There are 4 books in the **Easy English Police Powers** series available from Legal Aid NSW. This is **Book 1 – Questions**.

**Book 1 Police Powers: Questions**  
Book 2 Police Powers: **Searches**  
Book 3 Police Powers: **Arrest: On the street**  
Book 4 Police Powers: **Arrest: At the police station**

This is a general guide to the law, not legal advice. You should talk to a lawyer about your problem.

This information was correct at that time of printing, but the law can change. If you need more help contact LawAccess on **1300 888 529** for legal information and advice.


If you are hearing/speech impaired, you can communicate with us by calling the National Relay Service (NRS) on **133 677**.

If you need help to talk to us in your language, call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on **131 450** (9am-5pm).

Easy English translation by **Access Easy English** based on the Legal Aid NSW publication **Police Powers: Your rights and responsibilities**.

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The NSW Police know the law. These are like rules. It is their job to make sure we all follow the law.

There are lots of rules to know.

This book helps you know
- what the police can do
- what you can do.
These are called rights and responsibilities.
Remember!

Police work can be
- dangerous
- hard to do.

Police do have a lot of power. They want to keep you safe.

When the police ask a question
- be polite
- follow any instructions they give.

If you do not agree with what the police did or said you can make a complaint.

Go to page 21 to see how to make a complaint.
Can police ask for my ID?

Yes.
There must be a reason.

Your ID
This is a card with your
- name
- photo of you
- address.

It is called your ID or identification.
In some situations the police can ask you for your ID when you are
- in your car
- at home
- in the street.

Do you have a cover on your face?

The police can ask you to take off your face cover.
The police should do this away from the public.
When must I show my ID?

In your car

The police ask for ID when
- they stop you in your car
- you are the driver
- you are helping a learner driver.

When there is a car crash.
- The police come to the car crash.
In the street

It is a good idea to show the police your ID if they ask for it.

The police will ask for ID if you do something wrong on the
- train
- ferry
- bus
- at the station.

It can be for example, if you
- broke a window
- did not pay your fare

or
- are rude to other people
- are drunk and behaving badly.
The police think you are not 18 and they see you drink alcohol.

The police think you know something about a crime.

Other times the police will ask for ID. They
give you a paper from the court
you are in a place they think you should not be.
Do I have to answer the police questions?

No.

Can I be arrested just to answer questions?

No.
Police can ask you to go a police station to answer questions.

But

You do not have to go if you are not under arrest.

If you decide you want to talk to the police,

talk to a lawyer first.

Go to page 23 to find out where to find a lawyer.
The rules about police questions are different if you are under arrest. Go to Book 4—Arrest: At the police station.
Can the police tell me to move on?

Yes.

Move on means to leave the place you are.

The police officer must tell you

- his or her name

- where they work. Like, what police station.
■ why you need to move on.

You will be told to move on when you
■ are in the way of another person
■ stop cars and trucks on the road
■ scare other people with the words you say

■ try to sell illegal drugs
■ try to buy illegal drugs.
The police may also tell you to move on when you are drunk in a public area. Like,

- in the street
- at the shops.

You must stay away for 6 hours if they move you on.
What if I am drunk or on drugs and come to police attention?

You need a safe place to be.

Police may
- look for your friends

or
- take you to a police station.
Teenagers and children go to a different place.

Police must give you

- food
- drink

- a bed and blanket.

You are not with people who are arrested.
Police can look at your things. Like, your
- backpack
- clothes
- shoes.

You can leave when you are
- not drunk
- not affected by the drugs.

You will get all your things back from the police.
Drug dogs

The police have drug dogs. They can smell illegal drugs. Dogs work at
- gaols
- railway stations
- other public spaces. Like, sports stadiums and music festivals.

A drug dog can smell drugs on you. The drug dog tells the police. The police can then search you for drugs.
Complaints

You can make a complaint.

Sometimes police can do the wrong thing.

Some things you can complain about are

- the police stop you in the street. They search your bag. The police do not tell you why they do this, or they do not have a good reason.
- you are arrested. The police did not need to arrest you
- the police push you over. You are hurt.

The police can not do this.
How to make your complaint

1. Go to your local police station
   Ask for the duty officer
   or
   Local Area Commander.
   This is the boss at that station.

2. Write to the Commissioner of Police at www.police.nsw.gov.au/services/complain_about_a_police_officer

3. Phone the NSW Ombudsman 1800 451 524 or go to the website www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint
More information and legal help

LawAccess NSW: 1300 888 529
Free telephone helpline for legal information and in some cases, advice.

Legal Aid NSW Youth Hotline
(if you are under 18):
1800 10 18 10

Intellectual Disability Rights Service:
02 9318 0144 or 1800 666 611

Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS):
1800 765 767. If you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander you can get free legal help from the ALS.

The Law Society of NSW can refer you to a private lawyer in your area: 02 9926 0300

Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service: The WDVCAS assists women and children experiencing domestic violence get help at court: 1300 938 227