

Stopping Drug Dealing is Everyone's Business

What can I do?

There are certain things that you can do as a private citizen to help stop the spread of illegal drugs in your neighborhood. Drug Dealers have common habits which are easily observed by the average citizen. Some of those habits are listed on the back cover of this brochure.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT ILLEGAL DRUG ACTIVITY IS OCCURRING IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, OR OBSERVE SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY AS DESCRIBED ON THE REAR OF THIS BROCHURE, PLEASE CALL YOUR LOCAL POLICE.

To report suspicious activity inside the City of Saratoga Springs, call:

(518) 584-1800

For Emergencies and crimes
in progress, dial:

911

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Alone, any of these activities or signs may not mean that drug dealing is occurring. However, some or several of them happening together may indicate a problem.

- ✓ Frequent visitors at all times of the day or night.
- ✓ Frequent visitors for short times, usually a minute or two in duration.
- ✓ Frequent, late night activity.
- ✓ Windows blackened out or curtains always drawn.
- ✓ Visitors with expensive looking cars.
- ✓ Unemployed, yet drive expensive cars.
- ✓ Seem to have plenty of money. Pay bills in cash.
- ✓ Unfriendly. Appear secretive about their activities.
- ✓ Paranoid or odd behavior or extensive security, such as outdoor cameras.
- ✓ Watch cars suspiciously when they pass by.
- ✓ What have others in your neighborhood heard?



Neighborhood Resource Guide **STOP DRUG DEALERS**



Message from the Chief

The Saratoga Springs Police Department places major emphasis on the eradication of illegal drugs in our community through education of the public and proactive policing strategies by the men and women of the police department patrolling your streets. Our mission is further enhanced through specialized units within the department, including the School Resource Officer Programs and a Special Investigations Unit that is primarily responsible for the suppression of all illegal drug activity from street level operation up to and including major criminal conspiracy efforts.

Saratoga Springs enjoys a reputation as one of the safest communities in the nation to live in. This is accomplished not only through the hard work of the men and women of our police department, but also through the efforts of the citizens in our community. The high level of cooperation between the members of the community and local law enforcement is commendable. We need to remain vigilant for our community to maintain its status. Our department is currently in the planning stage for initiating a citywide Neighborhood Watch Program. Collaborative efforts between law enforcement and the community through programs like Neighborhood Watch can only help to improve the quality of life we all currently enjoy. We look forward to your continued support in our efforts to keep your streets safe from drugs and crime.

The Law Is On Your Side: Use It!

No one thinks drug dealers are good neighbors -- not the people who live in the neighborhood, not the businesses trying to make a living there, not the children who play in the parks, not the police officers who patrol the area. Taking back the streets and making them safer takes hard work, trust, and courage from all these people.

The law is on your side, but it works best when everyone with a stake in the neighborhood's health works together. Use partnerships with police, businesses, and local government to drive illegal drugs from your streets.

Getting Organized

Create a group -- call it an advisory commission, task force, neighborhood committee, or partnership. Make sure it includes residents, business owners, law enforcement, housing and other local agencies, religious groups, youth centers, schools, senior citizen centers, public housing managers.

At the first get-together, let everyone talk about their concerns, even if that means criticizing the police and other city services. Decide on what problems take top priority (for example, other than drugs, these might include vandalism, rape, burglary, auto theft, etc.). Discuss realistic solutions, develop specific short-term and long-term projects, and take action -- forging bonds among the community partners along the way. Involve young people -- if they are part of the problem, they've got to be part of the solution.

Look at Laws

Asset forfeiture laws say that authorities can seize assets from convicted drug dealers -- cars, jewelry, cash, real estate, sell them, and use the money to support drug abuse prevention, enforcement, and treatment programs.

Nuisance abatement laws allow individuals and government attorneys to bring suit in civil court against property owners who let drugs be used or kept on their property or permit other nuisances, such as graffiti or excessive noise. Penalties include fines, closing the building, and liens against the property.

Drug-free school zone laws set stiffer penalties for drug offenses committed in areas next to schools. Communities can adapt these laws to expand the drug-free zone idea to parks and other public spaces. Contact the local district attorney's office for help and information about your area's laws.

Go to the Police

Ask for more police patrols (especially foot patrols) in areas that are known drug markets. Establish a 24-hour telephone line that people can call to report suspicious activity anonymously to law enforcement. Make sure everyone knows about the line. (This is not a 9-1-1 emergency line.) Work with a community organization to hand out "hot spot" cards. Residents can anonymously identify drug houses or markets on the cards and turn them in, and the organization then passes the information on to the police.

Go to the Government

Public housing agencies often have tough policies for quickly evicting tenants found with drugs. Make sure they enforce these rules, working in cooperation with other concerned tenants and law enforcement. Some cities' public housing rules evict tenants whose activities or visitors' behavior seriously disrupt other residents' quality of life.

Drug houses are often rundown properties. Ask fire, health, and housing departments to investigate drug houses for code violations and shut down these hazardous properties if possible. Piles of trash, broken windows and doors, rats, and cars that don't run violate most city housing and health codes.

Urge government to tear down abandoned buildings or sell them to civic organizations who can rehabilitate them. Report abandoned vehicles, broken street lights, graffiti, cracked pavements, and trash in your neighborhoods, and report again and again until action is taken. Young people in the neighborhood can help.

Go to Businesses

Property owners can give police permission to enter private property, such as parking lots or outside stairs, to investigate and possibly arrest loiterers.

Telephone companies can fix pay phones so they can be used only for calls out -- then, drug dealers can't use them to conduct business.

Utility companies can investigate gas and electric connections that drug houses may be using illegally. Property owners can rewrite their leases to include specific bans on illegal drug activity.