

POLICE POWERS

It's against the law to refuse to give your name and address to the police or to give a false name or address if they have reasonable grounds for asking you.

The police can ask for your name and address if they think you've broken the law, are about to break the law or can help with the investigation of a crime. But you can ask the police why they want your name and address, and for their name, rank and place of duty.

The police can ask for your name and address without a reason if you're driving a car, motorbike or push bike, you're on public transport or in a licenced premise.

In most cases you don't have to answer any other questions the police ask you. There's no such thing as 'off-the-record' - the police can use what you say to arrest and charge you and as evidence against you in court. Tell the police you want to talk to a lawyer before you say anything further.

If you've been arrested and taken into custody the police must let you phone a lawyer and a friend or relative before they question you.

The police don't have to let you make phone calls before questioning starts if you've been drink driving, other people might be in danger, someone else involved in the crime might get away or evidence might be lost or tampered with.

If you're under 18 the police can't question you unless a parent, guardian or another independent person is present. If a parent, guardian or independent person isn't present the police can't use anything you say as evidence.

You can make a complaint about a police officer who's done the wrong thing.

If you want to make a complaint about the police record as much information about the incident as you can. If you've been injured take photos and see a doctor.

Contact a lawyer at a community legal centre who'll give you free legal advice and help you make the complaint. Remember that most police complaints are investigated by the police.

POLICE SEARCHES

The police can search you if you're in a public place and they believe you're carrying illegal drugs, stolen goods, weapons or firearms

The police can search you if you're 14 or older, you're trespassing or on or near public transport and they believe you're carrying a graffiti implement

The police can search you if you're under 18 and they believe you've chromed or are going to chrome

The police can do a pat down search, ask you to remove your outer clothing, search through your bag and search a car you're travelling in

The police can use a metal detector to search you if they think you're carrying a weapon

You must be search by a police officer of the same sex as you, unless this isn't reasonably possible