

## BUT...WHY ME???

- Maybe a crime has been reported and YOU are seen running away from that area.
- Maybe YOU have something that does not belong to you. The officer may think that you do.
- Maybe YOU are in an unusual place at an unusual time. Maybe YOU are in an alley behind a closed business at 4:00 am.
- Maybe YOU were misidentified as a suspect in a crime by witnesses or officers.
- Maybe YOU were acting disorderly, or appeared to be drunk and/or high in a public place.

## IF YOU ARE STOPPED WHILE WALKING

### RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Police can approach you and initiate a conversation. Police may ask for ID, or ask to search you or your belongings. Ask if you are free to leave.
2. In such a stop, police can "pat-down" your clothing to check for a concealed weapon if they suspect you have one. DO NOT physically resist, but make it clear that you do not consent to any further search.
3. You are not legally required to answer a police officer's questions. You cannot legally be arrested just for refusing to answer questions or not identifying yourself to a police officer. But if you are detained, failure to identify yourself can lead to additional charges, when you might otherwise get only a citation.
4. What you say to the police is always important. What you say *can* be used against you, and it can cause the police to arrest you.
5. You do not have to consent to any search of yourself or your possessions. If you do not consent to a search, be sure to tell the police that you do not consent to a search.
6. If the police say they have a search or arrest war-

rant for you, immediately comply with all directions.

7. You have a right to record audio and video of police activity so long as you can do so safely, and DO NOT physically interfere with their work.

### REALITY

1. Be polite and respectful. Although "bad mouthing" or criticizing a police officer may be legally protected speech, it is not recommended and may escalate a tense encounter.
2. STAY CALM! Consider the message your body language and tone send to the officer.
3. You may ask if you are free to leave but DO NOT argue with the officer. Cooperate now, complain and report later if you choose to do so.
4. Keep your hands where the police can see them. DO NOT make any sudden movements.
5. DO NOT ever touch a police officer.
6. DO NOT run. You might get hurt.
7. DO NOT resist even if you believe you have done nothing wrong. You may be injured and/or arrested.
8. DO NOT physically interfere when an officer is doing his or her job. You may be arrested.
9. Even though you have a Constitutional right not to speak, refusing to do so may prolong the interaction. If you do decide to talk, remember, any statement you make may be used against you. However, if you're detained (not free to leave), your phone and other belongings may be taken from you.
10. If you believe that you have been the victim of police misconduct, DO NOT argue with the officer and DO NOT threaten to file a complaint.

11. If you choose to file a complaint at a later time, document the incident as follows:

- a. Write down the date, time, and location of the occurrence.
- b. Write down the names of the officer(s), badge number(s) and/or patrol vehicle number(s).
- c. Prepare a written statement of everything you can remember as soon as possible. Memories fade quickly!
- d. Try to find witnesses. Write down their legal names, email addresses, phone numbers, and mailing addresses.
- e. If you are injured, take photographs of the injuries as soon as possible, get medical attention, and tell the doctor what happened. Obtain/request copies of your medical records.

## IF YOU ARE STOPPED IN A VEHICLE OR ON A BIKE

### RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The police can ask you to pull over when they observe you committing any traffic offense; this includes moving violations (failure to signal) and equipment violations (tail light out).
2. Activate flashers, stop the vehicle safely out of traffic, immediately place it in park, apply the parking brake, keep your hands visible and follow the officer's commands. You can ask the officer if it is okay to shut off the vehicle.
3. Tell the officer where in the vehicle your driver's license, vehicle registration and insurance card are located. Then request permission to retrieve them.
4. During a traffic stop, the police can search the passenger compartment of your car if they believe you are committing, have committed, or are about to commit a criminal act.
5. If you are given a ticket, you should sign it if asked. It IS NOT an admission of guilt.

6. If you are suspected of drunken driving and refuse to take a Field Sobriety Test, prepare to be arrested. If arrested, and you refuse to take a blood, urine or a breath test, your driver's license will be suspended at a later date.

### REALITY

1. If the police are trying to stop you, slow down, turn on flashers and try to pull over right away. While driving slowly, try to pull over in a well-lit area or where there are people.
2. Stay in the car until an officer tells you what to do. Keep your hands visible.
3. If it is dark outside, turn on the vehicle's inside light.
4. Keep your hands on the steering wheel where the officer can see them until you are told what to do. You may not have a legal duty to disclose the presence of a firearm in your vehicle or on your person, however in the interest of safety it may be best that you do so.
5. Be sure to have all your paperwork readily available. This includes: valid driver's license; valid vehicle registration; current insurance card; current & valid auto safety and emissions inspection stickers; and if applicable, a valid concealed carry license. Having this information can save you in fines and costs, and may prevent the towing of your car or the use of other official action.
6. If the officer searches your car, even if you object, DO NOT interfere.
7. If you are given a ticket, don't argue about it. You can always fight the case in traffic court, if you choose to do so at a later date

## IF THE POLICE COME TO YOUR HOME

### RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. If the police knock and ask to enter your home, *except for the situations in the next paragraph,*

you do not have to admit them unless they have a warrant signed by a judge. If they insist on coming In anyway say clearly that you do not consent to a search, but DO NOT physically interfere.

2. Some emergency situations (like when a person is screaming for help inside or when the police are chasing someone) permit officers to enter and provide aid to the person in trouble, or to pursue the fleeing suspect.
3. If you are arrested, the police can search you and the area close by; if you are in a building, police can search any nearby area where a person may be hiding.

### REALITY

1. If the police say that they have a search warrant, immediately comply with orders and ask to see the warrant later. DO NOT attempt to interfere, physically block, or argue with officers as they are trying to enter, you may be injured and/or arrested.
2. When you see the warrant, verify that it lists your address, and note the specific areas of your home listed in the warrant that are subject to search.
3. If the police insist on coming in with or without a warrant, at the conclusion of the encounter, try to get their names and badge numbers, and why they entered your home.
4. If the police have an arrest warrant, make sure the name, alias, or “nickname” on the paper is someone in the household, either you, a listed occupant, family member or tenant.

## IF YOU ARE ARRESTED OR TAKEN TO A POLICE STATION

### RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. If you are arrested, you have the right to remain silent and to talk to a lawyer before you answer questions from the police.
2. Tell the police nothing except your name, birth

date, legal address, height, weight, parent/guardian if applicable. Your ID may be disclosed without fear of self-incrimination and doing so may reduce the time you are held.

3. DO NOT talk without a lawyer; immediately ask to see one.

### REALITY

1. DO NOT give false identification, explanations, excuses or stories. Such information may be used against you and result in additional charges against you.
2. DO NOT make any decisions in your case until you have talked to a lawyer.
3. You can expect to be taken before a Judge within 12 - 24 hours after your arrest.

**THIS IS NOT COMPLETE ADVICE  
BE SURE TO CONSULT A LAWYER!**

### IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Allegheny Co Public Defender Office:  
412-350-2401
- Allegheny Co Bar Association, Lawyer Referral Service (private defense lawyers):  
412-261-0518

### COMMUNICATION ASSISTANCE

- Sign & Non-English Interpreters (24-hr.)  
Pgh Hearing & Deaf Services: 412-281-1375

### POLICE, PROSECUTORS, AND JAIL

- Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, Chief's Office:  
412-323-7800
- Allegheny Co Police, Superintendent's Office:  
412-473-1200
- Allegheny Co. Port Authority Police:  
412-255-1385
- Allegheny Co Sheriffs' Office:  
412-350-4700
- Allegheny Co District Attorney's Office:  
412-350-4400
- Allegheny Co Jail:  
412-350-2000

## COMPLAINTS ABOUT PITTSBURGH POLICE

- Independent Citizen Police Review Board:  
412-765-8023 ([www.cprbpgh.org](http://www.cprbpgh.org))
- Office of Municipal Investigations:  
412-255-2804 Fax: 412-255-2952

**FURTHER ASSISTANCE CAN BE OBTAINED BY  
CONTACTING A PRIVATE ATTORNEY AND/OR:**

- ACLU—Greater Pittsburgh:  
412-681-7736
- NAACP—Pittsburgh Unit:  
412-471-1024
- Alliance For Police Accountability (APA):  
412-256-8449

## CURRENT & HISTORICAL CONTRIBUTORS PITTSBURGH PA:

### ACLU-PA

*Alliance For Police Accountability (APA)  
Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP)  
Greater Pgh Coalition Against Violence (CAV)  
Guardians of Greater Pittsburgh  
Homer S. Brown Law Association  
Independent Citizen Police Review Board (CPRB)  
NAACP, Pittsburgh Unit  
Parents Against Violence  
Pittsburgh Bureau of Police  
Univ. of Pittsburgh School of Law*

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& REDISTRIBUTED FREELY.**

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# YOU & THE POLICE

**RIGHTS,**

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

**& REALITIES**

This brochure is being made available free of charge to all members of the community. It has three purposes:

**To outline** for people their rights when interacting and communicating with the police;

**To inform** people of their responsibilities and obligations any time they (or a family member or friend) have contact or involvement with police officers; and

**To promote** improved relations and understanding between members of the community and the police.

**Be Safe!**

**The term “Police”, “Officer”, or “Police Officer” within this pamphlet includes all Law Enforcement Officers, local, county, state, or federal.**