

## Off Campus Crime

Off campus crime is a major concern for most college and university students, especially in large urban areas. As college populations increase and schools find themselves with a lack of new real estate for student housing, many students choose to live "off campus" in neighborhoods near their schools but not owned by the schools. Many of these neighborhoods tend to be dilapidated where the residents live on the borderline of poverty because this housing is cheaper for the students. Because of the poor conditions, many students, and indeed other residents, do not take pride in their environment and do not endeavor to keep it clean, which can lead to more vandalism and crime. And, since the schools do not own the property, the colleges and universities generally take no responsibility for the state of the neighborhoods, their student's behavior while off campus, or the crime problems in the neighborhoods nor are the schools required to report incidents of crime in these neighborhoods, as they are required to report on campus crime. This leads to even more problems between students and other residents and between the schools and the communities.

### **The most common offenses students are cited or arrested for off campus:**

- Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol (DUI)
- Public Intoxication
- Open Alcoholic Beverage Containers in Public
- Being a Minor in Possession of Alcohol
- Selling Alcohol to Minors
- Adults Allowing Minors to Consume Alcohol at Parties
- Littering
- Noise Ordinance Violations
- Parking Violations
- False Fire Alarms
- Trespassing

### **A few things students and schools can do to prevent off campus crime:**

- Student patrols or escort services can be very effective in preventing crime. A student who feels uncomfortable walking alone in off campus neighborhoods can call the escort service and two or more trained students can escort that student to his or her destination within a reasonable distance. This service may also be extended to other residents in the neighborhood if the program has sufficient volunteer escorts. Increasing the number of people in a party deters criminals and increases awareness throughout the neighborhood.
- A packet of neighborhood policies such as noise ordinances and parking procedures as well as information about the demographics of the neighborhood residents can be prepared for students and other new residents who are moving into an off campus neighborhood so that they can fully understand the neighborhood and its regulations and hopefully avoid violations.
- A forum can be formed where students and neighborhood residents can express their concerns and work out solutions to simple problems before involving the authorities. If held in a respectful and organized environment, this can foster a good relationship between students and neighbors and help relieve tensions before situations escalate.
- Neighborhood clean up projects that involve both students and community residents can help create a more healthy and safe environment while fostering good relationships between students and their neighbors.
- Colleges and universities can hold their students responsible for their behavior (including disturbances from loud music or parties and vandalism) by responding to complaints from community residents and holding the students responsible for the disturbances through the school's judicial system. Not only will students be assessed a fine from local police, but students who get out of control will suffer a penalty through the school such as academic probation, referrals to substance abuse programs, community service, or a call to the student's parents. This keeps these incidents to a minimum and makes the community residents feel as though the school is taking responsibility for its students. Students who live off campus should be held to the same code of conduct as students who live on campus.



### **CCW and Off Campus Crime**

[www.collegecrimewatch.org](http://www.collegecrimewatch.org)

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CCW groups are encouraged to raise student awareness on the problem of off campus crime and take action to reduce the chance a student may become a victim.