

If the police believe someone faces imminent bodily harm, needs emergency aid, are in hot pursuit of a felon, or if other exigent circumstances exist, they will enter your residence, possibly without a warrant. Do not interfere. If you feel they were there in error, ask for clarification or to speak to a supervisor.

If you are arrested in your home, the police may search the area closest to you for weapons or contraband and they may conduct a protective sweep of the residence to ensure no one else is present who could pose a threat to anyone. As always, if you have any concerns, do not interfere or physically resist. Remain calm. You can always file a complaint at a later time.

### How to commend a police officer or file a complaint:

If you feel an officer has gone above and beyond his or her duties, please let us know. You can go to our website, [www.austintexas.gov/department/police](http://www.austintexas.gov/department/police) and click on the "Recognize Austin's Finest" tab to commend an officer, via the APD Mobile App by clicking on the "Submit a Tip" icon, or by calling the Chief's Office at (512) 974-5030. You can also submit a Complaint or Thank You to the Office of Police Oversight online at [www.atxpoliceoversight.org](http://www.atxpoliceoversight.org), via phone at (512) 972-2676 or email at [policeoversight@austintexas.gov](mailto:policeoversight@austintexas.gov). The Office of Police Oversight is a City of Austin department that provides impartial oversight of APD.

Officer(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Case # \_\_\_\_\_

**For more information:**  
City of Austin Departments  
<https://www.austintexas.gov>  
Texas Constitution & Statutes  
[www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us)  
Austin City Codes & Ordinances  
[municode.com/library/tx/austin](http://municode.com/library/tx/austin)

### AustinPD Smartphone App

The Austin Police Mobile App contains many icons that allow residents to stay informed and engaged by getting direct access to important APD services. These include: station locations, crime prevention information, links to policies, laws, submitting tips, reporting, filing a complaint or commending an officer, news updates, and the ability to file certain reports directly from the app. Users can also send tips to APD and have the option to be anonymous. Tipsters can include their GPS location, text, a photo, and have a secure two-way chat with officers. AustinPD is free and available via Apple's App Store for iOS devices, via the Android Marketplace for Android devices, and via the mobile web for other platforms. For more information about the app, visit <http://austintexas.gov/department/austin-pd-smartphone-app>



Please visit us on Facebook at @AustinPolice or on [www.Twitter.com/Austin\\_police](https://www.twitter.com/Austin_police)

When you are under arrest, you have the right to remain silent & call an attorney before you answer questions from the police. If you are arrested, and the officer makes a request, you are bound by law to provide police with your name, address & date of birth. Do not give out false evidence, identification, explanations, or excuses. Such information may be used against you in a court of law. Please note: nothing in this publication is legal advice. Consult an attorney if you have further questions. Issued: September 1, 2017



## You and the Police

### Fostering Fair and Safe Interactions with Law Enforcement.

Encounters with police can be stressful for anyone. However, everyone should expect that police will treat them fairly under the law. This pamphlet is not intended to explain all of your legal rights or to cover every situation that might occur. Following some of the simple, practical tips outlined within should help to make police interactions less stressful and safer for you and the officer.

When a law enforcement officer detains you, stop and listen to the instructions given. Do not run away or fight. Keep your hands visible. If you disagree with an officer's actions, continue to comply. You can contest any criminal charges in court, or file a complaint if you believe the officer acted inappropriately. A complaint may be made by:

- Asking for a supervisor
- Contacting the Office of Police Oversight at (512) 972-2676 or via the internet at [www.atxpoliceoversight.org](http://www.atxpoliceoversight.org)

- Contacting the Chief's Office at (512) 974-5030
- Via the Austin PD Mobile App through the "Submit a Tip" icon
- Sending via USPS to: P.O. Box 689001, Austin, Texas 78768

Following these steps will help ensure the safety of all involved, including you, the officer, and the public. The vast majority of our interactions are captured on in-car audio/visual equipment and/or Body Worn cameras. The primary goal of the Austin Police Department is to protect the public through fair and impartial application of the law.

**If you are detained by police in any situation:**

The police can stop and question you if they have reasonable suspicion that you are engaged in criminal activity. Officers are allowed to "pat-down" your clothing to ensure their safety and the public's safety if they reasonably believe you are armed and dangerous. Do not physically resist.

Do not interfere with or obstruct the police or you may be arrested.

**Following these steps can make police encounters less stressful:**

- Be polite and respectful.
- Stay calm. Try to keep your emotions and body language under control.
- Do not get into an argument with the police officer. If you are dissatisfied with any actions of the officer, you have the right to ask for a supervisor, and/or make a formal complaint.

- Communication is key. When you are initially stopped, keep your hands where the officer can see them. Do not make any sudden movements. Let the officer know when you are reaching for your purse, wallet, vehicle insurance, etc.
- If you have a handgun license and are carrying your firearm with you, advise the officer immediately. Even though state law merely requires you to produce your license, telling the officer you are licensed and where your firearm is will assist greatly.
- Do not run.
- Do not resist, even if you believe you are innocent.

**If you believe the officer acted inappropriately:**

- Ask for the officer's name, employee number and case number. This information is helpful but not necessary to file a complaint.
- You may ask for a supervisor to respond to the scene.
- Write everything down as soon as you can. The longer you wait the less you may remember.
- Contact the Office of Police Oversight at (512) 972-2676 or [www.atxpoliceoversight.org](http://www.atxpoliceoversight.org) to make a complaint about the incident as soon as possible. You may remain anonymous.

**If you are stopped while driving a car:**

The Police may direct you to pull over when they observe you commit a traffic violation; this includes moving violations [e.g. failure to signal intent] and equipment violations [e.g. taillight out.] In these situations, remember that the officer does not know you, just as you don't know the officer.

**Following this advice can help ordinary traffic stops go more smoothly:**

- Stop the vehicle in a safe place. If at night, make sure the area is well lit. If driving a short distance before stopping, please activate your emergency hazard lights.

- Stop the vehicle in a safe place. If at night, make sure the area is well lit. If driving a short distance before stopping, please activate your emergency hazard lights.
- Once stopped, immediately place the vehicle in park and turn on the dome light if it's dark.
- If you have tinted windows, rolling them down, even partially, will help.
- Remain in your vehicle and place your hands on the steering wheel, in plain view, until you receive further direction from the officer.
- When requested, reach for your driver's license and proof of insurance and give them to the officer. Do not make sudden movements.
- If you are given a citation, sign it. Your signature is not a guilty plea, only a promise that you will take the appropriate steps to respond to the ticket.
- Make certain all documents are current – driver's license (including your address,) your insurance, vehicle registration, and inspection.
- If the officer searches your vehicle or your person and you believe it is without cause, do not interfere. Again, it is your right to request a supervisor to the scene and to file a complaint with the Office of the Police Monitor.

**If the police come to your home:**

Police may enter your home with a warrant signed by a judge. You may request to see a copy of the warrant and verify that the information matches your own [e.g., name, address.] You should expect the police to leave a copy of a search warrant in your home.