



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY
EXPERIMENT STATION

MAFES DAWG TRACKS

We are nearing the anniversary of the tragic terrorism from September 11, 2001, and there has been an obvious rise of civil unrest in our country. All this makes it the perfect time to reflect on “What can I do, personally, to help keep myself safe?”.

The answer – **Be observant!**

Whether at work, at home, or out in public; being fully aware of your surroundings helps prevent being caught off-guard. This constant awareness may give you the essential, additional time to react in a manner that deters a crime or prevents an accident before it happens to you.

Notice the unusual and take action.

Being proactive always puts you at an advantage over being reactive. For example if at work and equipment is making a strange sound or operating differently, stop to evaluate the problem and have it repaired.

If a co-worker is acting out of character, talk to them and see if there is something you can do to help. For your own safety, some situations may need to be reported to your supervisor or the police, or you may be able to handle and repair or address the situation yourself. Either way, take action; don't just ignore the unusual.

Have a plan.

Think of situations that could happen at work, driving down the road or just walking through a parking lot. Then “what if...” these scenarios and plan how you can best react. Forethought put into unusual situations will help you react quicker and more effectively resulting in a decreased opportunity for accident or crime.

Because of the daily activities, research, and chemicals in our work environments here at MSU, we should be especially observant of suspicious activity around laboratories and farms.

What is considered suspicious activity?

- **Unusual items or situations:** A vehicle is parked in an odd location, a package/luggage is unattended, a window/door is open that is usually closed, or other out-of-the-ordinary situations occur.
- **Eliciting information:** A person questions individuals at a level beyond curiosity about a building's purpose, operations, security procedures and/or personnel, shift changes, etc.
- **Observation/surveillance:** Someone pays unusual attention to facilities or buildings beyond a casual or professional interest. This includes extended loitering without explanation (particularly in concealed locations); unusual, repeated, and/or prolonged observation of a building (e.g., with binoculars or video camera); taking notes or measurements; counting paces; sketching floor plans, etc.

MSU-PD relays good advice:

“Public apathy is a criminal's greatest ally. If you see or suspect criminal activity, you cannot assume that someone else has reported it. Whether you are a victim or an observer, you should report any crime, suspicious activity, or emergency... remember, you don't need proof that a crime has occurred.”

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Sources:

<https://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something/what-suspicious-activity>

MSU Police – “Preventing Campus Crime”