

## IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT AN OFFICER'S ACTIONS



If you believe an officer has acted improperly or violated your rights or the rights of others, we have procedures in place to address your concerns.

If you are unable to reach a favorable resolution at the scene, respectfully ask for the officer's name and badge number. Most officers carry business cards, so ask for one.



When you return home, collect your thoughts, then write a detailed account of the incident. Include the names, addresses, and phone numbers of those who were with you at the time of the incident.



Speak to an on-duty supervisor about the interaction. The supervising officer will explain to you why certain procedures are in place for the protection of the officer and you as well.



If you are not satisfied with the explanation, you can file a formal complaint that will be reviewed by supervision to ensure the decision is accurate and fair.

## IF YOU FEEL YOUR RIGHTS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED

- Law enforcement misconduct will not be successfully challenged on the street. Don't physically resist officers or threaten to file a complaint.



- Write down everything you remember, including officers' badge and patrol car numbers, which agency the officers were from, and any other details. Get contact information from witnesses. If you are injured, take photographs of your injuries after you have received medical attention for them.



- File a written complaint with the relevant agency's internal affairs division. In some cases, you can file a complaint anonymously if you wish.

Lake Wales Police Department  
133 E. Tillman Avenue  
Lake Wales, FL 33853  
(863)678-4223  
[lwpd@lakewalesfl.gov](mailto:lwpd@lakewalesfl.gov)  
[www.lakewalesfl.gov](http://www.lakewalesfl.gov)

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CHIEF  
CHRISTOPHER VELASQUEZ

**RESOLVING ISSUES**



*Building Partnerships for a Safer Community*



## your safety is important to us!

Sometimes contact between law enforcement officers and citizens are emotionally charged. During every encounter, it is the officer's job to represent authority and induce compliance to protect the safety of all involved. At the same time, the officer is also expected to show concern and respect.

### Reasons an officer might approach you on the street:

- You are in an area where a crime has recently occurred or been reported.
- You may be a witness to a criminal event or fit the description of a suspect.
- You appear to need assistance.

- You have violated a law.
- You are in a location or with individuals being monitored by law enforcement.
- Your actions appear to be suspicious, or potentially criminal.
- You are suspected of possessing stolen property, contraband, or weapons.

### Attitude is everything!

*Just as it is important for a law enforcement officer to act respectfully, it is equally important that civilians maintain a respectful attitude. The goal of law enforcement officers is to resolve potentially dangerous situations without using force or making an arrest.*

- Remain calm. Stop the car in a safe place as quickly as possible. Turn off the car, turn on the internal light, open the window part way and place your hands on the wheel.
- Keep your hands visible. Do not reach for anything unless directed to do so by the officer. Upon request, show the officer your driver's license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance. This is the law and you cannot refuse to provide it. If an officer asks to look inside your car, you can refuse to consent to search in some situations. However, if an officer observes a criminal violation, arrests you, suspects there are

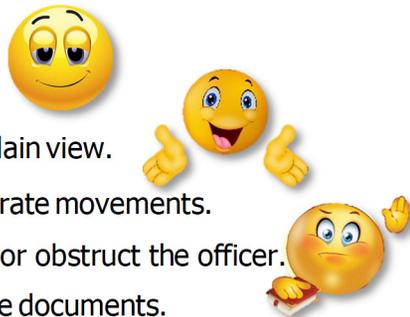
- weapons inside or a K-9 alerts to the odor of illegal drugs the officer does not need your consent.
- If you receive a traffic citation, keep in mind that accepting the citation is not an admission of guilt and arguing with the officer is unlikely to change the outcome. Instead, you can contest the citation in Court.

*Officers often ask people to "step out of the car" as a safety precaution.*

***If you are arrested, do not resist arrest even if you believe the arrest is unfair! Do not challenge the officer's acts in the field. Arguing and fighting with a law enforcement officer will only cause you more harm. You will have the right to challenge the officer's actions at a later time in a court of law.***

### If you are approached by an officer:

- Be calm and polite.
- Follow instructions.
- Keep your hands in plain view.
- Make slow and deliberate movements.
- Do not interfere with or obstruct the officer.
- Do not lie or give false documents.



### You should avoid:

- Turning your back on an officer.
- Reaching into your pockets, a box, pouch, or backpack without the officer's permission.
- Rude, confrontational and combative behavior.

