

Remember the following if you are stopped by the police:

1. Freeze! Do not move unless you are told to do so.
2. Never run from the police.
3. Always remain calm.
4. Think.
5. Cooperate.
6. Speak clearly.
7. Ask questions if you do not understand.
8. Always carry identification.
9. Never argue with a police officer.
10. Remember the officer's name and badge number.
11. Always tell a responsible adult what happened.
12. Report the incident to the proper authorities.
13. If you are wearing baggy pants, do not attempt to pull them up as this can be mistaken for reaching for a weapon.

Remember the following if you are stopped by the police:

You must remember to always tell the truth. Honest mistakes can happen when reporting an accident, but giving false information to the police is a crime (State Statute 817.49). Never be afraid to tell the truth.

How to Report an Incident

If you have an incident or police misconduct to report, please use the following numbers:

Miami-Dade Crime Stoppers

305-471-8477

Miami-Dade Office of The State Attorney

Public Corruption 305-547-0664

Miami-Dade Schools Police Department

Executive Office 305-757-7708

To report an incident 305-995-COPS
(2677)

Miami-Dade Police Department

305-627-7100

Miami Police Department

Professional Compliance Unit
305-835-2000

Miami Beach Police Department

305-663-6301

Florida Department of Law Enforcement

Internal Affairs Division 850-410-8240

In Case of Emergency, Dial 911

Produced by The Miami-Dade Schools Police Department



5000 Role Models of Excellence Project

Founded by Congresswoman Fredrica S. Wilson



Supported by:

The Miami-Dade Association of Chiefs of Police

&

The Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office



The purpose of this pamphlet is to promote positive interaction between youth and law enforcement by providing guidelines for youth in dealing with the police. While it is impossible to include all the information needed, this pamphlet is merely a guide to expected behavior during common encounters between police and youth.

What is Suspicious Behavior?

Contrary to the belief of some, no one should be considered suspicious because of race, age, ethnicity, or other superficial characteristics. However, one's actions can constitute suspicious behavior: If you are:

- In an out of the ordinary place at an unusual time of the day or night, such as, the mall or Metrorail station during school hours;
- Riding four-deep in a car at unusual times or late at night;
- Walking the street on a warm night in layered clothing;
- Sitting in a parked vehicle with no purpose for being there and or
- Riding or walking without proper identification.

If you are stopped by a police officer, the officer must be able to justify why you are being stopped. While some of these behaviors may seem ordinary to you, to a police officer, they constitute suspicious behavior.

You must remember that a lot of crimes are reported in Miami-Dade County every day. Many times, descriptions given to the police are vague and therefore, could describe anyone.

To a police officer, anyone could be a possible suspect so always keep your hands in plain sight.

What is Reasonable Suspicion?

Reasonable suspicion is when there are reasonable grounds to believe that the person being stopped and questioned has committed or is about to commit a crime. If an officer observes unusual conduct and reasonably suspects that you have committed a crime or are about to commit a crime, he/she may order you to stop and question you regarding the observations. The officer may briefly stop you for questioning even though there is lack of probable cause to believe that you have committed a crime and therefore your guilt or innocence is unimportant at this point.

When There is Reasonable Suspicion

- Assess your behavior. Ask yourself, "Have I done anything wrong"? or "Could my behavior appear suspicious"?
- If a police officer tells you to "Stop" or "Freeze," do so immediately. Any sudden moves could result in harm to yourself.
- Note your posture and overall attitude.
- Cooperate with the officer until you are out of the situation.
- If you choose to respond to an officer, do not become hostile. Do not overreact to questions, thus creating a more serious situation. Remember, you have the right to refuse to answer questions.
- If an officer requests a pat-down (frisk) because he/she believes you are armed, consent to it, but remember the circumstances leading to the frisk. Some search procedures are illegal and can lead to trouble for the officer in court.

What Are Your Rights?

If a police officer overreacts to you, remain calm and cooperate to insure your safety. You can deal with the officer's actions later. Remember the names of the officers and be able to describe them. As soon as the incident is over, while the events are fresh in your mind, write down the facts as you remember them. You can then write or phone your complaint to the internal affairs division of the police department and/or inform your lawyer of the incident.

A Message From The Law And You: The Cardinal Rule

The easiest way to avoid negative run-ins with law enforcement officials 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 law enforcement, approach the officer as you would a friend, not an enemy.

REMEMBER, THE FIRST WORDS SPOKEN BY EITHER THE OFFICER(S) OR THE CITIZEN(S) INVOLVED MAY VERY WELL DETERMINE THE TONE OF THE ENCOUNTER AND EVEN THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME.

The Law and You is produced in partnership by:

- ◇ NAACP
- ◇ National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
- ◇ Allstate Insurance Company

To receive a complimentary "The Law and You" program kit, please call **800-607-2722** and **select option 6**