



Town of Stow POLICE DEPARTMENT

305 Great Road
Stow, Massachusetts 01775

(978) 897-4545
FAX (978) 897-3692

Michael Sallèse
Chief of Police



General Order # 2021 – 02

SUBJECT: Suspicious Persons	ISSUE DATE: February 1, 2021
TO: ALL PERSONNEL	EFFECTIVE DATE: February 1, 2021
	REVISION OR EXPIRATION DATE: Yearly Review

One function of the police is to investigate activity that maybe predictive of a crime about to occur. While most calls report behavior that may be indicative of criminal behavior about to occur, other calls occasionally report an individual or individuals as suspicious merely because they are unfamiliar to a particular area or neighborhood. Reports of this nature may be driven by implicit bias or actual bias and may have an adverse impact on marginalized communities, particularly on people who are Black or Latinx.

On the one hand, the Stow Police Department must investigate suspicious behavior, and encourage people to report it. On the other hand, we must be careful not to contribute to the cumulative effect on communities who have repeated encounters with the police merely because of other people's unconscious or actual biases.

When a dispatcher receives a call concerning an alleged suspicious person or persons, the dispatcher will assign an officer or officers to investigate. The dispatcher should continue to question the caller about the perceived behavior of the individual to gather specific suspicious behaviors. If the dispatcher ascertains that the callers are reporting someone in their neighborhood who is unknown to them, the dispatcher will inform the assigned Officers of such report. Officers will have the discretion to determine whether or not to respond to these reports where the report of the person(s) is not behavior-based.

Nothing in this directive shall prevent officers from responding to the callers location and speaking directly with the caller in order to further investigate the caller's observations. Officers will also continue to investigate all behavior based reports of criminal activity.