

# Resolving issues!

## IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT AN OFFICER'S ACTIONS

If you believe an officer has acted improperly or violated your rights or the rights of others, we have procedures in place to address your concerns.

If you are unable to reach a favorable resolution at the scene, respectfully ask for the officer's name and badge number. Most officers carry business cards, so ask for one.

When you return home, collect your thoughts, then write a detailed account of the incident. Include the names, addresses, and phone numbers of those who were with you at the time of the incident.

Speak to an on-duty supervisor about the interaction. The supervising officer will explain to you why certain procedures are in place for the protection of the officer and you as well. If you are not satisfied with the explanation, you can file a formal complaint that will be reviewed by supervision to ensure the decision is accurate and fair.

## IF YOU FEEL YOUR RIGHTS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED

- Law enforcement misconduct will not be successfully challenged on the street. Don't physically resist officers or threaten to file a complaint.
- Write down everything you remember, including officers' badge and patrol car numbers, which agency the officers were from, and any other details. Get contact information from witnesses. If you are injured, take photographs of your injuries after you have received medical attention for them.
- File a written complaint with the relevant agency's internal affairs division. In some cases, you can file a complaint anonymously if you wish.

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*Building Partnerships for a  
Safer Community*

RESOLVING ISSUES

# your safety

## is important to us!

Contacts between law enforcement officers and citizens are typically emotionally charged. Whether these contacts occur on the side of a road during a traffic stop, on a dark sidewalk in the middle of the night, at a front door in the early morning hours, or at crowded public gatherings, the potential for a dangerous encounter is present. During every encounter, it is the officer's job to represent authority and induce compliance to protect the safety of all involved. At the same time, the officer is also expected to show concern and respect.

### Reasons an officer might approach you on the street:

- You are in an area where a crime has recently occurred or been reported.
- You may be a witness to a criminal event or fit the description of a suspect.
- You appear to need assistance.
- You have violated a law.
- You are in a location or with individuals being monitored by law enforcement.
- Your actions appear to be suspicious, or potentially criminal.
- You are suspected of possessing stolen property, contraband, or weapons.

# Attitude

## is everything!

Just as it is important for a law enforcement officer to act respectfully, it is equally important that civilians maintain a respectful attitude. Keep in mind the goal of law enforcement officers is to resolve potentially dangerous situations without using force or making an arrest.

### If you are approached by an officer:

- Be calm and polite.
- Follow instructions.
- Keep your hands in plain view.
- Make slow and deliberate movements.
- Do not interfere with or obstruct the officer.
- Do not lie or give false documents.

### You should avoid:

- Turning your back on an officer.
- Reaching into your pockets, a box, pouch, or backpack without the officer's permission.
- Rude, confrontational and combative behavior.

## IF YOU ARE STOPPED WHILE DRIVING:

- Remain calm. Stop the car in a safe place as quickly as possible. Turn off the car, turn on the internal light, open the window part way and place your hands on the wheel.
- Keep your hands visible. Do not reach for anything unless directed to do so by the officer.
- Upon request, show the officer your driver's license, registration and proof of insurance.
- If an officer asks to look inside your car, you can refuse to consent to the search. However, in certain circumstances they do not need your consent to search it.
- If you receive a traffic citation, keep in mind that accepting the citation is not an admission of guilt and arguing with the officer is unlikely to change the outcome. Instead, you can contest the citation in Court.

Officers often ask people to "step out of the car" as a safety precaution.

### If a law enforcement officer suspects you have a concealed weapon:

The officer may "pat-down" your outer clothing to ensure the safety of everyone present. When an officer is conducting a "pat-down", or a search of your personal items or property, please keep in mind that the officer is trained to remain in a position that will enhance the their safety as well as yours and the surrounding public. The officer's actions and communications are not intended to offend you.

### If you are arrested:

Do not resist arrest, even if you believe the arrest is unfair. Do not challenge the officer's acts in the field. Arguing and fighting with a law enforcement officer will only cause you more harm. You will have the right to challenge the officer's actions at a later time.

## home searches under the 4th amendment:

A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER MAY ENTER YOUR HOME FOR A SEARCH WITH YOUR CONSENT, OR WITH A WARRANT. YOUR HOME MAY ALSO BE ENTERED IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS REQUIRING SWIFT ACTION TO PREVENT THE LOSS OF LIFE, SERIOUS DAMAGE TO PROPERTY, OR TO HALT THE ESCAPE OF A SUSPECT OR DESTRUCTION OF EVIDENCE