



## ANNOYING PHONE CALLS

Anyone who has ever been the victim of an obscene or harassing phone call knows that it can be not only bothersome, but in some cases, frightening and intimidating.

A person who makes annoying, obscene or threatening phone calls is guilty of committing a CRIME. It is against the law to use profane, obscene or abusive language over the phone, or to use a telephone to harass people. Generally, crank callers are seeking attention or a reaction -- shock, anger, fear or exasperation -- from those receiving the calls.

If you are the recipient of this type of call, there are some procedures you can follow to deter them:

- HANG UP:
  - if a caller will not identify him/herself
  - If the person remains silent
  - At the first obscene word or lewd remark. Don't talk to the person and don't slam the receiver
- Always be cautious of divulging any personal information to anyone on the phone. Know who is calling and if in doubt, verify the name and number in the directory and call back.
- If someone asks what number they have called, ask instead what number they dialed. This may be a crank caller who dialed at random or is perhaps checking out the residence.
- Young children should be properly instructed on the importance of never revealing information to unknown callers. Have them take the caller's name and address.
- Women should use only their first initial in the directory to minimize the chance of an obscene phone call.
- If you are having problems with annoying phone calls, you may choose to have an unlisted phone number.
- Check the phone book for information on Call Display and Call Trace features.
- Call the police at 629-4172 or 911 if your life or property is threatened or if the calls are obscene.
- Information on any suspects would be of great assistance.
  - If you do not recognize the caller's voice, you may be able to supply some information describing the caller, for instance, the approximate age, whether it is a male or female, is he/she intoxicated, can you detect an accent or speech impediment and background noise.
  - Be sure to make a note of the time and date of the call and a brief comment on the nature of the call.