

Search and Seizure

311.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Both the federal and state Constitutions provide every individual with the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures. This policy provides general guidelines for Berkeley Police Department personnel to consider when dealing with search and seizure issues.

311.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Berkeley Police Department to respect the fundamental privacy rights of individuals. Members of this department will conduct searches in strict observance of the constitutional rights of persons being searched. All seizures by this department will comply with relevant federal and state law governing the seizure of persons and property.

The Department will provide relevant and current training to officers as guidance for the application of current law, local community standards and prosecutorial considerations regarding specific search and seizure situations, as appropriate.

311.3 SEARCHES

The U.S. Constitution generally provides that a valid warrant is required in order for a search to be valid. There are, however, several exceptions that permit a warrantless search.

Examples of law enforcement activities that are exceptions to the general warrant requirement include, but are not limited to, searches pursuant to the following:

- Valid consent
- Incident to a lawful arrest
- Legitimate community caretaking interests
- Vehicle searches under certain circumstances
- Exigent circumstances

Certain other activities are recognized by federal and state courts and by certain statutes as legitimate law enforcement activities that also do not require a warrant. Such activities may include seizure and examination of abandoned property, and observations of activities and property located on open public areas.

Because case law regarding search and seizure is constantly changing and subject to interpretation by the courts, each member of this department is expected to act in each situation according to current training and his/her familiarity with clearly established rights as determined by case law.

Whenever practicable, officers are encouraged to contact a supervisor to resolve questions regarding search and seizure issues prior to electing a course of action.

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311.4 SEARCH PROTOCOL

Although conditions will vary and officer safety and other exigencies must be considered in every search situation, the following guidelines should be followed whenever circumstances permit:

- (a) Members of this department will strive to conduct searches with dignity and courtesy.
- (b) Officers should explain to the person being searched the reason for the search.
- (c) Searches should be carried out with due regard and respect for private property interests and in a manner that minimizes damage. Property should be left in a condition as close as reasonably possible to its pre-search condition.
- (d) In order to minimize the need for forcible entry, an attempt should be made to obtain keys, combinations or access codes when a search of locked property is anticipated.
- (e) When the person to be searched is of the opposite sex as the searching officer, a reasonable effort should be made to summon an officer of the same sex as the subject to conduct the search. When it is not practicable to summon an officer of the same sex as the subject, the following guidelines should be followed:
 - 1. Another officer or a supervisor should witness the search.
 - 2. The officer should not search areas of the body covered by tight-fitting clothing, sheer clothing or clothing that could not reasonably conceal a weapon.

311.5 ASKING IF A PERSON IS ON PROBATION OR PAROLE

In an effort to foster community trust, officers should not ask if a person is on probation or parole when a person has satisfactorily identified themselves, either verbally or by presenting identification documents.

Officers may determine probation or parole status through standard records checks conducted in the course of a traffic safety or investigative stop. Officers should only ask when necessary to:

- (a) Protect the safety of others, the person detained, or officers;
- (b) Further a specific law enforcement investigative purpose (for example, sorting out multiple computer returns on a common name);
- (c) To confirm probation and parole status subsequent to a records check.

If an officer needs to ask the question, "Are you on probation or parole?" the officer should do so while treating the person with dignity and respect, and being mindful that people may take offense at the question.

311.6 WARRANTLESS SEARCHES OF INDIVIDUALS ON SUPERVISED RELEASE SEARCH CONDITIONS

In accordance with California law, individuals on probation, parole, Post Release Community Supervision, or other supervised release status may be subject to warrantless search as a condition of their probation. Officers shall only conduct probation or parole searches to further a

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legitimate law enforcement purpose. Searches shall not be conducted in an arbitrary, capricious, or harassing fashion.

Officers shall not detain and search a person on probation or parole solely because the officer is aware of that person's probation or parole status. The decision to detain a person and conduct a probation or parole search, or otherwise enforce probation or parole conditions, should be made, at a minimum, in connection with articulable facts that create a reasonable suspicion that a person may have committed a crime, be committing a crime, or be about to commit a crime.

311.7 DOCUMENTATION

Officers shall document, via MDT disposition, Field Interview, Incident or Case Report, any search of a person, vehicle or location. Officers should consider documenting, as applicable, the following:

- Reason for the search
- Any efforts used to minimize the intrusiveness of any search (e.g., asking for consent or keys)
- What, if any, injuries or damage occurred
- All steps taken to secure property
- The results of the search, including a description of any property or contraband seized
- If the person searched is the opposite sex, any efforts to summon an officer of the same sex as the person being searched and the identification of any witness officer

Supervisors shall review reports to ensure the reports are accurate, that actions are properly documented and that current legal requirements and department policy have been met.