



**Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department**  
**Citizen Review Board**

Student Guide for Encounters with  
Law Enforcement



*The goal of this guide is to provide you with information when interacting with the police in order to help you make smart decisions. This information should be viewed as general guidelines and not as legal advice.*

*In addition, this brochure holds information regarding the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Citizen Review Board (CRB). The CRB was created to provide community oversight of Clark County Detention Center and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD). If you feel you have been seriously wronged by the LVMPD please feel free to contact us and file a complaint.*

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### ***Common Sense***

The easiest way to avoid negative run-ins with law enforcement is simply to stay out of trouble. If you hang out with the wrong crowd, you increase your chances of being approached by officers in pursuit of those suspected of, or associated with, criminal activities.



If confronted by a police officer, approach them as you would a friend, not an enemy.

### ***First Impressions***

First impressions are very important! Law enforcement is both a difficult and dangerous profession. Police are trained to place a great deal of emphasis on their safety and survival. In some cases, the safety procedures undertaken by officers may appear offensive and unnecessary to citizens.

If you are stopped, questioned or approached by law enforcement officers, cooperate even though you may feel you are being unjustly stopped or questioned. Keep your composure and conduct yourself in a mature manner. Avoid any action or language that might escalate the situation.

*Here are some suggestions<sup>1</sup> that may help when contacted by police:*

- 1- Be respectful and don't assume the worst.*
- 2- Realize that your appearance and attitude may send a message, either good or bad.*
- 3- Do not have your hands in your pockets; officers will be concerned about whether or not you have a weapon.*
- 4- Avoid making sudden movements. The officer may think you are trying to hide something or you are trying to reach for a weapon.*
- 5- Remain calm. Fear and adrenaline can get both you and the officer in trouble.*
- 6- DO NOT RUN AWAY*



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<sup>1</sup> *From the City of San Jose Independent Police Auditor's A Student's Guide to Police Practices*

## Officer Misconduct

Officer misconduct is defined as "improper and/or illegal action(s) and/or conduct by an officer." Some of the more frequent types of misconduct are:

- Physical Abuse- slaps kicks, punches, choke-holds, beatings, flashlight and baton blows, tight handcuffs, unnecessary use of firearms.
- Verbal Abuse- name calling, use of racial slurs



The best way to avoid officer misconduct is to not provoke the officers. Showing off or showing up the officer may get you arrested and possibly injured. Comply at first and then get an explanation from the officer's supervisor.

If you do experience officer misconduct, here are some tips to help cope with the situation.

- ***Do not resist arrest for any reason***
- ***Control your emotions***
- ***Do not make threatening motions or statements***
- ***Never attempt to interfere with the arrest of others***
- ***Always note the name of the officers you encounter***
- ***Report cases of misconduct immediately following your release***
- ***Record, document and describe any information regarding officer misconduct***



### Pat-down Search

Officers may do a "pat-down" search of your clothing if they suspect you are concealing a weapon. If this search is against your wishes, do not physically resist but verbally tell the officer that you are not giving consent to the search.

Do not "bad mouth" the police officer or try to flee even if you believe what is happening is wrong. This could lead to your arrest. Do not challenge the officer. Remember, you can always report the misconduct by filing a complaint at a later time.



### Searches on Public School Campuses

Working hand in hand with local, county, state and federal agencies, the Clark County School Police Department is committed to ridding its schools from violence, weapons, substance abuse, vandalism and other hazards.



Police officers do not need to obtain a warrant to conduct a search on school grounds. Searches at schools can be done based on "reasonable suspicion." This means if a police officer, teacher or school administrator suspects you are involved in a violation of school policy, you may be searched. Your personal possessions, such as your backpack, locker and car, if they are on school property, may be searched as well.

### No Weapons on Campus

It is a felony to bring a firearm to school. A felony is a serious crime, which can be punished by time in prison. Remember, a school official can search your locker, backpack or your person without a warrant.



## Miranda Rights

*When do officers have to read you your Fifth Amendment rights?*

Your Fifth Amendment rights are also called "Miranda Rights." People believe the police must give "Miranda Rights" any time they are contacted or arrested. *In reality, police officers are required to read you your "Miranda Rights" **only** when:*

- 1- You are arrested for being involved in a crime and*
- 2- You are going to be questioned about that crime.*

Police officers can ask general questions such as your name, address and birthday without reading you your "Miranda Rights," and you must provide that information.

## What to do if Arrested



Whether or not you are guilty, go with the officer. You can later argue your case in court. Make sure you understand all of your rights before you agree to answer any questions.

If you have been "Mirandized" you may talk to the police or you may respectfully state your desire to request a lawyer. You have the right to remain silent and to talk to a lawyer before you talk to the police, and you may ask the police how to contact one.



can influence how a police officer responds to you by the way you act!