



# HOW TO IDENTIFY & REPORT A POTENTIAL JOHN

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## What to do?

*Whatever you do or don't do, your safety comes first! Do not do anything if you are concerned for your safety.*

- If a John communicates with you, say that what he is doing is **ILLEGAL** and you will report him to **Ottawa Police**. It is considered a crime in progress and you should call **9-1-1**
- Note the make, model, colour, # of doors, and type of vehicle.
- Note the appearance of the suspected John: Language, approximate age, physical appearance, eyewear, hat, facial hair, and clothing.
- If you feel safe to do so, note the license plate or take a photo.
- If the John is driving a company vehicle that features the contact info, contact the company giving the day/ time/location of the encounter.
- If you observe a sex trade worker getting out of a car, you may want to make a 'mental note' and be extra attentive to the reappearance of the vehicle.
- **If you witness a verbal or physical altercation between a suspected John and a female, call 9-1-1**
- If you observe solicitation by sex trade workers or Johns near schools, churches, playgrounds, daycares or recreation centres, you are urged to report to the **Ottawa Police**
- If you prefer to report to the **Ottawa Police** at a later time, you may do so at **613-236-1222 - Ext. 7300**
- If you are unsure what to do, simply want to share your experience or seek guidance, you may reach our **Community Police Officer** at **613-236-1222 ext 5823**
- Share your experience with your friends and neighbours.
- Some residents who have been solicited by a suspected John, have sometimes posted an alert on social media warning other women to be vigilant and urging Vanier residents to report to the Police if the man or vehicle is seen.
- Leaving your property lights on from dusk to dawn is an easy crime prevention measure that may deter criminals and will create a sense of personal safety for all of us walking about after dark. If you believe that additional lighting on your street or nearby park is needed, communicate with our **City councillor** at [stephanie.plante@ottawa.ca](mailto:stephanie.plante@ottawa.ca)
- Joining or creating a Neighbourhood Watch may help with the overall safety of your area. The **Neighbourhood Watch Program** in Vanier is an effective method to issue community-wide **John Alerts**.
- Join the **Vanier Safety Committee** and its efforts to ensure a safe community in which to live, work and play. Contact [vca.acv@gmail.com](mailto:vca.acv@gmail.com) for more information.

## What you should know:

- **John sweeps** by the Police are executed solely based on resident complaint and community concerns.
- It is important to **report, report, report!**
- Most Johns who solicit in Vanier are not local residents.
- If a suspicious vehicle or potential John is reported often enough, the **Ottawa Police** will send a '**Dear John**' letter to the registered owner of the vehicle informing him or her that the vehicle has been spotted circling a known sex work area.





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## Background:

- Soliciting and/or purchasing sexual services is **ILLEGAL!** Current laws on prostitution in Canada, introduced in 2014, make it *illegal to purchase sexual services but legal to sell them*. As a result, law enforcement and community efforts focus on the customers, also known as ‘Johns’.
- Contrary to popular belief, prostitution is NOT legal under all circumstances. The current law stipulates that **sex trade workers may not solicit for the purpose of selling sexual services: – in a public place, or in any place open to public view, that is or is next to a school ground, playground or daycare centre.**
- **Make no mistake, our community is victimized by the criminal behaviour of Johns!**

## Markers of a potential John:

*This list is only meant to inform. Individually or combined, these may not constitute a John.*

- Single man in the vehicle who **circles a block** slowly and repeatedly.
- **Johns solicit sexual services any time of the day or night** but they particularly ‘cruise’ in the very early morning hours before going to work and after their work day.
- Johns can often be found on **Vanier’s primary streets** and off-shoot streets.
- Their vehicles often have **Quebec license plates**.
- A John may slow down or ‘shadow’ lone female pedestrians. Johns are known to **approach all types of women** regardless of appearance or age, or if they are walking a dog or pushing a stroller. Women are particularly at risk of being solicited after dark. **These women are our neighbours, mothers, sisters, daughters and wives and have the right to feel safe on our streets!**
- **Repeated sightings** of the same vehicle (same location, time of day, unusual behaviour) may be an indication that the male driver is a John.
- Johns sometimes use their **company vehicles**. Uber drivers have been known to be charged with solicitation.
- **Johns are known to ‘cruise’ near problem locations** (i.e. crack houses) and bars and nightclubs.
- Once they have successfully picked up a sex trade worker, they may park their car on a side street that is poorly lit or a street that appears to have less surveillance by residents.
- **A lone car idling on the street or parked in a vacant parking lot** (i.e. school, recreation centre, church) may indicate that a John is waiting to meet a sex worker or is receiving a sexual service.
- A John will be a stranger to you. **Most Johns arrested in Vanier are NOT local residents.**