



Suspicious Persons Guidelines

What to do if you encounter a suspicious person in Biology buildings.

Call 9-1-1 if you are in danger or feel threatened.

For non-emergencies, call UWPD 685-UWPD (8973)

The UW is a big campus in a major city, with many public entrances, extended hours, and at the intersection of several major roads. We have periodically had issues with theft, vagrancy, and suspicious/unusual characters around and in our building. As a public building, there are limits placed on what the police can do—if no laws are being broken—for persons passing through our building, being stinky, or even acting strangely or having conversations with themselves. These activities, while rare and quite odd, are not illegal.

That said, you have a right to feel safe in your working or learning environment. UW Police (UWPD) has encouraged us to call them if you have any concerns. Emergency responders have emphasized they would rather be called many times when they're not needed than not be called once when they were needed. So if the actions or demeanor of any individual make you feel ill at ease for any reason, please call 9-1-1. Being vigilant about our safety and security is an important part of keeping our campus the safest it can be. Try to be observant and cautious without being paranoid.

This really is a very safe place to work.

Keep your office closed and locked, including windows (especially ground floors) when you are away—even for short periods such as a trip to the restroom. Office thefts happen and are not infrequent around campus as many people feel fairly secure and often leave valuables unsecured. In fact, a number of thefts have occurred from offices left open and unattended for less than 2 minutes. A thief only needs a second. In spite of this, we routinely still find offices with doors open and laptops, iPods, smartphones, wallets, and purses clearly in view. This seems unwise.

Do not hesitate to call UWPD if you notice activity which seems suspicious, even if no crimes have apparently yet been committed. Sometimes, a call and an officer patrol can be a deterrent if someone is scoping out an area for possible theft, and you, as occupants, staff, faculty, and students, are the people who will best know who belongs in an area and who seems out of place. Making a suspicious person aware that they have been noticed can be a powerful deterrent to theft since the best scenario for a thief is to be in and out without anyone noticing they are there. As much as you may be tempted to help out, do **not** give money to persons you don't know, especially when they pitch an unlikely story. Pan handlers and scam artists frequent areas that are productive for them.

Use available campus resources to help ensure your safety. If you must work late and feel uncomfortable walking back to your car or dorm, UW security guards are available to escort you back by calling 206-685-WALK (206-685-9255). Report threats or seek (non-emergency) advice or counseling by calling the Safe Campus advice line: 206-685-SAFE (206-685-7233).

Camping on UW property is not permitted. If you see any evidence of vagrancy or camps near our building or anywhere else on campus, please let UWPD and Biology facility staff know. Building areas not intended for the general public should be marked as such and, if possible, secured. Any areas not marked as "Authorized Personnel Only" are, by default, public access areas if unsecured.

Biology buildings have yellow notices marking some common areas for students, staff, and faculty. These notices provide cause for UWPD to request persons not involved in academic activities to leave if needed.

If you call UWPD or 9-1-1 Dispatcher (this is actually UWPD from campus phone), you may have more cooperation if you indicate that our building lounge areas have been signed for student, staff, faculty, and authorized guests only.

Safety tips from UWPD specific to our buildings following a security check:

Locate a safe room with:

- 1) A locking door without a window where you can hide from a suspicious/threatening person
- 2) A phone available in the room

Alternate escape routes:

Plan ahead in case your usual exit is blocked or unsafe—a wise suggestion for emergency building evacuation for fire, etc.

9-1-1 on campus:

Dial 9-1-1 for direct link to UW emergency dispatcher. UW dispatchers can identify the specific location of a call from all UW landline phones; NOT true of cell phones. If using a cell phone, tell the dispatcher you are on the UW campus immediately.

Open doors:

We like the collegial atmosphere encouraged by open office and lab doors, but open doors also provide easy access to those you would rather not access you or your property.

Weapons of opportunity:

UWPD noted several locations in our buildings where kitchen utensils (including knives) were routinely left at a sink area. Put these items in a drawer or other location when not in use so you know where they are, but passersby entering the room will not locate them easily.