



A Guide to Police Services in Toronto

Hello, I am Chief of Police William Blair.

At the Toronto Police Service we know that we serve the most multicultural city in the world and our officers are here to help you no matter what country you are from or what language you may speak.

As you go about your daily life you will see police officers patrolling the streets in your neighbourhood.

They will be walking, driving cars, and riding bicycles and all of them are there to help you.

I encourage you to talk to these officers - tell them about yourself, your community and any safety concerns that you may have.

This video is designed to help you understand more about the police and what to expect when you are dealing with police officers.

It will tell you how to contact the police if you need help and it will explain some of your rights and responsibilities when dealing with the police.

The Toronto Police Service proudly reflects the diverse communities that we serve. We are dedicated to delivering police services in partnership with our communities to keep Toronto the best and safest place to be.

This video will provide you with information about the services offered by the Toronto Police Service...

and how you can get help from the police when you need it.

It will give you information about the rights and responsibilities of both members of the community...

and the police.

It will also provide you with some information about why police stop people...

and what you can expect if you are stopped by the police.

Contacting the Police:

The Toronto Police Emergency phone number is 9-1-1

The phone number for non-emergencies is 416-808-2222.

9-1-1 is for emergencies only, which include a fire, a crime in progress, a medical emergency or a vehicle accident.

416-808-2222 is used for non emergencies such as thefts, lost passports and frauds.

9-1-1 is emergency in any language. When you call 9-1-1 the call taker answers by saying “Emergency, do you require police fire or ambulance?”

If English is not your first language the

9-1-1 call taker will question you to determine what language you need.

If you are unable to speak for any reason or the language spoken cannot be determined, the call taker will create a call to be dispatched to the address the phone number is assigned to.

If you are calling from a cellular phone you must be prepared to describe where the help is needed.

If the call taker can determine the language that you are speaking you are connected to the language line service.

An interpreter who speaks your language can explain to the 9-1-1 call taker what your emergency is and you will be sent the help you need.

What do I do when police come to my home?

An individual’s home is a very sacred place. In fact Canadian courts recognize the sanctity of a person’s home. Police can enter your home if they are invited, when there is an emergency situation such as when responding to a 9-1-1 call....

.....When a legal document permitting the entry is provided such as a search warrant.

If police come to the door, answer the door and acknowledge the police. Their priority is to ensure the safety of people.

In many cases the police officer may not understand or know the different traditions of your culture.

It is very important to communicate your needs to the officer, for example notify the officer if you have designated prayer areas, don’t be afraid to ask questions or explain specific things that the officer may not understand. Remember the officer is there to help you.

What if someone doesn’t speak or understand English?

The City of Toronto is the most culturally diverse city in the world. For many members of the community English is a 2nd language.

If you do not speak English you should try to have a family member or friend assist you in legal matters. If this is not possible the Toronto Police service maintains a list of bilingual police employees who can assist you.

Never agree to or sign anything in a legal matter unless you fully understand what you are agreeing to.

What should I do when an officer approaches me on the street?

Police can stop you under three general circumstances:

If the officer suspects that you have committed an offence

If the officer actually sees you committing an offence

If you are driving.

Police officers have the sworn duty to prevent and investigate crimes and to keep the peace. Therefore a police officer may ask to speak with you for reasons of which you are unaware.

These duties include:

Interviewing potential witnesses of crimes and interviewing persons who, based on the circumstances, appear to be suspicious.

Do I have to answer an officer's questions or identify myself?

In general you are under no obligation to identify yourself to a police officer. However, there are exceptions including:

if you are driving a car,

if you have committed a provincial offence such as...

a liquor, trespassing or driving offence.

In these circumstances simply cooperate with the officer and answer the questions to the best of your ability.

If the police suspect that you have committed an offence or are acting suspiciously they will want to know who you are.

There are several reasons for telling the police who you are:

If the police are looking for someone else you may avoid being arrested by showing that you are not that person.

If the police think that you have committed an offence and you do not tell them who you are they may arrest you and hold you at a police station until they find out who you are.

If the police think you have committed a minor offence and you identify yourself to their satisfaction they may give you a ticket or a notice advising you when to appear in court rather than arresting you.

Traffic offences

If you are directed to stop by a police officer, slow down and pull as far off to the right side of the road as possible.

Stay inside your vehicle unless directed otherwise by the officer.

Be prepared to produce the following documents to the officer:

A valid driver's licence,
the vehicle and plate portions of the vehicle permit
and proof of insurance.

If you receive a ticket accept it calmly. Accepting the ticket is not an admission of guilt.

What are my rights if I'm arrested?

The Canadian Charter of rights and freedoms protects you if you are arrested or detained by the police. These rights include:

The right to be informed promptly of the reason you have been arrested or detained;

The right to retain and instruct counsel without delay and to be informed of that right. This includes being informed of the availability of free legal aid counsel and how to obtain it. The words "without delay" are interpreted to mean once the situation is in control and the safety of everyone is ensured.

If you are under 18 years of age you have the additional right of being able to speak with a parent or another appropriate adult as soon as possible. The police must inform and explain these rights to you.

What if I have a complaint about the police?

You can complain about a policy or service provided by the Toronto Police Service or about the conduct of a police officer.

Only the person directly affected by the incident may make a complaint.

A complaint must be in writing and must be signed by the person making the complaint. The complaint may be in the form of a letter or on a standard form available from any police station or the Office of the Independent Police Review Director,

OIPRD
655 Bay Street
10th floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2K4

Toll-free phone: 1-877-411-4773

Pamphlets outlining the procedure for making a complaint are available at any police station or on-line at the Toronto Police Service website at www.torontopolice.on.ca.

Complaints must generally be made within 6 months of the incident.

How do I become a police officer?

The Toronto Police Service is actively seeking people who represent the diverse communities of our city to

become police officers.

To become a police officer you must meet the requirements outlined in the Police Services Act. Among other requirements you must:

Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada;

Be at least 18 years old;

Have successfully completed at least 4 years of secondary school education or its equivalent;

Be of good moral character and habits;

Have no criminal convictions without pardons;

Be physically and mentally able to perform the duties of the position.

You must also have:

20/40 uncorrected vision with normal colour acuity;

Valid 'Class G' driver's license with less than 6 demerit points;

Standard first aid and CPR level C.

We hope the information contained in this video has helped you to understand more about the Toronto Police Service.

Please keep a copy of the pamphlet, "A Guide to Police Services in Toronto" as a reminder of how to contact the police in an emergency, how to contact the police when it is not an emergency or what to do when the police stop you.

Please remember the police are here to help you no matter which language you speak. In an emergency you can get help by calling 9-1-1.