This is a guide to the way a ‘stop and search’ is done.

This is when the police stop you and ask you what you are carrying.

It does not cover all of the law.

For further information, please contact the Stop & Search team on StopSearch@dorset.pnn.police.uk or visit the Dorset Police website www.dorset.police.uk
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who can stop you?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is a stop?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is a stop and search?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What if I am in a vehicle?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How should a stop and search be carried out?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your right to a form</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can I do if I am unhappy about how I was treated?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacting us</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who can stop you?

A police officer.

A police officer does not have to be in uniform; if they are not in uniform they **must** show you their identity card.

A police community support officer (PCSO).

A police community support officer **must** be in uniform.
What is a stop?

A ‘stop’ is when a police officer stops you and asks you:

• what you are doing;

• why you are in a certain area or where you are going;

• what you are carrying.

What is a stop and search?

You can be stopped and searched anywhere when a police officer thinks that you are carrying:

• drugs which are against the law;

• weapons;

• stolen property.
Or if you are carrying things which could be used:

- to commit a crime;
- or commit an act of violence.

The police officer can ask you to take off your outer clothing, for example your coat or jacket.

They can ask you to take off anything you wear for religious reasons, such as a face scarf, veil or turban.

If the police officer asks you to do this, if possible, they should take you somewhere other people will not be able to see you.

You can ask that the officer who searches you is the same sex as you.

Being searched does not mean you are being arrested.
Sometimes police officers can search anyone within a certain area:

- when there is proof that serious violence could take place there, for example at a football ground;
- or where a terrorist threat is known.

The police officer must explain this to you and must be searching for things which could be used for violence or terrorism.

What if I am in a vehicle?

Your vehicle, such as a car or motorbike, can be stopped at any time.

You may be asked to show your driving documents.

You should be given a written record of what you have shown the police officer.
How should a stop and search be carried out?

Before you are searched, the police officer must tell you that you are being searched.

They must make sure you understand what is happening to you.

They must make sure that you understand:

- that you must wait to be searched
- what law they are using
- your rights
- their name
- the station they work at
- why they stopped you
- what they are looking for
- your right to a form
Your right to a form

A copy of the search record is called a form.

You are entitled to a copy of the search record within 3 months of the search, if you require one.

You can get this form from the enquiry office at your local station.

You must keep a copy of the form, especially if you are not happy with the way you were treated.
The police officer must write down:

• your name or a description of you (only if you are searched)

• when and where you were stopped or searched

• why you were stopped or searched

• if they are taking action against you

• the name and numbers of the police officers

• if you were searched, what they were looking for and anything they found.

The police officer will ask you some equalities questions. This means asking questions about yourself. They will ask how you describe your cultural background (for example, Asian, Black Caribbean, White)

The police officer will ask you for your name, address and date of birth.

You do not have to give this information if you don’t want to, but you do have to give this information if you are being arrested.
What can I do if I am unhappy about how I was treated?

The officer should treat you fairly and with respect.

If you are unhappy with how you were treated, you can complain.

If you feel you were treated differently because of your race, age, sexuality, gender identity, sex, disability, religion or belief, you can complain.

It will help if you keep the form that the police gave you.

You can get advice about how to make a complaint from places like:

• a police station

• your Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

• a Citizen’s Advice Bureau
You will be given a stop and search card. It will have information on:

- what is a stop search
- your rights
- the law
- body worn video
- complaints procedure
- the officers stop search details

The police officer who stops you must:

- treat you fairly and with respect
- give you the reason why you have been stopped
- give you their details, including their name, police number and station
- give you a copy of the stop and search form

Remember - you have the right to complain if you have not been treated fairly.
Contacting us

Please contact the stop and search team by emailing stopsearch@dorset.pnn.police.uk

You can also visit the Dorset Police website www.dorset.police.uk

Please do not report crime to our social media pages

Remember

Emergencies: Dial 999 as soon as you can

Not an emergency: Dial 101