

Q & A

Do I have to answer questions from police?

Not if your answers could be used against you. However, officers are generally suspicious of those who don't answer questions. Answering questions is the quickest way to resolve issues.

Do I have to provide identification?

Yes, if you're operating any kind of vehicle on city streets. When not operating a vehicle, officers may ask for identification if they think you may have committed a crime.

Do I have to do what police tell me to do?

Yes. Officers will explain their actions if the situation allows. If you have a problem with an officer, ask to speak to a supervisor or call 911.

What is "probable cause?"

When a reasonable person, presented with known facts would believe that you committed a crime. By law, probable cause must be met before police can make an arrest.

Making a Complaint

- Request to speak to a supervisor immediately, but continue to follow directions. You can complain later if a supervisor is not available.
- Don't confront, argue or debate legal issues. Try to get the officer's name and badge number.
- Don't yell at or touch an officer aggressively, it could result in your arrest.
- Cooperation is the best way to resolve a situation quickly. Never resist an arrest even if you think the officer's actions are wrong.



Important Numbers

Emergencies	911
Police Non-emergency	297-2121
Crime Stoppers	235-7300
Text-A-Tip	415-5666
Police Investigations	297-1102
Traffic Division	297-1143
Police Records	297-1112
Police Recruiting	297-1116
Internal Affairs Unit	297-1149
NAACP OKC Branch	236-2227



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This brochure was developed to provide general information about police encounters. Some basic rights are listed. It's not intended to replace the advice of a qualified legal representative. If you're unsure about your legal rights, contact an attorney.

Produced in partnership with the Oklahoma City Police, OCPD Citizen's Advisory Board and the NAACP OKC branch.

INTERACTING WITH OKLAHOMA CITY POLICE

what you should know





When encountering an Oklahoma City Police Officer, it's important to know your rights as well as theirs. Knowing what to expect and how to react is key for your safety and the safety of the officer. Police officers do a difficult and dangerous job. They are trained to approach every situation with caution until they feel it's safe.

Every scenario is different. How police respond and the outcome depends on many factors.



IF POLICE STOP YOUR CAR

- > **Pull over as soon as you safely can.** If you're unsure police are actually behind you, drive slower than the posted limit to a well lit, populated area before stopping. Oklahoma City Police Department cars are black and marked with the word "POLICE" in large white block letters on the sides. They have red and blue flashing lights. Some OCPD marked cars are still black and white.
- > **Stay in your car.** Never get out of the car unless the officer tells you to. Turn off music, hang up the phone and lower your window to speak to the officer.
- > **Don't flee.** Fleeing from police could result in your arrest.
- > **Always keep your hands visible to the officer.** Don't reach for anything without telling the officer what you're reaching for and where it is.
- > **Comply with the officer's requests, even if you disagree.** Don't argue about the officer's actions or the law. Follow instructions. You can request to speak/complain to a supervisor later. Officers should explain reasons for their actions.
- > **If an officer issues you a citation, sign it.** Your signature means you acknowledge your responsibility to pay or appear in court. Refusal to sign a citation could result in your arrest.
- > **An officer may be able to search your car without a warrant.** If an officer has probable cause that you might be involved in a crime, he or she can search your car without a warrant. If you're the driver/owner of the car and don't want your car searched, politely tell the officer.
- > **You're suspected of driving under the influence** - An officer may ask you to take a field sobriety test to determine if you're impaired. You can refuse the test, but the officer must treat it as a failed test.

IF POLICE COME TO YOUR HOME

- > **Answer the door.** If you're unsure that the person is really a law-enforcement officer, ask for identification or call 911.
- > **Determine the type of warrant the officer has.** The officer may have a search or arrest warrant. Police don't have to wait for you to read the warrant before taking action, but they do have to give you a copy of a search warrant.
- > **If you help a suspect, you could be arrested.** Police can prevent anyone from coming or going until they obtain a search warrant to look for wanted people or evidence.
- > **If someone commits a crime on your property you could be held responsible.** Allowing someone to sell drugs on your property could result in your arrest.

IF YOU'RE ARRESTED

- > **Remain calm.** If you don't know why you were arrested, politely ask. You will be handcuffed. Police are responsible for your safety after you have been arrested. Additional equipment may be used to restrain you if you don't cooperate.
- > **You have the right to make a phone call** after you get to jail. Calls from your personal cell phone are not permitted.
- > **You will generally see a judge** within 24 hours of your arrest.

IF POLICE STOP YOU ON THE STREET

- > **Don't run.** Running could result in increased suspicion.
- > **Remain calm and be respectful.** In most cases the officer will only ask a few questions.
- > **Police have authority to pat search you for weapons.** This is for their safety and the community's protection. Resisting a pat search could result in your arrest.
You have no say in the search of someone else, their home or vehicle (unless you're driving the vehicle).
- > **Don't lie if police question you.** It's a violation of the law to lie to police.
- > **Do I need an attorney before talking with police?** No, but you have the right to talk to one if police detain and question you as a suspect.
- > **If you keep getting stopped,** politely ask why you were stopped and what you can do to prevent it.



- > If you're 18 years old when arrested, your criminal record could be permanent. Some crimes can result in a permanent record from the age of 16.
- > Be careful who you hang out with. Your friends actions could get you into trouble.
- > Be careful where you hang out. Certain locations are known for more criminal activity than others.
- > Remove yourself from bad situations to avoid problems.