

Talk Time Topic: Police and Safety at Home

Let's get started... Together with the people in your group, make a list of what makes a neighborhood feel safe to live in.

Background:



This is a police officer for Bellevue, WA, a city of 117,000 residents. He is a patrol officer, and his job is responding to emergency calls, working to prevent drug crimes, traffic policing, and community policing.

Do the police in your home country have similar jobs? How are they different? Do they do other things?

Police tips for being safe at home

- Make sure your residence looks like somebody is at home (neat and clean; in good repair; lights on at night, etc.)
- Be a good neighbor. Get to know your neighbors and their habits so that you know when they usually come and go (and they can do the same for you).
- Lock your doors and windows, and make sure your address is easy to see.
- Introduce yourself to the officers who patrol your neighborhood.

Call the police if:

- You see a stranger entering your neighbor's house when no one is at home.
- You hear a scream.
- You see someone looking into parked cars.
- You see someone taking accessories, license plates or gasoline from a car.
- You see people entering or leaving a business place after hours.
- You hear the sound of broken glass or other loud bangs or unusual noises.
- You see people loitering around schools, parks or secluded areas, or in your neighborhood.
- You see people moving around your neighborhood who do not live there.

In pairs for 5 minutes, ask and answer these questions:

Did you ever see or hear anything dangerous (either here or in your home country?)
Did you call the police for help? What happened? Tell your partner about it.

Share your partner's answers with the group.

Discussion Questions:

What are the police like in your home country? Do people feel comfortable talking to them?

Did you feel safe in your home country?

Do you feel safe in the U.S.? Why or why not? What would make you feel safer?

Do you think it is safer in the city or in the country? In the city or in a small town?

When do you see police in your neighborhood?

If a policeman comes to your home, you do not need to let him in unless he has a warrant – a special paper from the court. You can ask to see the policeman's identification and the warrant.

Can you think of some good ways to stay safe

- When you are walking or jogging?
- When you are home alone?
- When you are in the park with your children or grandchildren?
- When you are going somewhere late at night?

What are some things to be cautious of?

When you call the police about something that happened, answer these questions:

- What happened?
- When?
- Where?
- Is anyone injured?
- Vehicle license plate number
- Direction of flight (escape)
- Description of people or vehicles

When describing suspects, notice age, race, sex, hairstyle and color, height and weight. Compare your height and weight to theirs. Look for some unique characteristic that will help to identify the suspect later. An obvious indicator, such as a piece of clothing, allows a quick identification by police.

What are some words that describe race?

What are some words to describe hairstyles (or facial hair?)

In pairs, practice describing each other as if you were giving a description to the police. (Ask your teacher to do an example for you first.) Tell your description to the group.

Look around the room and try to describe another person. Try not to look at the person when you talk. See if your group can guess who it is.

Bellevue residents can contact the police department online to ask questions, make a complaint, ask for help with traffic in their neighborhoods, and more at <http://www.ci.bellevue.wa.us/page.asp?view=8539>

Residents of other cities can also find police information online by going to their cities' home pages on the Internet.

New words and Idioms: officer, prevent, crimes, cop, residence, accessories, after hours, secluded, cautious, suspicious, suspects, loitering, secluded, flight, unique characteristic, obvious, "Better safe than sorry."