

**Lower Providence Township Police Department
Eagleville, Pennsylvania**

General Order ☒
Special Order ☐
Personnel Order ☐

ORDER NUMBER

417

Subject

Police - Citizen Contacts

Date of Issue

January 29, 2020

Effective Date

January 29, 2020

Expiration Date

**Until Amended or
Rescinded**

Issued by:

Michael Jackson, Chief of Police

Amends

Rescinds

All Previous Orders

Standard Number:

Distribution

- 1. General Order Manuals**
- 2. Records Manual**
- 3. Reading Verification to all Personnel**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the limitations of authority and acceptable conduct and practices of officers when making police business contacts with citizens.

II. POLICY

Police interactions with citizens form the cornerstone of effective police work. With that in mind, all officers shall follow the provisions of this policy to maximize the usefulness of investigatory citizen contacts while observing and respecting the privacy rights of citizens. This policy does not address stops based on reasonable suspicion of criminal activity or frisks of suspects incidental to such stops, nor does it apply to stops of motor vehicles. Officers should refer to protocols contained in this agency's General Order on Field interviews and Pat-down Searches and Vehicle Stops for further information on these related topics.

III. DEFINITIONS

Citizen Contact:

For purposes of this policy, a citizen contact is defined as actions by an officer that places him or her in face-to-face communication with a citizen for purposes of asking questions or gathering information of an official nature, where there is no reasonable suspicion to believe that the citizen has committed, is committing or is about to commit a crime.

IV. REGULATION

A. Grounds for Citizen Contacts

1. Citizen contacts may be initiated by an officer when the officer believes that it may serve the interests of a police investigation, inquiry or other bona fide police business.
2. Citizen contacts may be initiated without probable cause, reasonable suspicion or other indication of criminal activity by the citizen when officers adhere to provisions of this policy.

B. Initiation of Citizen Contacts

1. Officers may initiate a citizen contact in any place that the officer has a legal right to be. Examples of such places vary widely but include, for example:
 - a. Areas intended for public use or normally exposed to public view;
 - b. Places to which the officer has been admitted with the consent of the person empowered to give such consent;
 - c. Places to which the officer may be admitted pursuant to a court order (such as an arrest or search warrant);
 - d. Places where the circumstances require an immediate law enforcement presence to
 - e. Protect life, well-being or property; and
 - f. Places in which the officer may affect a lawful warrantless arrest.
2. Officers may initiate contacts only for legitimate police-related purposes. They may not use contacts on a pretext basis so as to intimidate, harass or coerce citizens (such as to leave a public place).

C. Citizen Contact Protocol: Officers must keep in mind that citizen contacts are based on the presumption that the citizen is not under any reasonable suspicion of criminal activity. As such, officers should adhere to the following protocols:

1. Persons “contacted” may not be detained in any manner against their will or frisked unless reasonable suspicion is established during the course of the contact to believe they present a danger to the officer or that they have committed, are committing or about to commit a crime.
2. An officer may not use force or coercion to require a citizen to stop or respond to questions or directions absent any other legal reason.
3. Officers shall ensure that the citizen could not reasonably perceive their actions and requests as a restraint on his or her freedom to leave the officer’s presence. As such, officers should observe the following:
 - a. Introduce themselves and explain the reason for making the contact.
 - b. Act in a courteous and restrained manner at all times.
 - c. Establish rapport.
 - d. Avoid gruffness, officious attitudes or requests that sound like commands.
 - e. Phrase requests using optional words such as “may,” “would you mind,” or similar terms and phrases.
 - f. Keep the duration of the contact as brief as possible.
 - g. Do not create a physical or other barrier to the citizen’s ability to leave, such as keeping a driver’s license or by creating a physically imposing and intimidating presence.
4. If citizens ask whether they must respond to questions or must remain in the officer’s presence, they shall be informed that they need not answer any question and are free to leave at any time.
5. Where citizens refuse or cease to cooperate during a contact, they must be permitted to leave.
6. Refusal of the citizen to cooperate with the officer, for example, through silence (e.g., not answering questions), by a refusal to provide personal identification, or by a refusal to account for his or her presence in a public place, cannot be used as the basis for turning the “contact” into a “stop.”

Michael Jackson

Michael Jackson
Chief of Police

