



Handbook

**For Strengthening Harmony
Between Communities and
the Guelph Police Service**



Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information on:

- The role of policing in Guelph
- How to access police services
- Using 911
- What to expect if you are approached by the police
- The rights and responsibilities of both community members and the police



What is the role of the police in Guelph?

The Guelph Police Service provides protection for life and property; maintains public peace and good order; and prevents, detects and solves crime. The Service's mission is to contribute to the positive growth and development of our members and our community by providing leadership and innovative policing that is effective, efficient, economical and environmentally responsible.

The people of Guelph have the right to feel safe in their homes, neighbourhoods, and community. The police work to understand neighbourhood problems and work closely with the community to prevent crimes.

Police officers have a responsibility to perform their duties professionally and ethically.

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

Pride in ourselves, our work, and our community;

Service with compassion and accountability;

Trust shared through integrity and mutual respect.

Phone numbers for contacting the Guelph Police Service

911 for emergencies only.

For non-emergencies, 519-824-1212.

What is an emergency?

An emergency includes fire, a crime in progress, or an incident that poses immediate danger to yourself or someone else.

What is a non-emergency?

Non-emergencies include things like...

- Vehicle damage (other than by an collision)
- Damage or mischief to property (under \$5,000)
- Lost or stolen drivers' licences
- Lost property (under \$5,000)
- Stolen licence plates
- Theft
- Theft from vehicle (under \$5,000)
- Identity theft or fraud
- Credit card fraud
- Internet fraud
- Personal fraud
- Traffic complaints

Some non-emergency incidents can be reported through the online reporting tool on our website at guelphpolice.ca.



911 is for emergencies only.

When you call 911, a communicator will answer by saying “Do you need police, fire or ambulance?”

If the communicator does not understand the language spoken by the caller, they will ask what language the caller speaks.

Once the language is determined, the caller will be connected to a [Languages in Motion](#) interpreter, who will help the caller to tell the communicator about the emergency.

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

What to do when the police come to your home?

Your home is a sacred place. 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 it under certain conditions.

The police can enter your home when:

- You invite them or let them inside;
- There is an emergency situation, such as when you call 911;
- 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 priority of the police is to ensure the safety of people.

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. Don't be afraid to explain specific things that the officer may not understand. The officer is there to help you.

Does the officer have to tell me why I have been arrested?

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

What are my rights if I am arrested?

You have the right:

- To be informed promptly as to why you have been arrested or detained.
- To retain and instruct counsel (a lawyer) without delay and to be informed of that right. The words “without delay” mean once the situation is under control and the safety of everyone is assured.
- To obtain 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?

The police must take steps to communicate to you in your language, such as using an interpreter so they can properly inform you of your rights and to explain the reason for your detention or 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 what the officer believes is happening.

If you are arrested, the police can search you for weapons, items that might help you escape, and/or evidence of an offence for which you have been arrested. They will usually conduct a frisk search of your clothing, including your pockets.

Such a search does not involve the removal of any clothing except outerwear such as jackets, hats, gloves or mittens.

Depending on the situation, they may 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 with their hands to make sure 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 it 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 as if there are any issues with the search, follow the complaints process listed on Page 12 in this pamphlet or contact a lawyer.

What should I do when an officer orders me to stop while I'm driving?

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

Traffic offences fall into two general categories:

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

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

Other reasons for being stopped when driving include:

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

Traffic stops are the most dangerous aspect of police work. More officers are injured or killed conducting routine traffic stops than any other function. You may be concerned about the way they approach your vehicle, but it is not meant to intimidate you. 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.



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

- Slow down and pull over as far as possible 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 do not make any sudden movements.
- Be prepared to produce the documents the officer asks for. As the driver, 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 you are getting the document from that location before getting it
- 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 if they are acting in a disorderly manner by, for example, throwing things out a window or hanging out a window. You must also ensure all passengers are wearing seat belts.



What if I have a complaint about the police?

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

You can complain about the policies or the services provided by the Guelph Police Service or about the conduct of a GPS police officer.

A complaint can be submitted directly through the [Office of the Independent Police Review Director](#) (OIPRD) or by submitting a completed OIPRD form to any regional, municipal, or provincial police station in Ontario.

Included in your complaint should be your full contact information (name, address, phone number), date of birth, which service/police officer your complaint is about, where the incident happened, the dates and times the incident took place and any other details.

How do I become a police officer?

The Guelph Police Service is actively seeking a diverse group of dedicated individuals who have a strong interest in serving the community.

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 at least 18 years of age
- 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 at least four years of secondary school education or its equivalent. Where education has been completed outside Ontario, official proof of equivalency must be provided
- Be of good moral character and habits, meaning you are an individual other people see as trustworthy and having integrity
- Possess a valid driver's license with full license privileges and no more than six accumulated demerit points
- Have current CPR and First Aid - Level C certification
- Be able to pass a security clearance as well as background investigation and credit and reference checks

For further information, visit the Careers Section on our website www.guelphpolice.ca