



## *What should I look for in my neighbourhood?*

The following is a list of common signs of illegal activity. Alone, any of these activities or signs may not mean that illegal activities are occurring on a property. However, a frequency of the following activities or a combination of them occurring on a property may indicate a problem:

- Frequent visitors at all times of the day and night
- Frequent late night activity
- Windows blackened or curtains always drawn
- Visitors with expensive vehicles
- Unfriendly people who appear to be secretive about their activities
- People watching cars suspiciously as they pass by
- Extensive investment in home security
- Strange odours coming from the house or garbage
- Garbage that contains numerous bottles and containers, particularly chemical containers
- Putting garbage out in another neighbours' collection area

If you are suspicious of a property in your neighbourhood, do not investigate it yourself or approach the occupants. Please call the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Investigation Unit immediately at **1-877-35-SAFER (72337)**.

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**T A K E   A C T I O N**

# *It's **Your** Neighbourhood. **YOU** can help fight crime.*



## ***You** can help fight crime.*

If you want to report a problem property or have any questions regarding this act, please don't hesitate to contact the Public Safety Investigative Unit.

To find out more about this Act, please visit us online at [www.gov.ns.ca/just](http://www.gov.ns.ca/just)

Call toll free at:

**1-877-35-SAFER**  
**1-877-357-2337**

  
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**The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act**



# The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act



The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act improves community safety by targeting and, if necessary, shutting down residential and commercial buildings and land that are regularly used for illegal activities such as producing, selling or using illegal drugs, prostitution, illegal gaming or the unlawful sale and consumption of alcohol.

This legislation gives citizens the tools to take back their neighbourhoods by reporting problem residences and businesses. It also holds property owners accountable for threatening or disturbing activities regularly taking place on their property.

The Act also creates a process to see to the removal of building fortifications that cause public safety concerns and/or exceed reasonable security measures for residential or commercial buildings. Fortification often includes bullet proof glass or explosive-resistant materials, barbed wire, armour to reinforce doors, and bars on windows or doors. These fortifications may prevent emergency response personnel, law enforcement, or occupants from gaining access to or escaping from these buildings in the event of an emergency.

An investigative unit is in place to respond to community concerns about suspected illegal activity. The unit includes a director, manager and investigators.

## Q. How does the complaint process work?

The process starts when one or more persons in a neighbourhood file a confidential complaint with the Director of Public Safety. If there is enough evidence to support the complaint, an investigation is launched.

## Q. Who investigates complaints?

The Director of Public Safety and the Public Safety Investigative Unit investigates complaints. The investigative unit serves all communities in Nova Scotia.

## Q. What kinds of property can be investigated?

Under the Act, "property" includes a structure, business, house, apartment, suite, mobile home or land with or without a structure or dwelling on it.

## Q. How do I make a complaint?

If you are suspicious of a property in your neighbourhood, do not investigate it yourself or approach the occupants. Please call the Public Safety Investigative Unit immediately at 1-877-35-SAFER (72337).

## Q. Are complaints confidential?

Yes, the identity of the person making a complaint is entirely confidential. The complainant will not be involved in any investigative or court proceedings that may result from the complaint.

## Q. What happens if an order is issued after an investigation?

The initial step is issuing a Community Safety Order that outlines steps to be taken by the property owner and/or tenants. Closing a property entirely through a Closure Order is a last resort that would only be used when there is a lack of cooperation. This Act is not criminal legislation designed to punish offenders. Rather, it is legislation to improve public safety in our communities.

## Q. What happens if either a Community Safety Order or Closure Order is issued for a property?

A copy of the order is posted on the property and a copy of the order is served on the owner. It orders the owner to take steps to stop the problem and bars tenants from continuing the illegal or threatening activities. It may also order some or all of the people to leave for a specific period of time if they have been involved in those activities.

## Q. What happens to occupants living in a property that is shut down?

All occupants of a property that is closed by a Community Safety Order must leave it immediately. If an occupant does not leave, the Director can obtain the assistance of a peace officer to remove them from the property. After leaving the property, and while the property is closed, no occupant can enter or occupy the property without the Director's consent.

## Q. What happens to tenants who were not involved in the "activities" if a Closure Order is served?

Commercial and residential tenants who have not been involved in any illegal activities can apply to the court for a variance of the order, which allows them to return to the property. This application is to be made within 14 days of being served with an order, although the court may extend this time.

***You can help  
fight crime.***