

# Wayne County Sheriff's Office

Training Brief 1-2

## Officer Safety Principles

**Purpose:** The following points shall be discussed with the student to ensure an understanding of basic officer safety principles.

### A. Arrival and Approach to the Scene.

1. Notify Dispatch of location, type of situation (if call is self-initiated), or any information that responding officers may need.
2. Factors to consider in Positioning of Vehicle.
  - a. Will the vehicle be used as cover?
  - b. Is vehicle lighting effective or is a stealth approach better?
  - c. Parking in view of potential threats.
    - Windows
    - Doorways.
    - Don't think of just the address of the call, but of the area of the call.
  - d. Traffic protection.
    - Create a safety pocket.
3. Don't stand between suspects and traffic; officers could be pushed into traffic or have no place to retreat.
4. Avoid talking to subject while still seated in your car and they walk up the vehicle.
5. Cover vs. Concealment.
  - a. Move from cover to cover when approaching on foot to high-risk calls (i.e. burglary in progress, man with a gun, etc.).
  - b. Scan the area for potential threats, areas that weapons could be hidden, escape routes and potential cover before moving. Don't rush into any situation.
  - c. If moving with another officer consider using the leap frog method for moving from position of cover to position of cover. **Communication** is vital if this is used.
  - d. Use concealment in combination with cover when you can and minimize noise when approaching.
    - Keys.
    - Radio
  - e. What is the difference between concealment and cover?
  - f. Avoid backlighting and being a silhouette.
    - Don't stand in open areas with ambient light behind or above you.
    - Don't stand in doorways, "the fatal funnel".

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### B. Making Contact and Controlling Subjects and Suspects.

1. Principle of contact and cover officer.
  - a. Determine who is doing what.
  - b. **Communicate** to each other.
  - c. Stay focused on your task. If you are a cover officer avoid engaging in conversation or interviews.
2. Stance
  - a. Weapon side away.
  - b. Strong hand/ weapon hand is kept free as much as possible.
  - c. Hands up around the chest. Avoid have your hands in your pockets, arms crossed, etc.
  - d. Relaxed but aware.
3. Reactionary Gap
  - a. Should be able to see from the top of their head to their feet. This will allow you the scan for weapons and aggressive movements.
4. Controlling subjects
  - a. Voice Commands
    - Should be short, concise, and simple.
    - Be polite and professional, but firm and direct.
    - Maintain reactionary gap while speaking; avoid "getting in their face". Only Penetrate the Gap to take physical control and do so quickly and efficiently.
  - b. Physical Control
    - Control the hands. Use both verbal commands and if necessary physical control.
    - Always try to place suspects in a position of disadvantage. It should be difficult for them to go for a weapon or start an aggressive movement toward you without you seeing them prepare for it.
  - c. Handcuffing.
    - Temporary Restraints.
    - Don't attempt to handcuff subject until they are under as much physical control as possible. If they are actively resisting deal with the resistance and then cuff them
    - Control on application of first cuff. Don't fumble for the cuff or arm.
    - Officers should be able to put the tip of a finger between the handcuff and the wrist once the handcuff is on the subject.
    - Double lock handcuffs at the safest and earliest convenience.
    - Observe the arrested for attempts to slip out of the handcuffs, to move them to the front of your body, or complaints of pain.
    - Handcuff behind the back.

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### 5. Pat downs and searches.

Difference between pat down for safety vs. search incident to arrest.

- A pat down is when an officer has a reasonable suspicion that a subject may have a weapon on them. A pat down is a frisk of the outer layer of clothes to feel for any object that may be a weapon for the officer's safety.
  - A search is a complete check of all clothing and containers of a person for weapons, evidence, or contraband. This can only be done with the person's consent, a search warrant, or upon the person's arrest.
- a. Don't search someone unless they have been handcuffed. The close proximity and the fact you could get trapped inside their clothing are factors to consider.
  - b. If you are patting down, have control of their hands.
  - c. Search and pat down the same way every time. Either top-to-bottom or bottom-to-top.
  - d. Feel any objects through the clothing before putting your hands in any pockets. Don't just pat. By grabbing the clothing and bunching it up you will locate items that pats will miss.
  - e. Check the waistline, collar line, and seam lines of clothing. Don't just check pockets check the entire body.
  - f. Be aware of searching the opposite sex. Searches may have to be modified, but don't avoid searching person of the opposite sex.
  - g. The metal detector may be an option.
  - h. Remember the groin is a common hiding place for hiding weapons and contraband.

### 6. Area Searches.

- a. Avoid reaching in a container or area without first visually scanning it for any potential risk.
- b. On any search of persons or property make sure you have sufficient back-up.

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Probationary officer's signature and unit number

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Date

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FTO's Signature and unit number

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Date