HALTON REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE: VALUING DIVERSITY

Halton Region is home to many first generation Canadians. The cultural diversity of Halton is always changing. That is why the Halton Regional Police Service has a full-time Sergeant who acts as Diversity Coordinator (905-825-4727) and is responsible for ensuring the HRPS provides the appropriate services for our changing community. See our website: www.hrps.on.ca under Diversity.

All officers are trained and educated in areas of cultural sensitivity and a wide range of diversity related matters.

Halton Region is also home to the Diversity Team Program, where every Municipality has on-duty officers who have been given extra training in order to act as resource for their colleagues and as a specialist for cultural or diversity matters. This program is the first of-its-kind and has won Ontario Human Rights Awards.

Halton Regional Police Service also hosts the Emergency Services Introduction for New Canadians program, known as ESINC. This program is done with Police, Fire Departments and EMS (ambulance) and is designed to build positive relationships with New Canadians. It educates new comers on how to contact emergency services, what to expect in an emergency, information on first aid, crime prevention, fire prevention and accident prevention.

CONTACTING THE POLICE:

The Halton Regional Police emergency phone number is 9-1-1

The phone number for non-emergencies is 905-825-4747

9-1-1 IS FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY

An emergency includes medical or life-threatening incidents that require an Ambulance, a fire, or a crime in progress.

905-825-4747 is used for non-emergencies such as thefts, lost passports, frauds, and car accidents where there are no injuries.
9-1-1 IS EMERGENCY IN ANY LANGUAGE

When you call 9-1-1, the operator answers by saying, “Emergency. Do you require Police, Fire or Ambulance”. If the 9-1-1 operator does not understand the language you are speaking, they will question you to determine what language you speak. If the caller is unable to communicate for any reason, the operator will prioritize your call, which means that a police officer(s) will immediately be dispatched to the address the phone number is assigned to.

When the operator can determine the language that you are speaking, you will be connected to the Language Line Service. An interpreter who speaks your language can explain to the 9-1-1 call taker what your emergency is and you will be sent the help you need.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN POLICING COME TO MY HOME?

An individual’s home is a very sacred place. In fact, Canadian courts recognize the sanctity of a person’s home.

The police can enter your home if:

• They are invited
• When there is an emergency situation, such as when you call 9-1-1
• When a legal document permitting the entry is provided, such as a Search Warrant

If police come to your door, answer the door and acknowledge the police – their priority is to ensure the safety of people.

In many cases, the police officer may not understand or know the different traditions of your culture. It is very important to communicate your needs to the officer. For example, notify the officer if you have designated prayer areas. Don’t be afraid to ask questions or explain specific things that the officer may not understand. Remember, the officer is there to serve you and the community.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN AN OFFICER APPROACHES ME ON THE STREET?

Most police officers are identifiable by their uniform. On occasion, you may encounter officers who are not wearing a uniform. If you have doubts as to the identity of the police officer, you are entitled to ask for proper identification including the officer’s name and/or badge number. Police can stop you under three general circumstances:

1. If the officer suspects that you have committed an offence.
2. If the officer actually sees you committing an offence.
3. If you are driving.

The officer may ask your name, address, what you are doing or where you are going. In some cases, the officer may ask to see your identification. In most circumstances you are not required to produce identification (unless driving), however, it is advisable to answer the officer’s questions.

Refusal to answer questions or being evasive may cause the officer to become more suspicious and
to investigate more thoroughly. The goal for everyone should be to achieve a resolution, or solve the crime or other problem. A police officer may ask to speak with you for reasons of which you are unaware. Police officers have the sworn duty to prevent and investigate crimes and to keep the peace. These duties include interviewing potential witnesses of crimes and interviewing persons who, based on the circumstances appear to be suspicious. If offenders could be identified simply by the way they look or dress, it would be easy to be a police officer, but the fact is police officers have to investigate. Do not take offence to a police officer asking questions. They are doing their jobs, preventing crime and helping to keep you and the community safe.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN AN OFFICER STOPS ME WHILE I’M DRIVING?**

Police have the authority to stop a car at any time to determine if the driver has consumed alcohol or drugs, the car is mechanically fit, the driver has a valid licence, and the car has valid insurance. The most likely reason the police will stop a car is a traffic violation.

Traffic offences fall into two main categories:

Moving Violations: Speeding, failing to stop at a red light or stop sign, improper lane changes, or following too close to another vehicle.

Non-moving Violations: Failing to wear seat belts, broken brake lights, or failure to produce a drivers licence, vehicle registration, or proof of insurance on a vehicle.

Other reasons for being stopped when driving:

- Impaired driving
- Dangerous driving
- Careless driving
- Criminal investigations. Your, your vehicle and/or its occupants may match the description of a person the officer is looking for.
- Safety concerns
- R.I.D.E. (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) Spot Checks

For many reasons, ‘traffic stops’ are the most dangerous aspect of police work. More officers are injured or killed conducting routine traffic stops than any other function. Officers must interpret the actions and behaviour of the occupants of the vehicle, as well as constantly monitor other traffic. For these reasons, officers are trained in making safe vehicle stops and to follow a set procedure. The way they approach your car is not meant to intimidate you.

If you are directed to stop by a police officer,

- Slow down and pull as far off to the right side of the road as possible.
- Stay inside your vehicle unless directed otherwise by the officer.
- Keep your hands where the officer can see them and don’t make any sudden movements.
- Be prepared to produce the necessary documents.

*Progress Through Participation*
As the driver of a car, you are required by law, upon demand of a police officer, to surrender a valid driver’s licence, the vehicle and plate portions of the vehicle permit and proof of insurance to the officer. If you receive a ticket, accept it calmly. Accepting the ticket is not an admission of guilt.

As the driver, you are also accountable for the conduct of your passengers, especially if they are acting disorderly, throwing things out the window or hanging out of the window. You must also ensure all passengers are wearing seat belts.

**DOES THE OFFICER HAVE TO TELL ME THE REASON FOR THE STOP?**

**YES!** An officer is trained to advise people the reason why they were stopped or detained.

**DO I HAVE TO ANSWER THE OFFICER’S QUESTIONS OR IDENTIFY MYSELF?**

In general, you are under no obligation to identify yourself to a police officer. However, there are exceptions including:

- if you are driving a car
- if you have committed a Provincial Offence such as a liquor, trespassing, or driving offence

In these circumstances, it is best to co-operate and answer the officer’s questions to avoid being arrested. If the police suspect that you have committed an offence or are acting suspiciously, they will want to know who you are. There are several reasons for telling the police who you are:

1. If the police are looking for someone else, you may avoid being arrested by showing that you are not that person.
2. If the police think that you have committed an offence, and you do not tell them who you are, they may arrest you and hold you at a police station until they find out who you are.
3. If the police think you have committed a minor offence, and you identify yourself to their satisfaction, they may give you a ticket or a notice advising you when to appear in court rather than arresting you.

**WHEN CAN A POLICE OFFICER SEARCH ME?**

Generally, the powers of search are dependant on the circumstances and the beliefs of the officer. If you are arrested, the police may search you and the immediate surroundings including your vehicle if you are in one. If you are being detained temporarily for investigation or for safety reasons, the police may ‘pat you down’ to ensure that you’re are not carrying a weapon. If you are in a car, this search could extend to a scan around the inside of the vehicle.

You can always refuse to be searched unless arrested, however, you may give permission to be searched to help alleviate the suspicion. If you feel that a search is improper, don’t confront the police officer, follow the complaints process listed in this pamphlet or contact a lawyer.

**WHAT IF SOMEONE IS ARRESTED AND THEY DON’T SPEAK ENGLISH?**

The Halton Regional Police Service is proud to police a community whose diversity is continually...
changing. If someone is at a police station for routine matters and needs language service because they don’t speak English, then the services of an interpreter or translator from the Halton Multicultural Council will be used.

If someone is in custody and is unable to speak English, then the Language Line Service will be used over the phone to advise someone of their rights to counsel, to find out about medical conditions, and to explain conditions of release from custody.

WHAT IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT ABOUT THE POLICE?

You can complain about a policy or service provided by the Halton Regional Police Service or about the conduct of a police officer.

Only the person directly affected by the incident may make a complaint. A complaint must be in writing and must be signed by the person making the complaint. The complaint may be in a letter or on a standard form, available from any police station or the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services (OCCOPS), 25 Grosvenor Street, First Floor, Toronto, M7A 1Y6.

For procedures on making a complaint, visit www.hrps.on.ca and look under Professional Standards, email ProfessionalStandardsBureau@hrps.on.ca, or call 905-825-4747.

Complaints must generally be made within six months of the incident.

HOW DO I BECOME A POLICE OFFICER?

The Halton Regional Police Service is an employer of choice for ALL! We are seeking people who represent all of our communities to become police officers.

To become a police officer you must meet the requirements outlined in the Police Services Act. Among other requirements, you must:

• Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada
• Be at least 18 years old
• Have successfully completed at least four years of secondary school or education or its equivalent
• Be of good moral character and habits
• Have no criminal convictions without pardons
• Be physically and mentally able to perform the duties of the position

For more Information please contact Halton Regional Police Recruiting at 905-825-4747 ext. 5112