

Sometimes even a very routine encounter may cause a person to feel intimidated or to respond in a manner which gives rise to conflict or suspicion. The Reno Police Department strives to provide services to everyone in the community fairly and equally. We are providing this information to help Citizens better understand what to expect from police officers if they are stopped. A Familiarization with law enforcement concerns and practices will help avert needless confrontation or misunderstanding. However, we are not offering legal advice, just information.

Although there are no specific guidelines for citizens in handling contacts with police, the following advice is beneficial. The goals of the police department are to improve police community relations and to have contacts and interviews resolved without unnecessary conflict or injury to either the officer or citizen. This information will hopefully help to minimize your stress and anxiety during your contact with the police and, at the same time, give you some insight into the concerns and procedures of the officers.

OFFICER SAFETY

Most citizens already realize that law enforcement is a difficult and dangerous profession. Hundreds of police officers are killed each year, and thousands more are injured and assaulted. For these reasons, police officers tend to be extremely cautious. They place a great deal of emphasis on officer safety and survival. Certain safety practices are instilled in our officers from the first day of their careers. Although the procedures maximize safety for the officer, they may seem stand offish, impolite or offensive to citizens who may not consider such precautions necessary with "them".

Even though you have no intention of doing the officer harm, he/she will probably maintain a defensive posture until the officer feels that there is no risk of confrontation or injury. As far as police officers are concerned, there is no such thing as a "routine" traffic stop. Each stop has the potential for danger.

IN ALL POLICE ENCOUNTERS

There are times when citizens who have contact with the police come away with feelings of frustration. The Reno Police Department does not condone police misconduct of any type. In our experience, we have learned that many of those negative feelings are often a result of not knowing the reason(s) an officer has made certain requests or acted in a certain manner. Unfortunately, demands on a patrol officer do not always permit time for explanations at the time you are stopped. Hopefully, the information presented here will give you an understanding of police procedures and let you know what to expect from a police officer if you are stopped.

