Handbook for Strengthening Harmony Between Immigrant Communities and the Edmonton Police Service

ALLIANCE
JEUNESSE-FAMILLE
— de l'Alberta Society —

Handbook for Strengthening Harmony

This handbook is intended to help you understand the role of policing in Edmonton; provide you with information on how to access police services; and explain what to expect if you are approached by the police. It will also explain the rights and responsibilities of both community members and the police.

Having a good understanding of how the police can help you, will also serve to strengthen harmony with the Edmonton Police Service.

We gratefully acknowledge Citizenship and Immigration Canada for their financial support and Edmonton Police Service for their partnership and commitment to serving the Edmonton Community in its diversity. Their respective participation led to the production of this handbook.

Alliance Jeunesse-Famille de l'Alberta Society (AJFAS)

What is the Role of the Police in Edmonton?

The role of the Edmonton Police Service is to provide protection of life and property, maintain public peace and good order; and prevent, detect and solve crimes. Where the police are unable to prevent a crime, their goal is to investigate and bring offenders into the justice system.

The people of Edmonton have a right to feel safe in their homes and communities. The police understand neighbourhood problems and work closely with the community to prevent crimes from occurring. The goal is to improve the quality of life for all citizens in our city.

Police officers have a responsibility to perform their duties with professionalism and to display ethical behaviour in everything they do. The policy of the Edmonton Police Service states that its members shall not discriminate against any person on the grounds of their race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor.

The work of the EPS is guided by a clear set of values:

INTEGRITY - Doing the right things for the right reasons all the time.

ACCOUNTABILITY - Responsible for our own decisions and actions.

RESPECT - Treating others as we would like to be treated.

INNOVATION - Pursuing excellence and creativity.

COURAGE - Maintain strength in the face of our greatest challenges.

COMMUNITY - Respect and honor the diverse communities that we are Dedicated to Protect and Proud to Serve.

Phone Numbers for Contacting the Edmonton Police Service

Dial 9-1-1 for emergencies only.

For non-emergencies dial 780-423-4567

What is an emergency?
An emergency includes a fire, a crime in progress, or a medical or life threatening incident that requires an ambulance.

What is a non-emergency?
Non-emergencies include things like thefts, lost passports, fraud and car accidents where there are no injuries.

Dial 780-423-4567

- If you require the attendance of a police officer at your location
- If you require advice on how to proceed with a criminal report

9-1-1 is for EMERGENCIES only
When you call 9-1-1, the operator answers by saying, **'Emergency. Do you require Police, Fire or Ambulance?'**

If the 9-1-1 operator does not understand the language you are speaking, they will question you to find out what language you speak.

If you are unable to communicate for any reason, the operator will immediately send police officers to the address that the phone number is assigned to.

If the operator is able to determine the language that you are speaking, you will be connected to the **Language Line Service.**

An interpreter who speaks your language will help you to tell the 9-1-1 operator what your emergency is and you will be sent the help that you need.

What To Do When The Police Come To My Home?

Your home is a very sacred place. In fact, Canadian courts have recognized the sanctity of a person's home. You have the right to privacy in your home and the police can only enter your home under certain conditions.

The police can enter your home when:

- You invite them inside or let them inside
- There is an emergency situation, such as when you call 9-1-1
- They have a legal document that allows them to enter, such as a Search Warrant issued by a judge or justice

If the police come to your door, answer them and keep in mind that the police's priority is to ensure the safety of people.

In many cases, the police officer may not understand or know the different traditions of your culture. It is very important to communicate your needs to the officer.

For example, tell the officer if you have designated prayer areas. Don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand something. Also, don't be afraid to explain specific things that the officer may not understand. The officer is there to help you and the community.

What If I Don't Speak Or Understand English?

For many members of the community, English is a second language.

If you don't speak English, you should try to have a family member or a friend assist you in police-related matters. If this is not possible, the Edmonton Police Service has a list of bilingual police employees who can help you.

Never sign an agreement or any document in a legal matter unless you fully understand what you are agreeing to.

What Should I Do When An Officer Approaches Me On The Street?

You can usually identify police officers by their uniform. Sometimes, you may meet officers who are not wearing a uniform. If you have doubts about the identity of a police officer, you can ask for their official identification, including the officer's name and badge number.

An officer may ask your name, address, what you are doing or where you are going. In some cases, the officer may ask to see

your identification. In most circumstances, you are not required to produce identification. However, it is advisable to be polite and answer the officer's questions.

If you refuse to answer the officer's questions or the officer thinks you are being evasive, the officer may become more suspicious and investigate more thoroughly. The goal for everyone should be to achieve a resolution or solve the crime.

Police officers can detain or arrest you generally in two situations:

1. If they suspect or believe that you have committed an offence
2. If they actually see you committing an offence

If a police officer detains or arrests you in one of these two situations, you must provide your name, address, and identification.

Police officers have the sworn duty to prevent and investigate crimes and keep the peace. These duties include interviewing potential witnesses of crimes and interviewing persons who, based on the circumstances, appear suspicious. If offenders could be identified simply by the way they looked or dressed, it would be easy to be a police officer, but the fact is police officers have to investigate.

This means that a police officer may ask to speak with you for reasons that might not make sense to you right away. Do not take offence to a police officer asking questions. They are doing their jobs, preventing crime and helping to keep you and the community safe.

Do I Have To Answer The Officer's Questions Or Identify Myself?

In general, you are under no obligation to identify yourself to a police officer. However, there are exceptions, which include the following:

- If you are driving a car
- If you have committed an offence such as a liquor offence, trespassing offence, driving offence, or criminal offence.

In these circumstances, it is preferable to co-operate and answer the officer's questions.

If the police suspect that you have committed an offence or are acting suspiciously, they will want to know who you are. There are several reasons for telling the police who you are:

1. If the police are looking for someone else, you may avoid being detained or arrested by showing that you are not that person;
2. If the police believe that you have committed an offence, and you do not tell them who you are, they may arrest you and hold you at a police station until they find out who you are;
3. If the police think you have committed a minor offence, and you identify yourself to their satisfaction, they may give you a ticket or a notice advising you when to appear in court rather than arresting you.

Does The Officer Have To Tell Me The Reason Why I Am Under Arrest?

YES! Police officers must tell people the reason why they are being arrested or detained. This is a requirement of section 10(a) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

What Should I Do When An Officer Orders Me To Stop While I'm Driving?

Police have the authority to stop a car at any time to determine if the driver has consumed alcohol or drugs, the car is mechanically fit, the driver has a valid licence, and the car has valid insurance. The most likely reason the police will stop a car is to investigate a traffic offence.

Traffic offences fall into two main categories:

Moving Violations: Speeding, failing to stop at a red light or stop sign, improper lane changes, or following too close to another vehicle.

Non-moving Violations: Failing to wear seat belts, broken brake lights, or failing to produce a drivers licence, vehicle registration, or proof of insurance for the vehicle.

Other reasons for being stopped when driving include:

- Impaired driving (i.e. drunk driving) and Checkstops
- Dangerous or careless driving
- Criminal investigations. For example, you, your passengers and/or your vehicle may match the description of a person the officer is looking for.
- Safety concerns

For many reasons, traffic stops are the most dangerous aspect of police work. More officers are injured or killed conducting routine traffic stops than any other function. Officers must interpret the actions and behaviour of the occupants of the vehicle, as well as constantly monitoring other traffic. For these reasons, officers are trained to make safe vehicle stops by following a certain procedure. You may be concerned about the way they approach your car, but it is not meant to intimidate you.

If you are ordered to stop by a police officer while driving

- Slow down and pull as far as possible off to the right side of the road.
- Stay inside your vehicle unless directed otherwise by the officer.
- Do what the officer tells you to do.
- Keep your hands where the officer can see them and don't make any sudden movements.
- Be prepared to produce the documents the officer asks you for. As the driver of a car, you are required by law, upon demand of a police officer, to produce a valid driver's licence, registration, and proof of insurance for the vehicle.
- If a document is in a glove compartment, wallet or purse, tell the officer that you are getting the document from there beforehand.
- If you receive a ticket, accept it calmly. Accepting the ticket is not an admission of guilt.

As the driver, you are also accountable for the conduct of your passengers, especially if they are acting disorderly, throwing things out the window or hanging out of the window. You must also ensure all passengers are wearing seat belts.

What Are My Rights If I Am Arrested?

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms sets out certain rights that protect you if you are arrested or detained by the police. These rights include:

- The right to be informed promptly of the reason you have been arrested or detained.
- The right to retain and instruct counsel (a lawyer) without delay and to be informed of that right. The words "without delay" are interpreted to mean once the situation is under control and the safety of everyone is assured.
- The right to telephone any lawyer you wish.
- The right to free advice from a legal aid lawyer.

If you are under 18 years of age, you have the additional right of being able to speak with a parent or other appropriate adult as soon as possible. The police must explain these rights to you.

What If I Am Arrested And I Don't Speak English?

If you are arrested or detained and you do not speak English, the police must take steps to communicate to you in your language, such as using an interpreter. This is so that they can properly inform you of your rights, and to explain the conditions of your release from custody.

When Can A Police Officer Search You?

Generally, a police officer's power to search depends on the situation and the beliefs of the officer.

If you are arrested, the police can search you for weapons, items that might help you escape, and evidence of the offence for which you have been arrested. They will usually conduct a "frisk search," so that the officer will frisk your clothing, including your pockets. It does not involve the removal of any clothing except outerwear such as jackets, hats, gloves or mittens.

Depending on the situation, they may be able to search your immediate surroundings, including your vehicle if you were inside it at the time you were arrested.

If you are being detained temporarily for investigative reasons, a police officer may conduct a "pat down" search for anything that can be used as a weapon. This means that they might pat you down with their hands to make sure that you are not carrying any weapons.

If you are not under arrest or detention, you can refuse to be searched. However, you may decide to allow the police to search you as this may help lessen their suspicion. Even if you initially consent to allowing the police to search, you can ask them to stop at any time during the search.

If you feel that a search is improper, don't confront the police officer. Instead, follow the complaints process listed in this pamphlet or contact a lawyer.

What If I Have A Complaint About The Police?

Citizens expect that our police officers will be held to a high standard of excellence. When citizen concerns and complaints of conduct are brought forward, they must be investigated in a fair and timely manner.

The EPS Professional Standards Branch is responsible for investigating complaints against the police in a fair, thorough and unbiased manner.

You can complain about the policies or the services provided by the Edmonton Police Service, or about the conduct of an EPS police officer.

A complaint must be in writing and must be signed by the person making the complaint. You may write your complaint in a letter or you may use a standard form, which you can obtain from any EPS police station or from the Edmonton Police Commission. You must make a complaint within one year after the incident happened.

A complaint must be mailed, faxed or delivered to any EPS police station, an EPS officer, or to the Edmonton Police Commission Office.

You can also call the Edmonton Police Service, Professional Standards Branch at 780-421-2676.

To reach the Edmonton Police Commission:

In the Edmonton area call:

Phone: (780) 414-7510
Fax: (780) 414-7511

Or write to:

Edmonton Police Commission
Suite 171, 10235-101 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3E9

The Edmonton Police Commission provides civilian oversight of the Edmonton Police Service. It is their job to ensure the police service provides effective, efficient and accountable policing to all Edmontonians.

Professional and ethical policing are values shared by the Edmonton Police Service and the Commission. The Commission ensures that all complaints are dealt with efficiently for all parties involved.

How Do I Become A Police Officer?

The Edmonton Police Service is actively seeking people who represent the diverse communities of our city to become police officers. In Edmonton, our cultural mosaic has grown and it's the desire of our police service to broadly reflect the community it serves.

To be considered for a career in policing, you must meet certain minimum requirements as outlined in the Police Services Act.

Specifically you must:

- Be a Canadian citizen or have permanent resident status in Canada;
- Be physically, and mentally able to perform the duties of the position, having regard to your own safety, and the safety of members of the public;
- Have successfully completed grade 12 or its equivalent (GED). When education has been completed outside Canada, an International Qualifications Assessment Certificate is required.
- Be of good moral character and habits, meaning that you are an individual other people would look upon as being trustworthy and having integrity;
- Possess a valid Alberta driver's license with full license privileges and no more than six accumulated demerit-points;
- Have current certification in standard First Aid/CPR Level C by the time of your Personal Disclosure Interview;
- Be able to pass a security clearance as well as background investigation, credit and reference checks.

For further information: go to the Edmonton Police Service website at www.edmontonpolice.ca or call 780-421-2233.

The Edmonton Police Service gratefully acknowledges the Alliance Jeunesse-Famille de L'Alberta Society for creating the concept that led to the production of this handbook.

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Alliance Jeunesse-Famille de l'Alberta Society (AJFAS)

8925 - 82 avenue, Bureau 100
Edmonton, AB T6C 0Z2
Phone: 780-440-2621
fax: 780-440-2621
e-mail: bureau@ajfas.ca
www.ajfas.ca

AJFAS' main mission is to prevent crime amongst Francophone immigrant youths and families, as well as to help them find a sense of belonging in the Albertan society and workplace.

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