

Speaker's notes

What's the law – Police

How to use these notes

Topic: Interactions with police, rights and obligations when speaking to a police officer.

Resources: *What's the law?* education kit 'Police', which contains a photo story (on DVD), activity sheets and answer sheets.

These notes provide guidelines for a speaker's script and information on how to use these resources when presenting to a community group. The notes include a story summary, questions and answers, key messages, areas for further discussion and referral information.

1. Preparing to present

It may be useful to read the activity and answer sheets to prepare for your presentation - they may give you ideas for additional questions and activities for your group. It is also a good idea to look at the websites and referral information given in section nine of these notes.

If you need assistance with presentation skills, engagement ideas or coordination support for the group you are preparing for you can contact communitylegaled@legalaid.qld.gov.au or 3238 3431.

2. Introduce yourself and *What's the law?*

Before you begin the presentation, introduce yourself, your role and your organisation.

For example, if you work at Legal Aid Queensland:

- Legal Aid Queensland helps the community in many different ways if people have problems with the law. We provide legal education to newly-arrived communities about their rights and responsibilities.
- Refer to the *What's the law?* education kit and its purpose by mentioning these key points:
- We see many different newly-arrived communities get into trouble with the law and often the same legal problems arise. These problems can be avoided if you know some simple information about the law and where to go to for help before your problem becomes serious.
- The photo stories in *What's the law?* have been made to help you learn about the law on ten different topics.

Begin with some introductory statements and general questions about the topic:

- Today we are going to show you a photo story about police in Queensland and your rights and responsibilities when you have contact with police.
- You may come into contact with police in Queensland at a police station, at the train station, at your home, when you are driving or on the street. Police are in the community to stop crimes and help keep people safe.
- Police have certain powers to stop you in the street. If a police officer believes you have done something illegal or you are about to, they may ask you questions.
- Most police wear a blue and white uniform. All police carry a police badge which shows their identification.
- Is there a difference between the way the police officers work here and the way the police worked in the country of your childhood?

3. Summarise the photo story

- This story is about Abdi and Gahmal who are in a shopping centre and are approached by a police officer.
- The police officer thinks Abdi looks like someone who committed a crime in the area and asks him for his name and address.
- Abdi provides a false name first then finally provides his real name.
- He is then charged by the police and goes to Legal Aid Queensland for help and advice.

4. Ask questions

To strengthen engagement with the photo story and develop the group's legal literacy, ask key questions before showing the story. This will encourage the group to watch actively and think about key messages.

While you are watching the story, think about the next three questions:

What should Abdi do when he is talking to the police?

What information must Abdi provide to the police and what must the police provide to Abdi?

Does Abdi have to answer any other questions the police ask?

5. Show the photo story



6. Answer the questions

Ask the same key questions after you show the story and allow for discussion to tease out the right answers.

What should Abdi do when he is talking to the police?

- He should remain calm and try not to show his anger or frustration. Anger can make the situation worse if the police feel you are making it hard for them to do their job. You can be charged with obstructing a police officer.
- Police also have an obligation to remain calm and act fairly in these situations.

What information must Abdi provide to the police and what must the police provide to Abdi?

- A police officer can ask you to give your name and address in certain circumstances, which include:
 - the police find you committing an offence
 - the police officer reasonably suspects you have committed an offence
 - the police officer reasonably suspects you can help with an investigation.
- If the police believe you are under 18, he or she can also ask you to state your date of birth.
- You must provide correct information about your name and address. It is an offence to provide false information to police about your name and address.
- If you ask a police officer for their details they must provide you with their name, rank and the police station where they work.

Does Abdi have to answer any other questions the police ask?

- Abdi only has to provide his name and address. He does not have to provide the police with any further information.
- If the police ask you other questions, you have the right to remain silent and ask for a lawyer and a friend or relative to help you.
- If you feel that the police have been unfair to you, you can speak to Legal Aid Queensland to help you make a complaint.

7. Emphasise key messages

- Always provide the police with your name and address when asked.
- You have the right to remain silent after doing this as well as the right to get the police officer's details.
- Call **Legal Aid Queensland** or your **community legal centre** if you have legal problems or have to go to court.

8. Further questions and discussion

- Does anyone have any questions?

You are not expected to be a lawyer to use this resource. Many teachers and community workers use this resource successfully. If a participant raises personal legal issues, you can provide referral information. If you are not a lawyer, legal assessment or advice should be referred to **Legal Aid Queensland** on **1300 65 11 88** or the closest **community legal centre**.

9. Possible discussion points and referral information

Making a complaint against a police officer

- www.police.qld.gov.au/services/clientServ/

Legal Aid Queensland information about making complaints against Queensland Police:

www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/legalinformation/thejusticesystem/Dealingswithpolice/Pages/Complaintsaboutpolice.aspx