



MESSAGE FROM THE WALSALL POLICE TO ALL MEMBERS OF PHANW. HOW TO KEEP YOURSELF AND YOUR COMMUNITY SAFE

In any **EMERGENCY** incident immediately **ring 999**

If an incident is not an emergency, has taken place previously, or the time is not known, ring 101 or use the webchat section on the West Midlands Police website.

Whenever possible you should always report wrongdoing to the Police instead of acting yourself. Sometimes the most casual engagement ends up with unintended circumstances. Your personal safety and that of others is a priority (**NEVER** compromise that).

When suspicious behaviour of a person(s) or vehicle(s) is seen you should look and observe, recording details of descriptions, locations, registration numbers etc. Ring the Police on the non-emergency number 101 or go online to the Police Webchat so that a log is created.

Stopping vehicles is **NOT** appropriate or safe. Any suspicious activity should be reported to the Police as soon as possible.

Stopping a member of the public who is on foot and who is acting suspiciously is **NOT** appropriate; again, please report any suspicious behaviour to the Police. However, it is a judgement call between keeping your distance for safety reasons, but also trying to engage with the person if they are vulnerable or need help, or intervening if member(s) of the public are in danger.

Asking people their name, or where they live, or what are they doing in the location is **NOT** appropriate. Better to try to strike up a general conversation.

Following other drivers who you feel are acting suspiciously is **NOT** appropriate. Best practice is to report what you have seen using the appropriate Police contacts. This way there should always be a police log created. Too many Police Officers and PCSOs get seriously injured when confronting members of the public in a vehicle. It is a potentially dangerous thing to do.

Should a PHANW WhatsApp message be sent out, for example a CODE RED - house burglary in process, the first thing to do is call the Police, and then, if safe to do so, ensure the resident is safe. If offenders are still in the location keep eyes on them and direct the Police to them on their arrival. **DO NOT** try to get hands on with any potential offender (you do not know who they are or what they may be carrying). Safety is always a priority no matter how understandable the urge is to detain the offender.

The public are our eyes and ears. We can't be everywhere at the same time and by working closely with Street Watch groups, Neighbourhood Watch organisations and other contacts within the community we can make a real and positive difference to the areas we live in. Any information our communities can give to us to prevent and detect crime is a massive help, but the information must not come with the risk of the public being put in a position of harm.

So, although some of this advice might seem restrictive, above all else and no matter what the best of intentions may be, personal safety should always come first.

In summary: If you feel the situation is a risk to you, step back, call 999, and report it to us. If there is no immediate threat or the incident occurred at another time, dial 101 or use the webchat section of the West Midlands Police website.

Thank you again for your continued support.

PCSO Tim Littlehales