

NTF: If the recruits have a difficult understanding this concept. Use the following information to explain in more depth.

Cops are on the hunt for suspiciousness: suspicious persons, suspicious vehicles, and suspicious circumstances. We use that word "suspicious" a lot. As a new officer, you may sometimes have trouble deciding what is or is not suspicious. There is no hard and fast rule as to what makes a person, vehicle, or situation "suspicious."

Here is a quick mental test, however: Think about John Q Public, the tax-paying librarian, who goes to bed by ten and watches must-see TV – your basic average citizen. Would HE be doing it? If the answer is "no" or "probably not," you've got something that's most likely suspicious.

It is your job to check on things that are out-of-place or abnormal. Regular citizens expect you to be doing this. Even the bad guys expect you to be doing this. When the bad guys see us coming, they are preparing to be contacted. It's how the game is played. We see them doing their thing, then we pounce. We start investigating and digging, looking for that violation or crime, running them for warrants. It's what we do.

QTC: What questions might you ask yourself to determine if something is suspicious?

AR: Does the person or vehicle look out-of-place?
Do people or cars usually park or hang out there?
Do the subjects have a guilty look on their face?
Do the subjects act differently when they see you?
Are they doing something that you would do?

Even if it's mildly suspicious, go ahead and check it out. Often times, major arrests are made and lives are saved by police officers who see something minor, and take the time to investigate. This is a valuable patrol function. Even if the contact never develops into anything, you have demonstrated to the citizen that the police are doing their job, and you get an on-view stat. Every contact you make increases the chances of you catching an offender. Everybody wins.