

Changes to policing in effect: What you need to know

As of January 1, 2017, police must follow new rules for street checks. A street check, sometimes referred to as carding, is when a police officer asks someone for identifying information in a particular type of situation.

The new rules apply if an officer asks you to identify yourself when they are:

- looking into suspicious activities
- gathering intelligence
- investigating general criminal activity in the community

The new rules do not apply if the officer is:

- talking to a driver during a traffic stop
- arresting or detaining you
- executing a warrant
- investigating a specific crime

If a police officer asks you for ID in a situation when the rules apply, they must:

- have a reason, which cannot be:
 - based on race
 - arbitrary (not meaningful)
 - only because you are in a high-crime area
 - because you refused to answer a question or walked away
- tell you why they want your identifying information
- tell you that you can refuse to give identifying information
- offer you a receipt – even if you refuse to share information – that includes:
 - the officer's name
 - the officer's badge number
 - how to contact the Office of the Independent Police Review Director, which handles complaints about police in Ontario
 - who to contact to access personal information about you that the police service has on file
- keep detailed records of their interaction with you.

In rare cases, if following the rules above could negatively affect an investigation, threaten public safety or force officers to reveal confidential information, police officers may not have to:

- tell you why they are asking for information (e.g. the reason involves a tip from a confidential informant)
- tell you that you have the right to refuse giving ID (e.g. the officer suspects a car passenger may be a victim of human trafficking)
- give you a receipt from the interaction (e.g. the officer receives an urgent call for service and must quickly end the interaction).

In these cases, the officer must record their reason for not following the rule.

Get more information at ontario.ca/streetchecks

