

# COMBATING CRIME PROBLEMS IN RENTAL PROPERTY

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## WHOSE JOB IS IT ANYWAY?

Property managers get frustrated very quickly when trying to report crime problems to the police. It just seems the police don't show enough interest. If they cared, they would arrest the troublemakers, right? **Well, it's not THAT easy!**

## TRUTH OR FICTION?

Some property managers are viewed as apathetic toward crime. It appears that some property managers intentionally rent to anyone as long as they pay the rent. Some police officers are viewed as apathetic toward problems that arise in rental communities. It appears the police are in too much of a hurry to get to the next call or to the next cup of coffee (public perception).

**THE TRUTH IS...**The majority of police officers and property managers ARE doing their level best. There is just the issue of misconceptions about what the police can and cannot do, as well as what the property manager can and cannot do.

### *The Displacement Theory*

*If management depends too heavily upon the police to deal with criminal activity on the property, they will likely be disappointed. The police cannot do everything on their own.*

For example, consider the balloon displacement theory.

If a balloon is squeezed from one side, all the air is displaced to the other side. When the balloon is released, all the air comes back again. The police have the same effect on crime. The police can respond to a crime problem, apply pressure, and displace the problem. As soon as they move onto the next area...and they will have to...the problem may return.

If a property manager squeezes one side of a balloon, maintenance squeezes another side, the police another side, and the residents squeeze from the top and bottom, the balloon will burst. This team can have the same effect on crime. **There is strength in numbers!**

Frequently, the police expect a property manager to do things that are not allowed. Many times, the police are asked to do things that they are not allowed to do either. Because there is not enough time spent on explaining why a particular action cannot be taken, the other sees this refusal as apathy. **This is a misnomer...our Spokane police officers care greatly.** They just need you to use your eyes and ears to report anything unusual or suspicious in your complex or neighborhood. The chances of a situation being taken care of is much greater if the **community can provide information to the police.**

We must all work together, as a community, to ensure safe housing for all residents of Spokane. Spokane C.O.P.S. and the Spokane Police Department are committed to developing problem-solving partnerships with rental / multi-family housing owners and managers by utilizing our Crime Free Multi-Housing training program and Apartment Watch program.

We CAN and WILL make a difference!

Public safety and safe housing for residents of Spokane is our main goal!

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Visit your C.O.P.S. Substation for more crime prevention assistance and information.