can sign up to be notified when there is an imminent threat to safety in a geographic area you specify. Situations can include active shooter events, searches for violent suspects, or other events that impact public safety or require public awareness. You will receive emergency alerts on a land line or cell phone, through text message, through email, or multiple sources, in the order you prefer. Get more information or sign up online at:

Problem Properties: Our choices

Problem properties are among the toughest issues to deal with. Neighbors need patience and persistence. We need to cooperate with each other, with police, and with city zoning inspectors, too. Maybe even with a city attorney. It all takes time.

In everyday terms, you probably know a problem property when you see it. It affects everyone's quality of life. It could be people coming and going all the time. Loud parties. Constant traffic. There might be an absentee landlord. Upkeep and maintenance might be a joke. The yard might even be dangerous. But when you ask people to keep it down, or clean up their act, it doesn't happen.

What's going on inside could be drug sales. Prostitution. Drug manufacturing. All of the above. Or maybe none of the above.

As neighbors, when being polite doesn't work, we either decide we're going to put up with it – or we're not. If we're not going to put up with it, we've got to follow a specific process to get the problem taken care of.

Nothing happens unless we call the police. Not just one of us. All of us. There is no magic number to achieve success. Just keep calling. We have to be specific. What did we see? When did we see it? Then repeat the next time the problem happens. And repeat. And repeat.

Who to call

- Saint Paul Police: 911 (crimes in progress)
- Saint Paul Police FORCE Unit: 651-266-5712 (ongoing behavior issues with a problem property, such as suspected drug sales)
- Saint Paul building inspectors: 651-266-8989 (property problems such as trash, overgrown lawns, or unshoveled sidewalks)

Resources for Landlords

More than 3,000 property owners are part of the Saint Paul Police Department's **Landlord Alert** program for rental properties. The program automatically sends a notice any time police respond to a call at a registered property. It's a great way for landlords and property managers to track whether they have problem tenants in their building. It can help landlords implement leases that make it easier to oust tenants who engage in criminal activity. To sign up, call 651-266-5712 or email centralforce@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Saint Paul Police also offer a **Crime Free Rental Housing Program** that provides extensive training for property managers, especially of multi-family buildings, on-site visits, and safety training for tenants. For details, call 651-266-5994.

Problem Properties: Our goals

1. Get enough calls on record – and police responding often enough – that it triggers the FORCE unit to get involved. That’s how police and the city attorney build a criminal case if necessary. It can take them time to pursue the necessary surveillance, undercover work, evictions, and other tactics.

2. Get enough calls on record – and build enough of a case – that the city goes after the owner. It’s not just police. City building inspectors get involved to enforce code. Maybe the fire department, too. Combined, they can flag the property for “excessive consumption.” That’s a legal definition (and it has nothing to do with too much alcohol). It means the property is eating up more city services than normal. It can be the behavior of the residents. It can be cars parked in the yard or an unmowed lawn. The owner gets 30 days to fix the problems – or the city starts charging the owner for these “excessive” services. Landlords, in particular, aren’t happy when their bank account takes a hit.

3. Get enough calls on record that the city declares the property a “public nuisance.” Once again, the owner gets 30 days to fix the problems. This time, however, if the owner fails to do so, the city attorney can get the occupancy permit yanked. That shuts the building down for one year. That’s the outline. In practice, it can take months. Timelines and a way forward can be complicated. It can depend on whether the property is rental or owner-occupied. But, with tenacity and cooperation, it works.

About Your Suspicions

individual situations to keep kids safe and out of the criminal justice system.

Scrapping

Scrappers -- those folks who ride around in overloaded pickup trucks stuffed with old appliances, scrap metal and more -- are part of the urban economy. Scrapping is not illegal, but it can be a gray area.

- The rule of thumb: If scrappers go onto private property, they've crossed the line. (Especially if they go into a fenced yard or an open garage)
- It is illegal for scrappers to pick stuff out of city recycling carts or out of roll-offs.

If you don't mind scrappers taking what you've set out, put it in the alley or on the curb with a "free" sign. Give them permission if that opportunity comes around. (Remember -- if it doesn't disappear, it's up to you to pay to get your own junk hauled away.)

Abandoned vehicles

A vehicle is considered abandoned if it is left parked illegally on public property for more than 48 hours. To get it taken care of, call 651-291-1111. Take down the make, model and license number before you call it in.

Curfew

Children younger than 15 can't be out past 10 p.m. in Saint Paul; 16- and 17-year-olds can't be out on their own past midnight. Think you see a violation? Call 651-291-1111. Police have a special program to deal with curfew violations that addresses

Describing Suspects

When you call 911, stay on the line. Give the dispatcher specific and accurate descriptions of what you see.

- Focus on descriptions such as sex, race, age, and height. (Tip: Don't try to guess someone's height: Describe it in relation to other people or objects.)
- Pay attention to clothes, shoes, and hats – what style they are, what color they are.
- Notice hair color and length, whether they wear glasses, whether they have facial hair or an unusual complexion.
- Look for identifying features such as scars, tattoos, dental work, piercings, or jewelry.
- Does the person have an accent or unusual odor?
- Describe how many people you see.
- Give as much vehicle information as you can. Focus on make, model, color, anything that's distinct about accessories or condition, and license plates (even partial numbers help)
- Keep the "Describe the Suspects" tip sheet (*next page*) handy. Use it as an outline for what to pay attention to.

Step Three: No opportunities

Simple fact: To prevent crime, we have to stop being naïve or overly trustful.

Many crimes – especially burglaries, vehicle break-ins, and auto thefts – are crimes of opportunity. We give criminals the opportunity; they take it.

- We leave valuables where anyone can see them or swipe them.
- We leave our doors, windows, and garages wide open -- or cracked just enough that someone can pry their way in.
- We don't lock our cars, our homes, or our garages.
- We ignore people doing suspicious things because we don't want to be involved. Or we want to be polite.

We can change that. We can start applying common sense. That makes us part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Crime Prevention Tips

Garages

An open garage door is an open invitation to thieves. If they don't take anything now, they'll be back – because they now have seen what you store inside.

- Don't leave your main overhead door or your side service door open, even if you are working nearby.
- When you drive away, stick around long enough to make sure the overhead door actually closes.
- Cover your garage windows so thieves can't peer inside.
- If your garage has glass windows, mount plexiglass behind them
- Lock up bicycles, power tools, and other valuables -- even if you already keep them in a locked garage or shed. Securing

them (such as with a bike lock or chain and padlock) adds another layer of protection

- If your garage door remote is stolen or disappears, reprogram your overhead door opener so the missing remote no longer works.

Renters: If you live in an apartment complex with underground or enclosed parking, keep an eye on the garage door when you leave and when you enter. Doors to parking garages are easy entry points for burglars. They can hang around until the door opens, then quickly duck inside. Once a burglar is in the garage, it's easy pickings for vehicles, storage lockers, or even residential areas.

Understanding the Difference

Burglary: Anytime a criminal enters a building with the intent of committing a theft

or other crime.

Robbery: Anytime a criminal takes property directly from another person through force, intimidation, or coercion.

Theft: Anytime a criminal takes property that does not belong to him or her; theft (unlike robbery) does not involve personal interaction.

Burglary: Residential

It takes only seconds for burglars to walk in and grab valuables, or cut a screen, lift a window, and take what's available. Don't give burglars the chance. Even if you are doing yard work, talking with neighbors over the fence, or taking out the trash or recycling:

- Lock your doors (and latch your windows) any time you step outside.
- Never leave phones, wallets, purses, keys, or other valuables close to a door or window.
- Never leave your garage doors open.
- Make your home appear occupied, even if you're not there. Put lights and a TV
- Install an alarm system (or get a dog).

they confront you, give them the property they ask for.

Confronting a burglar

Don't. Burglars typically do not expect anyone to be home. They want to steal property; they rarely expect to confront anyone or hurt anyone. However, if someone you don't know enters your home:

- Call or text 9-1-1 and give your address immediately. Tell the operator what you think is happening.
- Stay as quiet as possible until police arrive. Be aware of what you hear and see. If the burglar flees before police arrive, remember which direction they fled.
- Don't be a hero -- your life is worth more than your property. Do not confront the suspect. If

Don't take chances

- Lock your storm doors anytime you are inside. That way, when you answer the door, someone can't easily force their way in.
- Never let a stranger or unexpected visitor into your house. If someone you don't know comes to your door, talk to them through the door.
- Be suspicious if someone knocks on your door and asks for someone who does not live there, or asks if you need work done around the house. It's a common way for burglars to case the place before breaking in. Call 911, describe what happened, and give a description of the person, their vehicle, and their behavior.

Keep records

- Keep an up-to-date inventory – on paper, computer, or the cloud – of

Auto theft

Can you say common sense? The No. 1 rule to reduce your chances of becoming a victim of auto theft: Lock. Your. Car.

- Rule 1A: Take your key with you every time -- even if you're out of the car "just for a minute."
- Rule 1B: Do not leave your car running to "warm up" with your keys in. It literally takes only seconds for someone to jump in and drive off -- or swipe valuables -- while you stand by helplessly. Besides, leaving keys in a vehicle is illegal in Saint Paul. And who needs another ticket and trip down to police headquarters? (You *can* use a remote starter to warm up your car; you *cannot*

key documents; credit cards; electronics, tools, and bikes; (including serial numbers); and furniture (indoors and out). Keep a copy outside the house.

Insurance companies often have inventory sheets you can use.

- Photograph valuables such as jewelry, coins, and memorabilia. Keep valuables in a safe.

Request a premise survey

Saint Paul Police can provide a free premise survey to make your home more secure. They'll examine doors, windows, and landscaping, then provide recommendations for things you can do inside and out. Some are inexpensive, such as putting longer screws into the strike plate of doors. To schedule your free survey, call 651-266-5485.

keep your car running with the keys in it.)

To further protect yourself:

- If your vehicle is stolen, inform police immediately. Stolen vehicles often are used to commit other illegal activities.
- The sooner you report that your car is stolen, the better the odds of getting it back. Don't wait until you find your title to report the theft.
- Do not leave the vehicle title in the car. Keep it secure at home or in a safe deposit box.
- Have a record of your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and a complete description of your vehicle.

- Never leave an identification tag with your name and address on your key ring. If your keys are lost or stolen, an ID tag can help a thief burglarize your home, too.

Theft From Autos

Breaking into cars is another common crime of opportunity. To deter criminals:

- Lock your doors.
- Roll up your windows.
- Whenever possible, don't park your car outside.
- Don't keep valuables in the vehicle. Definitely don't keep them in sight. This includes your automatic garage door opener
- If you move valuables out of the car and into the trunk, do so *before* you get to your destination. That way, thieves can't see what you're trying to hide.
- If you're on a shopping trip, whenever possible, drop new purchases off at home before you continue shopping.

These are the items thieves steal most often from vehicles in Saint Paul:

- Mobile phones
- GPS units and radar detectors
- iPods and other MP3 players
- Tablet and laptop computers
- Purses, wallets, and checkbooks
- Gym bags, back packs, and brief cases
- Camera gear
- Jewelry
- Tool boxes and power tools
- Cash -- even spare change

Garage door remotes

Don't leave them in your car. If someone rifles through your car and you're checking to see if anything is missing, don't forget to check for your automatic garage door opener. Thieves love to steal the remote, then come back at another time to clean out your garage.

Don't leave the remote visible in your car – even away from home. Why? Because most of us have something in the car with our address on it. An enterprising thief can pop the lock, pocket the remote, write down your address, then get into your garage anytime it suits their schedule.

Package Theft

Package theft never goes out of season. It is the definition of a crime of opportunity. The sad truth is, thieves often shadow delivery trucks, write down addresses, then come back later to swipe the delivery. Here's how to minimize chances of being a victim. When you order online or over the phone:

- Ask for a tracking number. If the tracking report says your package was delivered, but it's not at your door, check with a neighbor to see if they're holding it. If not, call the police and the sender immediately.
- Whenever possible, request the "signature required" option. That way, the package won't be delivered unless someone signs for it.
- Request that your package be left at a side or back door, to reduce its visibility.
- Don't have the package delivered to your home at all. Instead:

- Get your packages delivered to your workplace or to a relative or neighbor who is home during the day.
- Have the shipping service hold your package at their nearest customer service center so you can pick it up on your schedule. Examples:
 - The Postal Service can hold packages at the nearest post office
 - UPS has a customer center on Broadway St. in Minneapolis (just west of Highway 280). You can also utilize a retail stores near District 10, such as 1760 N. Lexington in Roseville (about a block north of Larpenteur) or 1360 W. University in Saint Paul (near Hamline)
 - Fed Ex has a ship center on Walnut St. (near the junction of 280 and Interstate 35W)
 - Amazon can deliver packages to secure “lockers” at public locations, including nearby Herberger’s and Whole Foods stores

How we can help each other out:

- Look out for packages delivered to your neighbors. If you know your neighbor isn’t home, take custody of their package. (Of course, you’ll want to text them or email them to let them know you have the package.)
- If you see someone stealing a package, call 911 immediately.

On vacation?

Heading out of town for a couple of days? A month? Do whatever you can to make burglars think twice about whether you are home or not.

- Sign up for the Saint Paul Police Department's free Vacation Watch. Reserve officers will check your home once a day while you're away. Just call 651-266-5485. (Be prepared to provide a list of people who have keys, or who will be checking on your pets, watering your plants, or otherwise have access.)
- Don't boast about your absence on social media. Criminals can monitor Next Door or Facebook for the opportunity to break in and walk off with your valuables.
- Hold your mail. (Sign up online at <https://holdmail.usps.com/holdmail>)
- Cancel newspaper deliveries.
- Set up timers on your lights, television, or radio.

- If you are robbed, call 9-1-1 immediately. That gives police a much better chance of tracking down the crook before they get too far.

Personal Safety

- Be alert to what's going on around you. Tuck your headphones and smart phones away so you can be aware of the situation you are in.
- Look around. Make eye contact with people. Criminals don't want to be identified; they'll move along.
- Practice describing to yourself the people around you. It keeps you alert. It also makes you more likely to provide a useful description if a crime does occur.
- Trust your instincts: If a situation does not feel safe, avoid it.

Patio Furniture

- Use plastic-coated cable to lock your furniture to heavy or immovable objects.
- If practical, move furniture indoors or into a locked shed when you're not using it.
- Keep gates closed (and locked if possible) overnight or when you're not home.
- Keep lights on in your yard at night, or install motion-activated lights; thieves don't like to be seen.
- Install motion detection alarms.
- Install security cameras.

Bicycle Theft

- Always bring your bike inside at night.
- Whenever your bike is not inside your home, lock it. If you store it in a garage or shed, lock it inside there, too. Lock it to something permanent such as a pipe or rafter.
- Use a high-quality lock. Avoid cable locks; they do not deter professionals. If possible, purchase a lock that is listed on the Sold Secure Gold list.
- Use two or three locks if possible: The more difficult you make it for the thief, the less interested they are.
- Never lock your bike to a tree.
- Don't just lock your frame; lock your wheels and your saddle, too, especially if they have quick release levers.
- Keep a file on all of your bikes. Include receipts, serial numbers, and photos. Register your bike on a nationwide database such as nationalbikeregistry.com