

STOP & SEARCH



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

**Stop and search –
know your rights**
Easy read version

This is a guide to the way a 'stop and search' is done.

It does not cover all of the law.



For more information or translations into other languages

or different formats



go to
www.apa.police.uk

or contact your local police authority.



Contents

Who can stop you?	4
What is a stop?	4
What is a stop and search?	5
What if I am in a vehicle?	9
How should a stop and search be carried out?	9
Your right to a form	10
What can I do if I am unhappy about how I was treated?	12

Who can stop you?

- A police officer; or
- a police community support officer (PCSO)

A PCSO **must** be in uniform.



A police officer does not have to be in uniform; if they are not in uniform they **must** show you their identity card.



What is a stop?

A 'stop' is when a police officer stops you and asks you:

- what you are doing;
- why you are in a certain area or where you are going; or
- what you are carrying.

Why can I be stopped by the police?



What is a stop and search?

You can be stopped and searched anywhere when a police officer thinks that you are carrying:



- drugs which are against the law;



- weapons;



- stolen property;



or things which could be used:

- to do a crime; or
- to do an act of violence.



**Please
take off your
jacket**

The police officer can ask you to take off outer clothing, for example your coat or jacket.



They can ask you to take off anything you wear for religious reasons, such as a face scarf, veil or turban.



If the police officer asks you to do this they should, if possible, take you somewhere where other people cannot see you.



You can ask that the officer who searches you is the same sex as you.

I want to be searched by a female police officer



It does not mean you are being arrested.

You are not under arrest



Sometimes police officers can search anyone within a certain area:

- when there is proof that serious violence could take place there, for example, at a football ground;
- or where a terrorist threat is known.



The police officer must explain this to you and must be searching for things which could be used for violence or terrorism.



What if I am in a vehicle?

Your vehicle can be stopped at any time.

You may be asked to show your driving documents.

You should be given a written record.

How should a stop and search be carried out?

Before you are searched, the police officer must tell you and make sure you understand:



I must make sure you understand why you must be stopped and searched



- that you must wait to be searched;
- what law they are using and your rights;
- their name;
- the station they work at;
- why they stopped you;
- what they are looking for; and
- your right to a form.



Your right to a receipt

If you are stopped or searched the police officer must give you a receipt.



The police officer should give you the receipt straight away unless they are called away to an emergency; in this case you can get a copy from a police station.



You must keep the receipt especially if you are not happy with the way you were treated.



The police officer must take down:

- your name or a description of you (only if you are searched);
- how you describe your cultural background for example; Asian, Black Caribbean, Chinese, White;
- when and where you were stopped or searched;
- why you were stopped or searched;



- if they are taking any action against you;
- the name and/or numbers of the police officers; and
- if you were searched, what they were looking for and anything they found.



The police officer will ask you for your name, address and date of birth.

You do not have to give this information if you don't want to unless you are being arrested.

You do not have to give me your details unless you are being arrested



What can I do if I am unhappy about how I was treated?

The officer should treat you fairly and with respect. If you are unhappy with how you were treated, you can complain.



If you feel you were treated differently because of your race, age, sexuality, gender, disability, religion or faith, you can complain.



It will help if you keep the form that the police gave you.



You can get advice about how to make a complaint from places like:

- a police station;
- your local police authority;
- a Citizen's Advice Bureau;



- the Independent Police Complaints Commission;
- the Commission for Equality and Human Rights; or
- a Solicitor

The police officer who stops you must:

- treat you fairly and with respect;
- give you the reason why you have been stopped;
- give you their details, including name, police number and station; and
- give you a copy of the stop/search form.

Remember – you have the right to complain if you have not been treated fairly.



For more information,
translations into
alternative languages and
different formats go to
www.apa.police.uk or
contact your local police
authority.



Your local police authority is

If you are stopped and searched, you have rights.



Association of Police Authorities
15 Greycoat Place
London SW1P 1BN

Tel 020 7664 3168
Fax 020 7664 3191
www.apa.police.uk

© Association of Police Authorities · March 2010

The Association of Police Authorities wishes to
acknowledge the following for their pictures

© Valuing People ClipArt Tel: 0800 0430 980

www.inspiredservices.org.uk