

# Student Guide to Police Practices

Prepared by the Police Ombudsman and Spokane Police Department



The goal of the Student Guide to Police Practices is to provide you with information to help you make smart decisions as you interact with police, peers and other members of the community. The Guide contains basic information about your legal rights, common crimes, and how to avoid becoming the victim of a crime. It isn't intended to replace legal advice from a lawyer. We hope you will find the Guide helpful.



August 2013

# Mayor and City Council



## **David A. Condon**

Mayor, City of Spokane

Term: 2012-2015

[mayor@spokanecity.org](mailto:mayor@spokanecity.org)



## **Ben Stuckart**

City Council President, At Large

Term: 2012 - 2015

[bstuckart@spokanecity.org](mailto:bstuckart@spokanecity.org)



## **Amber Waldref**

City Council Member, District 1

Term: 2010 - 2013

[awaldref@spokanecity.org](mailto:awaldref@spokanecity.org)



## **Mike Fagan**

City Council Member, District 1

Term: 2012 - 2015

[mfagan@spokanecity.org](mailto:mfagan@spokanecity.org)



## **Jon Snyder**

City Council Member, District 2

Term: 2010 - 2013

[jsnyder@spokanecity.org](mailto:jsnyder@spokanecity.org)



## **Mike Allen**

City Council Member, District 2

Term: 2012 - 2015

[mallen@spokanecity.org](mailto:mallen@spokanecity.org)



## **Steve Salvatori**

City Council Member, District 3

Term: 2012 - 2015

[ssalvatori@spokanecity.org](mailto:ssalvatori@spokanecity.org)



## **Nancy McLaughlin**

City Council Member, District 3

Term: 2010 - 2013

[nmclaughlin@spokanecity.org](mailto:nmclaughlin@spokanecity.org)

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# Letter from Mayor David Condon



Dear Spokane Student,

As Mayor, I am proud to serve all the citizens of the City of Spokane, including our youth. It's important to me that young people today want to stay in Spokane and be part of the future of our community.

I tell students that they have a strong voice. I firmly believe that elected officials should pay attention to students because they will have to live with the long-term consequences of any decision.

As a City, we are working to improve trust between the Spokane Police Department and our citizens. This guide for students is designed to help you feel more comfortable when you interact with police officers, and it introduces you to our Police Ombudsman's Office, which can be a resource for you.

It is my hope that after reading the "Student's Guide to Police Practices," you'll have a better understanding of your rights, how to communicate better with those in authority, and why officers respond the way they do.

Thank you for your interest in our community and for taking an active role in understanding the role of law enforcement. Working together, we can make Spokane the "City of Choice" in the Northwest.

Happy reading!

Mayor David Condon

# Letter from Council President Ben Stuckart



Hello Everyone,

One of the most important things that the City Council Office can do is to ensure that the people we have been elected to represent have trust and confidence in the decisions that we make and the way that we represent our community. This also holds true for our professional police department. It is imperative that citizens have trust and confidence in the way its officers perform their work. We are proud of the positive relationships we have established over the years with the diverse groups of people who live, work and play in Spokane. We are also proud to support the development and distribution of the "Student's Guide to Police Practices" because it will help inform Spokane's youth about what their rights are when interacting with the police as well as educate them about why police officers take the actions they do to ensure the safety of our community as a whole.

We are also proud of the working relationship we have established with the Office of the Police Ombudsman. The goals of our two departments are the same, in that we want to ensure that our citizens are represented and that when issues arise they are thoroughly and fairly investigated. As such, it is my hope that this guide will help foster a spirit of mutual understanding and friendship between the youth of Spokane and the police officers who serve them.

Thank you for taking the time to read and study this guide.

Sincerely,

Ben Stuckart  
City Council President

# Letter from Police Chief Frank G. Straub, Jr



Dear Spokane Student,

On behalf of the Spokane Police Department, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you this Student Handbook, which was developed for you to acquaint you with police practices and citizen rights. We are proud to support the development and distribution of the “Student’s Guide to Police Practices” by the Office of Police Ombudsman. The information in this handbook informs you of your rights when interacting with the Spokane Police Department. It also is meant to explain why police officers take the actions they do to ensure the safety of our community.

The community must have trust and confidence in their police officers. The Spokane Police Department is working very hard to establish positive relationships with our community and the citizens we serve.

We have established a good working relationship with the Office of the Police Ombudsman. Our goals are the same: we want to ensure that any allegations of police misconduct are investigated thoroughly, objectively and timely. I believe that this guide will help foster a spirit of mutual understanding between the youth of Spokane and our police officers. Please contact our Internal Affairs office if you have a question regarding any police activity. The phone number to the Internal Affairs Unit is 509-835-4588. You may also contact the Internal Affairs office by using our website, [spokanepolice.org](http://spokanepolice.org).

Thank you for taking the time to read and study this guide.

Sincerely,

Frank G. Straub, Jr  
Chief of Police

**Letter from**  
**Spokane Public Schools**  
**Shelley Redinger, Ph.D.**  
**Superintendent**



Dear Students,

Spokane Public Schools employs a team of commissioned police officers dedicated to promoting and protecting the safety of every student. Since these officers are assigned to our schools, they are able to build relationships with our student and parent towards fostering a safe learning environment. School Resource Officers are police officers---the main difference is they are assigned to work at and around schools.

School safety is everyone's responsibility. Each of you must report anything that may jeopardize your safety, or the safety of any student. Please tell a teacher, counselor, Principal, a parent, or a Resource Officer. Spokane Public Schools also has an anonymous tip line 354-SAFE (7233) and we partner with CRIME STOPPERS of Spokane (800) 222-TIPS) if students are more comfortable reporting to a 3rd party other than law enforcement.

We need everyone's help with safety in our schools and in our community. Remember, "if you see something--say something."

Thank you for taking the time to read and study this guide.

Sincerely,

Shelley K. Redinger, Ph.D.  
Superintendent  
Spokane Public Schools





## If you are contacted by the police:

### REMAIN CALM

Don't assume the worst. Fear and adrenaline can create problems for both you and the officer.

### BE RESPECTFUL

This includes your attitude and the way you act. Don't raise your voice or "cop an attitude." Treat the officer the way you would like to be treated.

### FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

Don't resist arrest or run away. Failure to follow an officer's directions can lead to arrest, serious injuries, or death. This is not the time to challenge the officer. If necessary, you can file a complaint later or argue your case in court.

### TELL THE TRUTH

It's better not to say anything to a police officer than to lie. Lying to an officer is risky and is a crime in some cases. If the officer finds out you lied, s/he probably won't believe anything else that you say and, in some cases, is a crime.

### KEEP YOUR HANDS OPEN AND WHERE THE OFFICER CAN SEE THEM

Don't put your hands in your pockets or reach for something out of view. The officer may think you have a weapon. Don't reach for something in your backpack, on the floor of your car, or in your belt or waistband unless the officer gives you permission.

### AVOID MAKING SUDDEN MOVEMENTS

Again, the officer may think you're trying to take out a weapon or trying to hide something.



# Police Practices

## Consensual Encounters

A “consensual encounter” is when an officer contacts you and the officer has no legal reason to suspect you are doing anything wrong. **This type of police contact usually involves a police officer asking for basic information like your name, address, date of birth, and probation status.** You can ask the officer if you are free to leave. If the officer says yes, they should not stop you from leaving because the conversation is voluntary. Sometimes a consensual encounter becomes a detention.

## Detentions

If the officer says you’re NOT free to go, you are being detained. **If an officer has a suspicion that a crime has occurred, the officer may detain you in order to investigate their suspicions.** The officer may write your name and other information down. This doesn’t mean you’re under arrest. The information is used to track investigations they conduct in the field. The officer may take a picture of you or your tattoos. They are allowed to do this if you give them permission, or if you are being detained for a specific crime. During a detention, the officer may also do a “pat-down” of your clothing if they suspect you are hiding a weapon. A pat-down can lead to a search if the officer feels something that might be a weapon or illegal.

Once the investigation is done, if you’re not being taken into custody, you should be allowed to leave. **If you believe what is happening is wrong, don’t challenge the officer or run. You could end up being arrested or physically forced to cooperate.** If you think an officer has done something wrong to you, or someone else, you can later file a complaint. (Please see page 27 for information on how to file a complaint.)

## Probable Cause

If the officer forms a reasonable belief that you were involved in a crime, also known as probable cause, you may be arrested or taken into custody. Ask if you are under arrest. If you are, then ask the reasons why. You have the right to know this, but it’s best to use a respectful tone of voice.

## Miranda Rights & Arrests

When do officers have to read you your rights? On TV, it seems the police tell people their Miranda rights every time they're contacted or arrested. In reality: police officers don't have to read you your rights unless you're arrested AND you're going to be questioned about a crime.

Police officers can ask you general questions such as your name, address, and date of birth without reading you your Miranda rights. When you're read your Miranda rights, the officer should say the following things, although not necessarily in these words:

- You have the right to remain silent.
- Anything you say can be used against you in a court of law.
- You have the right to talk to a lawyer and have them present with you while you're being questioned.
- If you cannot afford to hire a lawyer, one will be appointed to represent you before any questioning if you wish.

**What's the point of reading you your Miranda rights?** The point of the Miranda rights is to inform you that what you say can, and will be used against you in court – so be careful. If you aren't sure you should talk, tell the officer you would like to speak to a lawyer before answering any questions. If you understand your rights, you may choose to speak to the officer, but doing so may put your legal rights or defense at risk. It's usually okay to provide basic information like your name, address, or date of birth.

**What happens if you are arrested, taken to a police station, or taken to the Spokane County Juvenile Detention Center?** Whether or not you're guilty, go with the officer. If you're a minor (under the age of 18), Washington state law requires that the officer immediately make a reasonable effort to contact your parents. Under Miranda, you have the right to remain silent and to talk to a lawyer before you talk to the police. You can talk to the police or tell them that you wish to remain silent, but you should provide them with your name, date of birth, address, and other identifying information when asked. After talking to a lawyer, you and your lawyer can decide how to handle your case.

You have the right to ask to see a lawyer. If you cannot pay for a lawyer, the court will assign one to represent you. This lawyer is called a “public defender.” If you are in custody (Juvenile Detention) you will meet your public defender at your first court appearance, usually within three working days of your arrest.

Immediately after being booked, or within one hour after your arrest, you have the right to make phone calls to a parent, guardian, or responsible relative. Use good judgment. Try to reach a parent or adult who can help you.

## Warrants & Searches at School

**Arrest Warrants:** Arrest warrants are orders issued by a judge to take you into custody. A warrant does not expire unless it’s taken back by the court or you’re arrested. If you think there’s a warrant for your arrest, you should call the police or sheriff’s department and ask how to take care of it. Follow up right away.

One way to avoid a warrant is to go to scheduled hearings, or court dates. If you don’t show up, and you didn’t have permission from the court ahead of time a warrant can be issued. Calling the court or writing a letter is not enough. You need a written notice from the court that your date has been rescheduled or that you don’t have to appear.

**Search Warrants:** A search warrant is an order signed by a judge, which gives officers permission to search certain areas or locations for the specific items listed in the search warrant. Officers must give you: (1) a copy of the warrant and (2) a list of any items they take. If you’re on probation or parole and have a search condition, a probation or parole officer doesn’t need a warrant to search you, your car, or your home.

**Searches on Public School Campuses:** In most cases, police officers need a search warrant based on probable cause to search you, your house, or car. In a school, officials, teachers, or officers don’t need a search warrant if they have a special need to conduct a search or suspect criminal activity. Searches can be done in schools based on “reasonable suspicion.” **If a teacher or school administrator suspects that you’re breaking a law or school policy, you may be searched.** If your personal possessions (like your backpack, locker, purse, or car) are on school property, they can be searched.

## Traffic Stops

Traffic stops are one of the most dangerous situations for police officers, especially at night. In addition to driving violations like speeding or running a red light, police officers can legally stop cars for many other reasons. Some examples are:

- Not wearing a seat belt
- Littering or throwing objects from a car
- Having only one license plate on a vehicle (you must have one in the front and one in the back)
- Covering a license plate (for example, with a thick frame)
- Placing too many stickers on the windshield
- Having cracks in the windshield
- Hanging things from the inside rearview mirror
- Having bald tires
- Illegally modifying the vehicle (exhaust, tinted windows, etc.)
- Playing music too loudly
- Covering both ears with headphones
- Having dim or broken tail or signal lights

**Driving while talking on a cell phone.** Washington State law prohibits a person under 18 from driving while using a cell phone, even if the youth is using a hands-free device. Those over 18 must use a hands-free device to talk on the phone while driving. The only exception is calling 911.

Officers also can stop you if they have: (1) a warrant for your arrest (2) suspicion you're involved in a crime, or (3) probable cause to arrest you. The suspicion or probable cause can be based on what officers have seen or on information from witnesses or other official sources.

**What happens if you are stopped while driving a car?** When asked, show your driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance. An officer may instruct you to remain inside the vehicle or to step out of the car while they decide if you will be given a ticket. This is for officer safety and you should obey these orders.

Normally, your car can't be searched without your permission or a warrant, unless emergency or critical circumstances exist. Be respectful toward the officer. Do not physically resist, yell, or insult the officer. You can file a complaint later or argue your case in court.

**Driving Under the Age of 18** - Driving in Washington while under the age of 18 is controlled by very specific laws. For instance, there are restrictions on teens driving with other teens in the car. For further information, call your local Washington Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or go to their website at [dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/teens](http://dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/teens).

**Zero Tolerance for Drinking and Driving** - Washington State law is very clear: if you're under 21 and driving a car with any alcohol in your system you can be arrested. The charge for this violation is a misdemeanor. If you're suspected of drunk driving and refuse a blood, urine, or breath test, your driver's license will be suspended. It's illegal to have any bottles or cans of alcohol, even if they're unopened, in your vehicle if you are under 21. Both the driver and any passengers may receive a ticket. Driving under the influence of marijuana or any other drug also is against the law.

### **Driving Without a Driver's License.**

If you have a driver's license or learner's permit, you must have it with you any time you are driving a vehicle. If you're stopped and you don't have your license or permit with you, you may receive a ticket and/or not be allowed to drive away.

If you've never been given a driver's license by the DMV or if it's been suspended, driving without a license is more serious. You'll be given a ticket and you may be arrested. Your car may be towed or the officer may let you call someone else who has a license to drive the car home. It's up to the officer.

If the car is towed it will cost a lot of money to get it back. You will be required to go to court. If your vehicle has been impounded by the Spokane Police, you may want to call the Municipal Court Clerk's Office at 625.4400 for information for an impound hearing.

### **Traffic Stop Searches**

Be aware that if you or a passenger in your car is on probation or parole, officers can stop you. If your probation or parole order contains a search clause, they can search you as a condition of your probation or parole. They can usually search your car as well. If you're not on probation or parole but your passenger is, they can only search the areas of the car that were in your passenger's reach.

## Skateboards

You must wear a safety helmet to ride a skateboard in a skate park or on public property in the City of Spokane. Elbow pads and knee pads are recommended. Unless you're crossing in a crosswalk, never ride your skateboard in a street or roadway.

## Bicycles

Biking is fun and good for your health, if you ride safely. Bicycle riders must follow most traffic laws, including stopping at stop signs, signaling when turning, riding with the flow of traffic, and giving pedestrians the right-of-way. If you are riding a bicycle you must wear a helmet. If you're riding at night, be sure to wear reflective clothing, use a front light, and rear reflector and side reflectors. Sit on a regular, attached seat, not on someone's handlebars, center frame, or over the rear tire. Don't wear a radio headset while biking. Drivers may not see you so always watch for cars and stay alert. You may register your bicycle at your local C.O.P. S. shop to help in recovering the bicycle in the event of a theft.

## Safely Surrendered Baby Law

The Safely Surrendered Baby Law (also known as the Safe Haven Law) allows a parent who is not able or willing to care for an infant to surrender the newborn baby to a Safe Haven location within 72 hours of birth. As long as there are no signs of abuse or neglect, the parent will not be arrested or prosecuted for abandoning the child. In Washington state, a newborn may be surrendered to any hospital emergency (recommended first choice), a fire station during its hours of operation, or a federally designated rural health clinic during its hours of operation.

A baby can be safely surrendered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Every baby deserves a chance for a healthy life. For more information, call a local emergency room.





# Common Crimes

## that sometimes involve young people...

This section describes common crimes that sometimes involve young people. Some of the crimes are misdemeanors that carry a fine, and possible jail time. Others are more serious and have stronger penalties. The punishment may be increased if you have been convicted of the same type of crime in the past, the crimes are gang related, or if a gun was involved.

### Trespassing

You're trespassing if you enter property without permission. If a "No Trespassing" sign is posted or you don't leave a business or other private property (or you return) after being asked to leave by an authorized person, you are trespassing.

### Jaywalking

Cross the street only at crosswalks or intersecting unless a police officer directs you to do something else.

### Loitering

To loiter means to delay, linger, or "hang out" in a school or public place without an acceptable purpose. Other locations include parking lots, convenience stores, malls, and parks, after closing.

### Disturbing the Peace

It's illegal to create unreasonably loud noises that disturb the peace and quiet of any neighborhood. Among other things, this includes loud music, noisy car exhaust systems, and repeatedly honking a car horn.

### Street Racing

Street racing, also known as "drag racing," is a form of illegal car racing. Each year, hundreds of people are injured or killed while drag racing. Don't risk your health and safety, or anyone else's, by street racing. Don't put your freedom or car on the line.

## **Shoplifting**

Shoplifting usually involves taking something from a store without paying for it. It also can involve changing the price tag on an item or eating food and leaving without paying the bill. If you are charged with shoplifting, it will be treated as either a misdemeanor or a felony depending on: (1) the value of the item stolen and (2) your criminal record. Teenagers who shoplift sometimes do it for the thrill. Penalties can range from small fines, probation, and community service, to juvenile detention, jail, or prison time.

## **Truancy or “Cutting School”**

In Washington state, eight to 18 year olds are required to go to school. Truancy is a crime. A student is truant if they are absent from a Spokane Public School for half a day or more without a valid excuse. A valid excuse is one that falls within the school district’s guidelines and is written by your parent or guardian. (Examples: illness or family death.)

Consequences for cutting school include being returned to school, being referred to counseling, and school disciplinary action, not to mention failing your classes. Legal action may be taken if a student keeps cutting school. Students can be referred to juvenile court and ordered to serve time in juvenile detention. In Spokane, your parents may be fined.

## **Disrupting or Interfering with Classes**

It’s illegal to disrupt classes or other school activities on purpose. Anyone who comes onto school grounds or nearby sidewalks and interferes with school activities may be charged with a crime.

## **Fighting & Threatening Others**

An assault or battery that occurs on or off school property is against the law. An assault is a threat or an attempt to hit someone when you have the ability to do so. Fighting is battery (the unlawful touching of another), even if it’s just one punch. Other examples of battery are: pulling hair, shoving, spitting, and throwing food or something else at someone. Threats to seriously injure or kill someone when THEY believe you have the ability to carry out that threat is illegal.

It’s illegal to try to stop a school employee or officer from performing their duties by threatening to hurt the employee or to damage his or her property if the employee feels that you can carry out the threat.

## Drugs & Alcohol

It's illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to possess alcohol. It's illegal to buy it and illegal for someone else (including parents) to buy it for you.

Sometimes people take drugs and drink alcohol to make them feel smart, confident, happy, energetic, or relaxed. The problem is that these feelings are not real and, whether you use drugs or alcohol once in a while or all the time, it's illegal. The only drugs you can legally take are those that a doctor prescribes for you. Sometimes people take medicine prescribed for someone else. Taking someone else's prescribed medicine or using street drugs of any kind, is dangerous and against the law.

Drugs and alcohol may cause a person to make bad decisions, harm themselves or put themselves in risky situations. Many lives have been ruined because of drug or alcohol addiction. You may not be able to do anything about your friend's decision to take drugs or use alcohol, but you have the choice to stay away from drugs and alcohol yourself. Be smart. Don't do drugs or alcohol. **If you want to stop drinking, call Alcoholics Anonymous at 509.624.1442. If you want to stop using drugs, call Narcotics Anonymous at 509.325.5045.**

## Vandalism & Graffiti ("Tagging")

It is a crime to damage, destroy, or deface a school building, or any public or private building or structure without permission, including fences, vehicles, mailboxes, street signs, etc.

Graffiti is a form of vandalism and damages what communities have worked to build. It involves putting words, figures, marks or designs on property that doesn't belong to you. Punishment for vandalism or graffiti usually includes a fine. The amount depends on how much damage was done and can get as high as several thousand dollars. If you can't afford to pay, your parents or guardians may be forced to pay the fine for you. You may receive jail time in addition to a fine, especially if it isn't the first time you've been found guilty. Other punishments may include community service, cleaning, repairing, or replacing the damaged property – with or without your parents' help. The court may require that you get counseling.

Some view graffiti, “tagging,” as a form of art but it can lead to serious trouble. Areas that are tagged are often considered to be “gang turf.” Graffiti may attract gang activity and can result in violence and retaliation.

Sometimes it’s illegal to possess items commonly used for tagging. If a minor is on a public street or other public place, it’s illegal for the minor to possess etching cream or aerosol containers of paint that can be used for tagging – even if the minor is in a car. If you intend to commit vandalism or graffiti, it’s illegal to possess things like glass cutters, chisels, and certain felt tip markers.

If you see someone in the process of tagging call 911. To request that graffiti be removed it has to be reported first. Call Crime Check to report it at 509.456.2233, or contact a neighborhood C.O.P.S. shop.

# Crime Check **456-2233**

*Need to report a CRIME?*





## **We need everyone's help to protect our parks.**

Precious budget dollars that could be going into new features and maintenance are being channeled into significant vandalism repair and graffiti removal.

For example, in the last few days of August 2011:

- Play equipment at Shadle Park destroyed by fire could cost an estimated \$50,000 to replace
- Picnic tables at Logan Park were destroyed
- A garbage can from Fairview Park was stolen and smashed into neighbor's cars and all the sprinkler heads in the park were broken off
- Police were called numerous times to break up beer parties and assist with additional minor incidents in Manito Park
- In Riverfront Park an estimated \$30,000 a year is spent for staff and materials to repair vandalism and remove graffiti

Here's what the public can do to help:

Be aware and report suspicious behavior.

The Spokane Department of Emergency Management coordinates the "See Something, Say Something" Campaign.

### **Report Suspicious Behavior**

509.477.2204

### **Report Crimes to Crime Check**

509.456.2233

### **Report Park Vandalism & Graffiti to Parks Operations**

509.363.5455



## Gang Activity

An illegal gang is a group of three or more people with a common name or symbol who are or have been involved in a pattern of committing crimes. Gang members can be male or female and almost any age. They may gather in a certain location and claim it as their “turf.” In Spokane the gangs currently are not considered territorial, therefore turf is not as significant here as it is in other areas of the United States. Gang members display their membership in a number of ways. They have particular tattoos or haircuts and may wear clothes that are a specific color or have a certain number or logo on them. Sometimes they do not display any identifying marks or symbols.

It’s not illegal to join a gang, but because many gang members participate in activities that are illegal, like selling drugs, stealing, and violence, members often end up in Juvenile Detention, prison, or on probation or parole. Police officers have a responsibility to keep the City safe from criminal activity.

Young people may join gangs to gain friends, “respect,” and a sense of belonging. Others say their family members were gang members and were pressured into joining or needed gang protection. No matter what the reason, joining a gang may have very negative results. A person who joins a gang becomes the immediate enemy of rival gangs. The new gang member and their family are “marked” by enemy gangs and may be attacked, seriously injured, or killed. This can occur even if a person is not a gang member but hangs around with other gang members.

Sometimes a young person who is not a gang member dresses like one to look cool. This is dangerous because it can attract the attention of enemy gangs. Gangs have been known to use girls, children, or gang “wannabes” to hold their drugs, act as look-outs, or help commit crimes. This puts non-gang members at risk of gang retaliation and arrest.

If you join a gang, it will be difficult to get out. The gang may not let you quit so it’s best not to join in the first place. If you have questions about gangs or how to get out of a gang, call the Spokane Violent Crime Gang Enforcement Team at 509.625.4264.

For more information about gangs in Spokane  
please visit our gang website at  
**[StopSpokanegangs.org](http://StopSpokanegangs.org)**

## Bullying

Bullying is repeatedly acting hurtful toward another person, usually someone less powerful. It can involve teasing, threatening, name calling, hitting, kicking, spitting, and/or pushing. Bullying can occur in person, by cell phone, e-mail or social media. Sometimes bullying is “hate-motivated” which means it’s done against a particular person because of his or her race, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disabilities. Bullies may think that they look cool but the truth is that only weak people bully. Bullying someone else is not something to be proud of and can lead to criminal charges.

## Cyberbullying

Online bullying, called cyberbullying, happens when someone uses the internet, cell phones, or other devices to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person. Some youth who cyberbully:

- Pretend they are other people online to trick others
- Spread lies and rumors about victims
- Trick people into revealing personal information
- Send, post, or forward mean text messages, blogs, or emails
- Post pictures of victims without their consent

Although cyberbullies may think they are anonymous, they can be found. If you are cyberbullied or harassed and need help, save all cyberbully communication and talk to a parent, teacher, police officer, or an adult you trust. There are ways to prevent cyberbullying:

- Refuse to pass along cyberbullying messages
- Tell friends to stop cyberbullying
- Block communication with cyberbullies
- Report cyberbullying to a trusted adult

Don’t forget that even though you can’t see a cyberbully or the bully’s victim, cyberbullying causes real problems. If you wouldn’t say it in person, don’t say it online.



## Weapons on Campus

It's a felony to have a firearm (gun) at school. A felony is a serious crime which may result in being sent to a state prison for a year or more. Also, it is illegal to have plastic or toy guns, paint balls, or pellet guns. Remember that a school official can search you, your locker, purse or backpack without a warrant.

Any object that can be used to cause serious injury can be considered a weapon. Some of these objects are razors, pocket knives, billie clubs, metal knuckles, nunchucks, pellet guns, spot marker guns, explosives including fireworks, stun guns, pepper spray, and others. While the possession of some of these objects may not be illegal, their possession at a school is not allowed. Even if you're not arrested, you can be suspended or expelled.





# Youth as Victims of Crime

Everyday there are young people who experience robbery, rape, assault, domestic violence, child abuse, and other crimes. If you have been the victim of a crime, call 911. The police will investigate the crime and get you to a hospital if you need medical care.

The Spokane County Prosecutor's Office offers some important services to survivors of crime. Call Victim/Witness Department at 509.477.2525 for the juvenile department and 509.477.3646 for adults. Other agencies listed in the resource section of this Guide may also be useful to you. Remember, you're not alone.

## Staying Safe

There are steps you can take to keep safe:

- Always be aware of where you are and what's going on around you.
- Avoid dangerous situations like walking alone in an isolated area at night.
- Whenever possible, go with a friend and stay in well-lit, open areas.
- Never accept a ride from a stranger, open your door to someone you don't know or trust.
- Tell a stranger that you're home alone, and don't give your address to unknown callers – even if they say they need it for a business reason.
- If you sense trouble, trust your instincts and get away from the situation.
- If you feel you're in danger, call 911.

## Hate Crimes

In Washington a hate crime is a crime that is committed against someone because of their nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation (gay, straight, etc.), disability, or gender (male, female, transgendered). It is also a crime that is committed against someone because the victim hangs out with a person or group with one of those characteristics. Hate crimes are illegal and can lead to serious criminal charges and more severe punishments than regular crimes. If you think you have been the victim of a hate crime, report it to the police so they can try to prevent it from happening to others.

## Child Abuse

A child needs a caring and safe environment in order to grow up to be healthy and happy. Some children grow up in families that hurt or neglect them. Child abuse can be physical, sexual, or emotional. Physical abuse is when a child is hurt by punching, kicking, choking, or other ways. It can involve bruising or serious injuries like broken bones. Sexual abuse includes being touched in ways that make you uncomfortable or being forced to have sex. Emotional abuse is when a child is constantly put down or told they are no good. It can include shouting, criticizing, or swearing at a child. Neglect is when a child is not given the basic things they need to grow, like food, clothes, and medical

care. If you have been abused it's not your fault. Everyone makes mistakes, but that does not give adults the right to abuse you. If you are being abused or neglected, call the Child Abuse Reporting Hotline at 509.363.3333 or 911. If you're too afraid to call, talk to an adult you trust like a teacher or relative. Child abuse is against the law and you should not have to deal with it on your own or keep it a secret.

## Dating & Abuse

Dating violence happens when one person tries to control another person using their words or actions. Types of dating violence can include sexual assault, physical abuse, and/or emotional abuse. These types of activities can be crimes and can happen in casual, or serious, same-sex or opposite-sex relationships. It is never a victim's fault when these things happen – no one deserves to be hurt or violated in these ways.

Sometimes a victim is given alcohol or "date rape" drugs that make it hard to resist an attack and cause the victim to forget what happened.

These drugs may be slipped into a victim's drink while a person is hanging out or at a party. It is important to be aware of situations where you can become a victim of dating violence. Stay out of uncomfortable or threatening situations and know if you are in an abusive relationship.

Some signs of being in an abusive relationship include your boy or girlfriend:

- Wanting to know what you're doing all the time
- Criticizing you for little things
- Accusing you of cheating or is extremely jealous
- Not wanting you to see your family or friends
- Blaming you for everything
- Trying to control how you spend your money and what you wear
- Putting you down in front of other people
- Hurting you or threatens to hurt you
- Not allowing you to leave when you want to
- Trying to force you to have sex when you don't want to



Understand that you are not to blame and you shouldn't be ashamed to ask for help. Even though dating violence is a crime, victims may be too embarrassed to report it. There are many forms of help for dating violence, including help from the police, counselors, advocates, friends, or family. Reach out by calling 911 or the National Teen Dating Abuse 24-hour hotline at 866.331.9474 or by talking to a counselor at school. Please see the resources section of this Guide for agencies that can help if you have been a victim of abuse.

## Internet Safety

The Internet is used by millions of people all over the world, not just your friends and family. While many Internet users are friendly, some may want to hurt you.

Below are some ways to stay cyber-safe:

- Never post or share your personal information online (this includes your full name, address, telephone number, school name, parents' names, credit card number, Social Security number, date of birth, and details about where you hang out.)
- Never post personal information about your friends
- Never post sensitive information like: "Going on vacation for 2 weeks" , "Just got a new expensive toy," "Parents are gone" or "I've got the house to myself"
- Never share your internet passwords with anyone, except your parents
- Never meet anyone face-to-face who you only know online
- Never post private photos of yourself or anyone else online. Once the picture is online, it can get passed around for a long time
- Never talk about sex with strangers
- Talk to your parents about what you do online

## Running Away from Home

A young person who runs away from home is usually facing a tough problem and feels it's the only escape. The problem is that running away is dangerous and creates new problems like not having food, money, or a safe place to sleep. The police will become involved if you are reported as a missing person. If you feel there's no way to fix a problem, try talking to your parents, a relative, a teacher, a counselor, or a trusted adult. Or ask for help by calling the National Runaway Switchboard at 800.621.4000.

# Police Conduct

## Observing the Police

It is increasingly common for those near any police action and not directly involved in criminal activity to record contact between officers and citizens.

Bystanders have the right to record police officer enforcement activities.

Exceptions to this right is when the person so:

1. Jeopardizes the safety of the officers or suspect
2. Obstructs the officers and/or violates the law
3. Threatens others by words or actions
4. Attempts to incite others to violate the law

When recorded media of any kind is being sought from an uninvolved citizen, officers may:

- Make a request for the media. If the citizen voluntarily surrenders the media, they will be given the Incident number and the requesting officer's name
- Attempt to obtain witness identification and advise the citizen that the recorded media may be evidence of a crime and that it should not be tampered with, altered, or destroyed

## Profile Stops & Discrimination

When an officer bases the decision to stop someone mostly on how the person looks, their race, skin color, or the type of car they drive, without really focusing on what the person did, the officer may be making a "profile stop." If an officer treats a person differently than they treat others because of the person's race, skin color, religion, age, sex, or sexual orientation, it may be discrimination. For instance, if you're the only boy with a group of girls and you're all jaywalking, but you're the only person who gets a ticket for jaywalking, it may be discrimination. The Spokane Police Department has rules against "bias based policing" which includes profile stops and discrimination. If you feel that you were profile stopped file a complaint so your concern can be investigated.

# Police Complaints

## How to File a Complaint:

In a number of places this guide mentions your right to file a complaint/misconduct allegation against a police officer. If you feel a Spokane police officer has committed misconduct you may contact the Office of the Police Ombudsman (OPO) or the Internal Affairs Unit of the Spokane Police Department (SPD).

You don't need your parents' permission to file a complaint. You may file in person, by phone, fax, mail, or email. It's helpful to provide the date, time, and place where the incident happened. If you have criminal charges related to the incident that are pending, we suggest that you speak to an attorney before filing a complaint.

Officer commendations are welcome and deserving, and can be filed by using the same process.

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## Office of the Police Ombudsman (OPO)

The OPO is a City agency, independent of the police department, where community members can file complaints against SPD officers. Complaint investigations are conducted by the SPD and monitored and audited (reviewed) by the OPO.

808 W Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, Washington 99201  
Tel. 509.625.6742, Fax 509.625.6748  
Email: [spdombudsman@spokanecity.org](mailto:spdombudsman@spokanecity.org)  
[spdombudsman.org](http://spdombudsman.org)

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## Internal Affairs Unit

Internal Affairs conducts police misconduct investigations for the SPD.

1100 W Mallon Ave., Spokane, WA  
Tel. 509.835.4588, Fax 509.835.4551  
[spokanepolice.org/investigations/internalaffairs](http://spokanepolice.org/investigations/internalaffairs)

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## No Retaliation

The City of Spokane has a policy against retaliation. It's illegal for an officer to try to "get back at" a person for filing a complaint.

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## Notes

[illegible]

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## **OPO Presentations**

The Office of Police Ombudsman offers presentations to schools, churches, neighborhood groups, business associations, community centers, local agencies and others. For more information, please call 509.625.6742.

The publication of this brochure would not have been possible without support and valuable information from the following...

- Office of the Mayor
- Office of the City Council
- City of Spokane Parks & Recreation Department
- City of Spokane Youth Department & the Chase Youth Commission
- City of San Jose – Independent Police Auditor, San Jose, CA.
- Scott Richter, former OPO intern

For a digital copy of this guide, please email the Office of Police Ombudsman and add "SGPP Digital Request" in the subject line.



### **City of Spokane Office of Police Ombudsman**

808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.  
Spokane, Washington 99201  
Phone: 509.625.6742  
Fax: 509.625.6748

E-mail: [spdombudsman@spokanecity.org](mailto:spdombudsman@spokanecity.org)

**[spdombudsman.org](http://spdombudsman.org)**

