

PREPARED NOT PARANOID

HOW TO DESCRIBE A SUSPECT



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- ! To capture a criminal in these highly mobile times, it is of utmost importance for the police to promptly obtain an accurate description. Following are some of the most important identifiers the police need to apprehend criminal suspects. Keep this information in mind so that you can give the police an accurate description of any criminal or criminal incident you may observe.



LOCATION INFORMATION IS CRITICAL

- Observe where you are and the **exact location** of the crime. Try to remember if you have ever seen the suspect in the area before.
- Note the **time** as precisely as possible.
- Observe if the suspect is **carrying a weapon** and, if so, what type—revolver, handgun, shotgun, knife, etc.
- If the suspect leaves the scene, **note the direction** of flight.
- If the suspect is in a **vehicle**, note as much of the following information as possible:
 - Vehicle type (auto, truck, van, 2dr, 4dr, convertible etc.);
 - Color;
 - Make and model; condition (dirty, damaged, etc.);
 - License plate numbers.

Note also if the vehicle has no license plates or a “license applied for” sticker in the rear windshield.

Distinguishing features (spoiler, racing stripes, tinting, damage, etc.)

Watch for decoys or accomplices.

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A VARIETY OF GENERAL DESCRIPTION INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUSPECT SHOULD BE NOTED

Sex

Race or national origin

Age (estimated)

Height-use comparisons with your own height, a door, or some other standard measure

Weight (estimated)

Build-fat, husky, slim, muscular, etc.



FACIAL INFORMATION IS ALSO IMPORTANT

Hair-note the color, texture, hairline, style; also possible dyes or wigs

Forehead-note forehead height, and whether the skin is smooth, creased or wrinkled

Eyes-note the color, shape (round, slanted), whether clear or bloodshot, and the heaviness of eyelashes and eyebrows

- Nose-overall shape (long, wide, flat, etc.) and nostrils (wide, narrow, flared) are important

- Cheeks-is the flesh sunken, filled out, dried or oily? are there wrinkles around nose or mouth? are cheekbones high or low, wide or narrow?

- Ears-note size and prominence (protruding or flat against head)

- Mouth-are lips thin, medium, full? Do corners turn up, turn down, or level?

- Chin-what is the shape (round, oval, pointed, square)? double chin, dimpled, cleft?

- Neck-note protruding Adam's apple or hanging jowls

- Complexion-note pores, pockmarks, acne, razor rash, bumps

- Facial hair-clean shaven? unshaven? beard, mustache, goatee, sideburns?

- Tattoos-shape and style; on what part of the body



CLOTHING INFORMATION IS ALSO VERY IMPORTANT

- Hat-note color, style, ornaments, how it is worn (bill forward, backward, to one side)

- Coat-note color and style (suit coat, jacket, topcoat, overcoat)

- Shirt/Blouse/Dress-note color, design, sleeves, collar

- Trousers/Slacks/Skirt-note color, style, cuffs

- Socks-note color, pattern, length

- Shoes-note color, style, brand name for sneakers (if possible), condition

- Accessories-sweater, scarf, gloves, necktie

- Jewelry-rings, watches, bracelets, necklaces
- General appearance-neat or sloppy? clean or dirty?
- Oddities-look for clothing too large or too small; odd colors; patchwork



LOOK FOR OTHER PHYSICAL FEATURES OR PECULIARITIES

- Voice-pitch, tone, rasp, lisp
- Speech-articulate, uneducated, accent, use of slang
- Gait-slow, fast, limp



You will never be able to remember all of these details about any one suspect you may see. But remembering as many as possible can be particularly helpful to the police and to your community.