



### If A Police Officer Comes To Your Door

- First make sure that the individual is really a law enforcement official, by requesting to see a badge and/or identification card
- Make sure the officer(s) are at the correct residence. They should have a warrant, be actively investigating a crime, or be in “hot pursuit” of an individual suspected of committing a crime and running into your residence. If the officers do not have a warrant or are not in hot pursuit, you can deny them entry

### If You Are Arrested

- You are entitled to know why you are being arrested
- You have a right not to make incriminating statements which might be used against you at a later time
- You are entitled to an attorney; Therefore, you should always have the number of a person you can rely on to contact an attorney on your behalf

### If You Feel That The Officer Treated You Unfairly Or Inappropriately

Innocent individuals are often offended and/or angered as a result of being detained by an officer for questioning. Although the delay might be inconvenient, the officer is justified in his actions if he or she believes that there is a reason (reasonable suspicion) to stop you and ask questions.

Examples of reasonable suspicion might include questioning about a crime or incident which occurred recently in the area, particularly if your clothing and/or physical description matches the description of a suspect relating to a recent crime, someone placing a complaint about your presence, or ongoing suspicious activity or behavior. The officer does not want to detain you any longer than necessary. A few minutes of cooperation will speed up the process and get you on your way.

However, if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or inappropriately, and you decide to file a complaint, you can do so in a number of ways:

## How To File a Complaint

### Against Public Safety

#### EOAA

Employees, students, and third parties may contact EOAA to inquire about their rights under University policies, request assistance, seek information about filing a complaint, or report conduct or behavior that may violate these policies.

103 Low Library, MC 4333      Medical Center hours  
212-854-5511                      by appointment only - 212-854-5511  
eoaa@columbia.edu  
http://eoaa.columbia.edu

#### OMBUDS OFFICE

The Ombuds Office offers a confidential place to discuss workplace issues, academic concerns, issues relating to administrative paperwork and process, explanation and interpretation of policies and procedures, and many other issues or concerns.

<b>Medical Center</b> 154 Haven Avenue Room 412 Tel: 212-304-7026	<b>Morningside Heights</b> 660 Schermerhorn Extension 1200 Amsterdam Avenue Tel: 212-854-1234
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#### PUBLIC SAFETY

The Department of Public Safety welcomes your comments concerning our service to the Columbia community.

#### You may contact us at any hour by calling:

Morningside 212 854-2797 / Medical Center 212 305-8100 /  
Manhattanville 212 853-3301

#### You may send any correspondence to:

Columbia University Department of Public Safety  
535 W 116 Street, Room 101 Low Library  
New York, NY 10027  
Mail Code 4301 or e-mail: publicsafety@columbia.edu.

#### You can visit our offices at the following locations:

<b>Morningside</b>	Low Library, Room 101 535 W. 116th Street, New York, NY 10027
<b>Medical Center</b>	Black Building, Rm. 109 650 W. 168th Street, New York, NY 10032
<b>Manhattanville</b>	Public Safety Operations Center 3270 Broadway, New York, NY 10027

### Against N.Y.P.D.

If you want to file a complaint against the police for misconduct or corruption, you should notify the N.Y.P.D.'s Internal Affairs Bureau (I.A.B.) by phone, letter or in person at:

315 Hudson Street, 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10038  
212-741-8401

For complaints of unnecessary use of force, abuse of authority, discourtesy or offensive language, you should notify the Civilian Complaint Review Board (C.C.R.B.) by phone, letter or in person at:

100 Church Street, 10th floor  
New York, NY 10007  
212-NEW-YORK or 311  
1-800-341-2272

### Other Useful University Numbers

Alice! CU's Health Education Program: 212-854-5453

Affirmative Action/EOAA: 212-854-5511

CUEMS (Emergency Medical Services): 212-854-5555

Ombuds Office:      Morningside 212-854-1234  
                                 Medical Center 212-304-7026

Gay Health Advocacy Project: 212-854-7970

Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-621-HOPE

Mt. Sinai/St. Luke's Hospital Crime Victim Treatment Center:  
212-523-4728

NYS Office of Victim Services: 800-247-8035

### Statement on Racial Profiling

The Department of Public Safety is committed to the impartial enforcement of laws, University policies and Constitutional rights. Therefore, to emphasize these commitments and to ensure that all members of the Department engage only in constitutionally sound public safety practices, the Department prohibits the use of racial profiling in all of its interactions with the Columbia Community. Racial profiling is defined as the use of race, color, ethnicity or national origin as the determinative factor for initiating action.

All interactions involving Public Safety personnel and those whom we serve will be conducted in accordance with the safeguards provided by the U.S. Constitution and University policies. Officers must be able to articulate the factors which led them to take action, in particular those factors leading to reasonable suspicion for stopping and questioning persons and for requesting identification from them. Officers are also reminded that the use of characteristics such as religion, age, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation as the determinative factor for taking action is prohibited.

While performing their duties, officers are reminded that this policy in no way precludes them from taking into account the reported race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation of a specific suspect in the same way the member would use pedigree information, e.g., height, weight, age, etc., about specific suspects.



PRIDE • PROFESSIONALISM • SERVICE



## Your Rights and Responsibilities

When Interacting with Public Safety Personnel at Columbia



# A Welcome Message

## From The Vice President For Public Safety James F. McShane

On behalf of the men and women of Columbia University's Department of Public Safety, I welcome you to our campus. As a member of the Columbia University community, you are about to enjoy a unique experience at a world class University located in the most exciting big city in the world and the safest big city in America.

Because Columbia is located in a major urban environment, you may experience some of the various issues that are common to most urban communities, including crime. At the Department of Public Safety, we are committed to providing a safe environment for all faculty, staff, students, residents and visitors to the University. We are committed to working closely with the Columbia University community, and the New York City Police Department to make our campus, and the surrounding environment as safe as it can possibly be.

We are doing this by adhering faithfully to our values of "Pride–Professionalism–Service." We are also doing it by engaging everyone in the business of public safety. Safety is a shared responsibility and the Department of Public Safety's highest priority is to help you develop tools to navigate any large, diverse urban community safely and easily. A key element in this strategy is to provide you with guidelines on how to communicate effectively and interact positively with members of the Department of Public Safety, as well as with other law enforcement agencies within our community, as well as in other urban settings.

To enhance communication, respect and trust between Public Safety officers and our community, we have prepared this brochure, "Your Rights & Responsibilities When Interacting with Public Safety personnel at Columbia." It is designed to increase your understanding of how best to respond if you are stopped by a Public Safety or Police Officer, whether on campus or elsewhere, and to enhance communications between the Department of Public Safety and the community we serve.

If you have any questions about this brochure or about any other aspect of the Department of Public Safety and the services we offer, please refer to the last page of this guide for a listing of Public Safety contact numbers, web site address, and contact information for various resource centers at Columbia University. If you have any comments or suggestions, you can register them by visiting our website at <https://publicsafety.columbia.edu>. You can also contact our 24 hour a day Operations Centers at 212-854-2797 on the Morningside Campus, at 212-305-8100 on the Medical Center Campus or at 212-853-3301 on the Manhattanville Campus. We welcome your input!

Please remember that the Department of Public Safety is your safety resource at Columbia University. As such, you have my commitment that members of this Department will provide fair, equitable and professional services to every member of our community. We are committed to our values of "Pride, Professionalism and Service."

# First Impressions

Remember, the first words of any encounter, whether spoken by the officer(s) or the student/citizen(s) involved, may well determine the tone of an encounter and even the eventual success of the outcome. Law enforcement, by its very nature, is both a difficult and dangerous profession. Many police officers are killed each year and even more are injured. Public Safety Officers routinely find themselves in situations with very little useful information and very little time to react to potentially life threatening situations. Consequently, officers are routinely trained to place a great deal of emphasis on their safety and survival. This heightened sense of caution can sometimes create communication problems between officers and the public they serve. This communication gap can be even greater in a university environment.

At Columbia University, our Public Safety Officers have been trained and encouraged to interact with you in a professional manner and to treat you with respect. If you are stopped, questioned, or detained by a Public Safety Officer or other law enforcement official, it will help facilitate the encounter if you interact with him or her in a respectful and professional manner, as well.

We realize it is difficult to be calm when you feel you have been unjustly stopped or questioned. However, the following suggestions have proven very helpful in ensuring that a police encounter does not escalate into a more serious incident. Remember always to:

- Maintain your composure
- Comply with any reasonable requests, particularly a request to produce appropriate identification
- Conduct yourself in a mature and respectful manner
- Avoid any action or language that might be deemed inappropriate or which might needlessly escalate the situation

If these suggestions are followed, there is a much greater likelihood that the encounter will conclude expeditiously and successfully with a minimum of stress to all of the participants. It is our hope that every encounter can be conducted in a courteous and respectful manner. These guidelines will facilitate that outcome.



# Your Basic Rights And Responsibilities

## If You Are Stopped By A Police Officer

Law enforcement officers are trained to explain to you why you are being stopped. In most instances, the explanation may not be offered until after they have received pertinent information from you. If you are stopped or detained by an officer and you have a question, you should politely ask the officer why you are being stopped.

Don't always assume that if you are stopped by an officer you are a suspect. The officer may simply be approaching you to have a conversation about an ongoing investigation. If the officer has a "reasonable suspicion" that you may be carrying a weapon, you may be subjected to a "pat-down" search. Officers are permitted by law to conduct a "pat-down" search for officer safety. In all cases, remember these key points:

- Be polite
- Stay calm: control your words, body language and emotions
- Answer all questions. Your answers should be factual and to the best of your knowledge
- Speak clearly
- Remember, you are not required to give testimony against yourself. You have Fifth Amendment rights, which protect you from incriminating yourself.
- Don't argue, complain or "bad mouth" the officer
- Keep your hands visible and refrain from using hand gestures
- Don't touch the officer
- Don't attempt to run or resist

We realize this is difficult, but it is necessary to ensure everyone's safety during this stop. Please do not resist the search. Obey all requests made of you unless the request poses a risk to your personal safety or well-being. In that case, calmly ask the officer to request that his/her supervisor come to your location.



## If You Are Stopped On Campus By Officers From The Department of Public Safety

The Columbia University Campus, although generally open to the public, is private property. As such, the University may restrict or deny access to anyone, particularly persons who are not affiliated with the university and those who have no bona-fide reason for being on campus. Access to this campus, like any other private property, is a privilege, rather than a right.

Naturally, those persons who are affiliated with the University are afforded greater latitude across campus. It is for that reason that our Public Safety Officers will routinely ask persons for identification. In particular, they are attempting to determine whether or not you are a member of the Columbia Community.

Therefore, when you are asked for your identification on campus, you have an obligation to provide it as a means of confirming your status and, consequently, your right to be on Columbia property. After you have produced your identification and verified your status, you are entitled to an explanation as to why you were stopped and questioned.

## If You Are Stopped By The Police While Driving Your Car

- Slow down and pull over safely when you can. If the police vehicle is unmarked and you cannot identify the driver as a uniformed police officer, drive below the speed limit to a well-lit, populated spot and then pull over.
- Stay in the driver's seat with your hands on the steering wheel in sight of the officer. Do not try to exit your vehicle unless asked to do so by the officer. Getting out of your car can be perceived as aggressive behavior and a threat to the officer's safety. Turn on your interior light if you are stopped at night.
- Comply with the officer's request to see your driver's license and/or registration. If they are in the glove box or under the seat, tell the officer and then slowly retrieve them.
- Please do not debate the reason for the stop with the officer. Police officers should provide specific reasons for the stop before or after they have received your license and registration.
- If you wish to offer an explanation of your circumstances when stopped, do so before the officer returns to his vehicle. The officer cannot void a ticket once it has been written. If you believe you have been treated unfairly during this stop, ask to speak to the officer's supervisor or follow the procedures at the end of this pamphlet that show you where and how to file a complaint with the N.Y.P.D.
- If the officer has "probable cause," your car may be searched without a court-issued warrant. If you are the driver and/or owner of the car and do not want your vehicle searched, you have the right to inform the officer clearly of your non-consent in a polite manner.