

NT POLICE – Q & A

The Northern Territory Police motto is "To serve and protect".

Police have several powers, which include the right to arrest people, charge people who have committed offences and take people to court.

It is a crime to hinder a police officer in their work, but it is not a crime to ask a police officer what is going on if they are questioning you.

You must remember there is a difference between asking what is going on and not co-operating. It is very important to always be as polite as possible and never be rude, offensive or cheeky to the Police.

Be Responsible For Your Own Actions

Q1. When you are under arrest, do you have the right to one free telephone call? YES or NO?

There is no law stating that the Police must allow you a free telephone call in every case. If the Police wish to interview you in relation to a crime, then they must first allow you to contact someone. There are circumstances however, such as if the Police think you are going to contact an accomplice, when this can be refused. The Police will generally let you make a call and you should always ask.

Q2. Can you be charged for assault if you have a fight during a game of football? YES or No?

Yes, you can be charged. Although we see many fights on TV that do not lead to charges, there have been some people charged with assault during sporting matches.

Q3. How old do you need to be before you can be charged for a criminal offence? 8, 9, 10, or 11 years old?

10 years old. Once you have turned 10 years old you can be charged for criminal offences as a juvenile. If you offend after you turn 18 years old you will be charged as an adult.

Q4. If the police wish to search you because they think you have drugs on you, do they need a warrant? YES or No?

No. Under the *Police Administration Act*, if you are in a public place and the police have reason to suspect that you have drugs on your person, then they have the power to search you and your bag without a warrant. They can also ask you to remove your clothing if they think you have drugs hidden under your clothes or on your body.

Q5. Can you be charged if you walk home from a party after drinking a lot of alcohol? YES or No?

No. You cannot be charged with being drunk. However, if police believe you are seriously affected by alcohol or drugs they can take you into custody and hold you for up to six hours or until it appears you are no longer intoxicated or until you can be released into the custody of a person who is capable of taking care of you.

Q6. If someone gives you a pair of shoes that you know are stolen, can you be charged? YES or No?

Yes. You can be charged for receiving stolen property if you know the shoes have been stolen.

Q7. If you are shopping with a friend and you know they are stealing a chocolate bar, can you be charged? YES or No?

If the Police believe you have assisted your friend to steal, then you can be charged. Assisting could be as simple as warning your friend of security. Being a lookout is being an accessory to the crime.

What Should You Do If You Are Questioned By The Police?

1. Stay cool and calm.
2. You should give your correct name, age and address.
3. You have the right to remain silent and not sign any statements, however, if you have not committed an offence you should co-operate with Police.
4. If you are stopped by the Police or taken to the station, ask if you are free to go, and if not, why not? However, you should co-operate with their requests and not be rude to the Police.
5. You should get legal advice as soon as possible.

What Should You Do If The Police Come To Your Door?

1. Stay cool and calm and stay together.
2. Ask why they are there.
3. If you do not want the Police to enter you must say so, however there are certain circumstances when the Police can search your house without your consent. You can ask the Police under what authority they wish to search, but do not under any circumstances touch or physically stop the Police from entering or searching your home as they may charge you.

What Should You Do If The Police Want To Search You?

Stay cool and calm. There are certain circumstances when the Police may search you without your consent if they suspect you have committed a crime or are carrying illegal drugs. They may take you to a private place and ask you to remove your clothing, even if you have not been arrested. If you don't wish to be searched, it is important to tell the Police.

Some useful contact numbers

Legal Aid Commission

Alice Springs	8951 5377
Darwin	8999 3000
Katherine	8973 8704

Juvenile Pre-court Diversion Unit

Darwin	8999 1566
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NT Police

Alice Springs	8951 8888
Darwin	8927 8888
Katherine	8973 8000
Nhulunbuy	8987 1333
Tennant Creek	8962 4444