

Key West Police are trained to treat everyone with respect while insuring public safety. If you think your rights have been violated, officers cannot handle your complaint at the scene.

To complain or compliment an officer, you can call non-emergency dispatch, 809-1111 and ask for the officers' immediate supervisor. If you wish to go further ask for the Department of Professional Standards. You may also contact the Citizen Review Board (CRB) at 809-3887 to file a complaint against an officer. The CRB recommends that complaints be filed within 90 days of the incident.

Citizens are cautioned against filing intentionally false complaints, as that could result in criminal charges.

AUTHORITY OF POLICE

- Police may use reasonable force to make an arrest or detain someone.
- If officers have probable cause of criminal activity or a reasonable suspicion that you have a weapon or illegal substance, they may search you, your vehicle and, in some cases, your residence.
- If they have probable cause, they can seize your property.

Police may ask for your consent to search your person, car or home without a warrant. You may refuse to give them your consent in the absence of a warrant unless you are arrested.

Q: What if the police stop me on the street?

A. Ask if you are free to go. If the answer is yes, consider just walking away. If the police tell you that you are not under arrest, but are not free to go, then you are being detained. The police can pat down the outside of your clothing (for weapons only?) if they have a reason to suspect you might be armed and dangerous. If they search anymore than this, say clearly, "I do not consent to a search." They may continue to search anyway. You do not need to answer any questions if you are detained or arrested with one important exception. The police may ask for your name once you have been detained, and you can be arrested in some states for refusing to provide that information.

Q: What if I am treated badly by the police?

A. Write down the officer's name, badge number or any other identifying information you may have. You have the right to ask the officer for this information. If there are witnesses at the scene of your incident, obtain their names, addresses and telephone numbers. If you have been injured, seek medical attention and photograph your injuries as soon as possible.

PLEASE REMEMBER:
INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY IS THE
KEY TO RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

Understanding

the Law and Police Procedures

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MISSION OF THE CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD

The Citizen Review Board exists to promote public confidence and accountability of Key West's law enforcement through unbiased investigation of citizen complaints, independent review of police actions, thoughtful policy recommendations and on-going public outreach. We are committed to building a greater understanding between the police and the public they serve.

CONTACT WITH POLICE OFFICERS OCCURS IN DIFFERENT WAYS

- Traffic stops or accidents
- During a criminal investigation, an officer may stop you in search of information
- To check your welfare or the welfare of your neighborhood
- You may give information to officers as a victim or witness of a crime
- To alert you to safety concerns
- During community events
- Emergency situations

What to Expect WHEN POLICE COME TO YOUR HOME

- A police officer can enter your residence if:
 - You give them consent
 - They have an arrest or search warrant
 - An emergency exists, or someone calling for help, first aid is needed, or to prevent injury or harm
 - Pursuing a criminal suspect, or if officers believe criminal evidence may be lost if they wait for a warrant

What to Expect WHEN YOU ARE ARRESTED

- The officer will ask you for your name, date of birth and address. You are not required to talk to the police, but doing so may resolve the situation more quickly.
- Don't give false information
- You may see a lawyer before answering any questions if you wish. If you can't afford a lawyer, one will be appointed for you.

What to Expect WHEN YOU ARE STOPPED IN PERSON BY A POLICE OFFICER

Officers may stop and talk with individuals for a number of reasons, including to check your welfare or that of your neighborhood or to obtain information. If the officer has **reasonable suspicion** that a person has committed a crime, is about to commit a crime, or has information about a crime, that person may be detained by police.

- **You may be asked for your name, date of birth and a form of identification.** It's usually not a crime to refuse to answer questions, but not answering may raise suspicions about you. You can be arrested for providing false information to police.
- **Stay calm, be polite and respectful.** Don't get into an argument with the officer.
- **You may ask why the action is being taken.** If you are under arrest, you have the right to know why.
- **Keep your hands where the police can see them.** Don't put your hands in your pockets.
- **Don't run away.**
- **Don't touch, interfere or obstruct the officers** or you could be arrested.
- **Police may pat down your clothing** if they suspect you're carrying a concealed weapon.
- **Don't complain at the scene.** If you do not agree with the reason for the stop or the officer's demeanor, you may file a complaint at any time up to 90 days after the incident.
- **On request, an officer must provide his or her name and ID number when it is safe to do so.**

What to Expect WHEN YOU ARE STOPPED IN YOUR CAR BY AN OFFICER

Traffic safety is a big concern for citizens and traffic enforcement is an important role for police. Traffic stops, however, can be very dangerous for officers and uncomfortable for citizens. Citizen cooperation can make the stop safer for everyone involved.

- You may be stopped if the officer observes:
 - Illegal driving behavior.
 - Defective or improper vehicle equipment.
 - Evidence of possible criminal activity.

When stopped:

- **Safely pull over to the right and stay in your vehicle.** Turn on your interior light if stopped at night.
- **Do not exit the vehicle unless the officer asks you to do so.**
- **Keep your hands on the steering wheel.**
- **You'll be asked to give your license, registration and proof of insurance.** Florida law requires you carry this information with you. Driving without these items is cause for a citation or arrest.
- **If you are carrying a concealed weapon, tell the officer.** Don't try to reach or display the weapon unless requested to do so.
- **The officer should treat you in a courteous and professional manner.** If you are issued a ticket, you should receive an explanation of why as well as your options for resolving it.
- **You do not have to consent to a search of your person or vehicle,** but an officer may still search if there is suspicion for criminal activity.