

Policing in Surrey: A Newcomer’s Guide

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Introduction

This guide is intended to provide information about the police services available in Surrey, when and how to contact police and what to expect if approached or questioned by police. You will also find information on crime prevention programs and how you can play a proactive role in preventing crime in your neighbourhood. You can download an electronic version through the Surrey RCMP website www.surreyrcmp.ca or request additional copies by emailing us at surrey_diversity@rcmp-grc.gc.ca.

About the Surrey RCMP

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) provides federal, provincial and municipal policing to communities across Canada. In Surrey, the RCMP has been contracted to provide policing services to the City of Surrey since 1951. The RCMP is committed to ensuring Safe Homes and Safe Communities for all those who live and work in Surrey. Our goal is to work with the community to enhance the liveability of the city.

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The Role of the Police

The role of the police is to keep the peace, uphold the law and work with the community to keep people safe.

Police can help in situations such as:

- Investigating a break-in to a home.
- Assisting with traffic safety if there is a car accident.
- Locating a missing person.
- Offering crime prevention information to prevent further crimes.
- Participating in community festivals and conducting traffic control at special events.

Police officers in Surrey work in different roles such as general duty patrols, traffic services and specialized investigative services. They can be dressed in various ways, such as:

- **Regular Uniform** - worn by general duty officers, traffic services, and community policing officers.
- **Red or Blue Serge** – worn mainly for special events or ceremonial purposes. The iconic red serge is the uniform recognized around the world as a symbol of Canada.
- **Plain Clothing** – specialized teams can be dressed in business attire or casual clothing depending on their roles.

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If you are unsure if someone is a police officer, you can ask to see their police identification card or badge. You can also call your local police office to verify the information.



Quick Facts about Surrey RCMP

- ✓ *Surrey has the largest RCMP detachment in all of Canada with over 1000 police officers, support staff and volunteers.*
- ✓ *We have 6 offices located across Surrey.*
- ✓ *In 2014, we had over 40 different languages spoken by our employees and volunteers.*

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Contact Police

We encourage you to contact the Surrey RCMP to **report all crime and suspicious activity**. Reporting crime can help us identify and catch suspects, track crime trends, and know how to use our resources.

Call 911 – Emergency

For police, fire or medical emergencies call 911 immediately (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Examples of when to call 911:

- Someone's life is in danger or there is an immediate threat to person or property.
- A crime in progress, such as a break and enter.
- When a serious crime has just happened and the suspect may still be near and/or return to the scene.
- When there is a good chance of arresting a suspect or preventing a serious crime.

When you call 911, the operator will ask if you want police, fire or ambulance and for which city. If you are unable to speak English, let the operator know which language you prefer and they will do their best to find someone who speaks the same language. For example, you could say "police, Surrey, and speak Mandarin."

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Note on Accidental 9-1-1 Calls

We receive thousands of accidental 9-1-1 calls each year. To help us prevent some of these calls:

- Do not pre-program 9-1-1 into your home or cellular phones.
- Ensure your cellular phone is locked to prevent a pocket dial.
- Explain to children how and when to dial 911.

If you dial 9-1-1 accidentally stay on the line to talk to our operator. Otherwise we will need to call you back or respond in person. Our priority is to ensure you are safe. You will not be in trouble or get a ticket for calling by mistake but we do ask that you never hang up, always stay on the line and explain what has happened.



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Call 604-599-0502 – Non Emergency

Call the non-emergency line when you need to report a crime that is not an emergency. This number is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Examples of a non-emergency call:

- Reporting a crime that has already been committed and there are no suspects (i.e. your vehicle was broken into overnight).
- Reporting suspicious or nuisance behaviour (i.e. a noisy party).
- Getting or giving follow-up information for a police file you have already.

What is needed when you call police

Our telecommunications operators are highly trained to gather specific information from you through a series of questions. By staying on the line, remaining calm, and answering the questions, you can help guide our response. In an emergency, the telecommunications operators are relaying information to the police officer that is on their way to where the incident has happened.

OBSERVE IT. REPORT IT.

If something seems unusual or out of place to you, follow your instincts and report it to police. Suspicious activity could include: someone peering into cars and windows, a stranger who looks to have no purpose for being in the neighbourhood or a car that is driving out of control.

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Some of the questions the telecommunications operator will ask you are:

WHAT is the incident being reported?

WHEN did it happen?

WHERE did it happen?

WHO is involved?

WHY do you think this happened?

The operator may also ask if there is any alcohol, drugs or weapons at the scene so they can provide the information to the officers who are attending.

If you are involved in a police incident as a suspect, witness or victim, the officer will ask for the following information: your full name, date of birth, address and phone number. This information will be entered into a secured police database. Your information will not be given out to anyone else and is used as a way to identify and keep records.

Did you Know....

- If you wish to report a crime anonymously you can contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS or online. Crime Stoppers take information in over 115 languages.
- You can report a crime by visiting any of our 6 offices across Surrey.
- You can text 9-1-1 if you are a pre-registered deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired person.

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Interactions with the Police

There are a number of reasons police may need to speak with you either inside your home or while out in the community. For example, police may want to:

- Talk about an ongoing investigation.
- Look through your neighbourhood for information about a crime that occurred.
- Provide crime prevention or safety information.

If police attend your residence while you are home, you should answer the door. If you have cultural traditions that you want the officer to be aware of, please let them know. ***Please note that a police officer that is on duty will not be able to remove their shoes when they enter a home.***

Do not be afraid to ask questions if you do not understand something. If you do not speak English, you can ask a family member, friend or even a neighbour to help you. If nobody is around, the officer will do his or her best to find someone to assist in your preferred language.



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Police officers can enter your home when:

- They have been invited inside by someone in the home.
- They have reasonable grounds to believe there is an emergency or someone is being hurt.
- They have a legal document showing they are allowed inside.
- To check the well-being of someone in the residence (i.e. abandoned 911 call)

WHAT IS A...

Victim:

Someone who has been harmed emotionally or physically as a result of a crime, accident or event.

Witness:

Someone who sees a crime or accident take place.

Suspect: *Someone who is thought to have committed a crime or offense.*

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While Driving

Police have the authority to stop a vehicle at any time to check for driving infractions or other violations. A police officer will indicate you are being pulled over by signalling to you from the road or their police vehicle through hand signals or use of lights, sirens or loud speaker.

To ensure everyone's safety when stopped by police, you should:

- Slow down and pull over to the right side of the road as soon as safe to do so.
- Stay in your vehicle unless directed otherwise by the police officer.
- Roll down the window and keep hands visible.
- Speak to the officer and provide any requested documents such as driver's license and registration papers. It is the law to show these documents to a police officer when asked to do so.

Did you know that it is a traffic offense to...

- Drive without a valid driver's license.
- Fail to stop for the police.
- Not pull over for an emergency vehicle trying to pass.
- Not wear a seatbelt.
- Use a cell-phone while driving.

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What happens if you are Detained or Arrested by the Police?

Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms you have rights if you are arrested or detained by police. These rights include:

- To be told why you are being arrested or detained.
- To be informed and given the right to have a lawyer without delay (meaning once the situation is in control and the safety of all parties is ensured.)
- To be allowed to telephone any lawyer you wish or obtain free advice from a legal aid lawyer.

Youth under the age of 18 have additional rights under the Young Offender Act, one of which is the right to speak with a parent or guardian.

A police officer has the right to detain you if they believe you are somehow connected to a crime that has occurred. Usually, they will use this time to further investigate the situation and ask questions. When you are under arrest for a crime, the police officer can search you, anything you are carrying and your vehicle if it is around the time you are arrested. They do this search to ensure everyone's safety, to find evidence and protect it from being destroyed.

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Questions or Concerns

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your interactions with police you have the right to voice them. You can contact the Surrey RCMP to discuss your concerns by:

- Telephone: 604-599-0502
- Letter or in person at our Main Detachment:
14355 57 Avenue, Surrey, BC V3X 1A9.

If you do not want to contact the Surrey RCMP directly but still have concerns about your interactions with police, you can also contact the *Commission for Public Complaints against the RCMP*:

- Telephone: 1-800-665-6878
- Letter: P.O. Box 88689, Surrey BC, V3W 0X1

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Other Programs and Services offered by Surrey RCMP

Crime Prevention

The Surrey RCMP strongly encourages residents to play a role in preventing crime by participating in programs like *Block Watch*. *Block Watch* is a program to help neighbours watch out for neighbours. It aims to get citizens involved in discouraging and preventing crime. To learn more about the program, please contact your local district office – contact information on inside cover.

Crime Free Multi-Housing

If you are renting an apartment, your building may already be part of the *Crime Free Multi Housing* program which helps owners, managers and residents keep illegal and nuisance activity off rental properties. You can contact the coordinator via phone **604-599-7747**.

Victim Services

If you are a victim of a crime, you can contact our Victim Services Department at **604-599-7600**. Case workers can provide emotional support, updates on police/court files, referrals for further services or information on how the criminal justice system works.

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Police Information Checks or Fingerprinting

If you live in Surrey and require a police information check for employment, volunteering or school you can visit our Main Detachment or District 2: Guildford/Fleetwood office to have it completed. Please bring with you:

- 2 pieces of identification, at least one must have your photo. (Example: Driver's license, BC Identification Card, Passport, Nexus Card, Permanent Resident Card, Canadian Citizenship Card)
- Confirmation of your address in Surrey, if not listed on the identification. (Example: Bill or bank statement)
- There is a fee for police information checks and fingerprinting. Please call 604-599-0502 or check www.surreyrcmp.ca for the most up to date fees. The fee is waived for volunteer work if you bring a letter from organization, however the volunteer work must occur in Surrey.

Note: If you require fingerprinting services for immigration purposes please bring a letter or form from the Immigration Department setting out what the requirements are, along with identification.

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Employment

Become a Police Officer

If you want to make a difference in your community and your country, explore what the RCMP has to offer. Having a diverse group of officers is important in order to understand cultural issues and have a balanced approach to problem solving.

To apply for the RCMP you must meet a list of requirements and be willing to spend 6 months at the RCMP Academy in Regina, Saskatchewan. For the complete list of requirements and upcoming recruiting events, please visit: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca

RCMP Support Services

The City of Surrey offers a number of exciting career opportunities in support of the Surrey RCMP, including positions in Operational Communications, Cell Block Operations, Records management, Victim Services, Information Technology and more. For further information, please visit: <http://www.surrey.ca/city-government/599.aspx>

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Personal Safety

Remembering some basic safety tips can help prevent a crime from happening or help you respond to the situation accordingly. A simple but effective tip is to be aware of your surroundings at all times. Trust your instincts and if something doesn't feel right remove yourself from the situation or contact police.

Our district offices can offer further resources and brochures on how to protect yourself, or visit www.surreyrcmp.ca

Street Robbery

If you are approached, verbally threatened or physically assaulted you can avoid further confrontation by giving the person whatever property they want – this could include your cell phone, wallet, hat etc. Do not argue or try to fight back as this could make the situation worse. Additional safety precautions you can take are:

- Walk with confidence and be aware of your surroundings.
- Avoid carrying large bags or purses.
- Keep possessions such as cell phones and valuables out of sight.
- Only carry identification, money and/or cards that you will need for your specific trip.

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Auto Crime

Auto crimes include both theft of your vehicle and theft from your vehicle. Many of these cases can be prevented by:

- Using an anti-theft device.
- Parking in well-lit areas or in places with people walking around.
- Removing possessions from your vehicle (i.e. shopping bags, change, electronics, briefcases, etc.)
- Never leaving your vehicle unattended while it warms up.
- Keeping your garage door opener hidden or taking it with you.

Home Security

Taking some basic safety measures at home can minimize your chances of being targeted by thieves.

Some tips include:

- Ensure your home is properly secured and well-lit.
- Keep your doors and windows locked, even when you are at home.
- Invest in an alarm system.
- Let a trusted neighbour or friend check your house if you are away for an extended period.

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It is important to make your home appear lived in as thieves target empty homes. This can be as simple as making sure that there is not a pile of newspapers sitting outside your door. Also, if you are planning on leaving your home for a long time, check in with your insurance company as they may require someone to check your home while you are gone to ensure you are still covered.

Pedestrian and Road Safety

Drivers, cyclists and pedestrians all have a responsibility to share the road and follow the law.

- Pedestrians should stay on sidewalks and cross at designated cross walks. Dress in bright or reflective clothing to be seen especially in poor weather or at night. If you are walking and listening to music, try not to put both headphones in your ear or have it on maximum volume in order to remain alert about your surroundings.
- Cyclists must follow the rules of the road and wear a helmet. You should also make sure if your bicycle is in good working order before you ride it.
- Drivers should be aware of the rules of the road, as outlined in the Motor Vehicle Act. This includes abiding by posted speed limits, ensuring your vehicle is safe to drive, and that

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all passengers are safely secured with seat belts. Driving while impaired by drugs or alcohol is illegal and could result in an arrest, fine or jail time.

Did you know...

- It is the law to wear a helmet when you are riding a bicycle.
- Jaywalking is when you walk across the road where there is no cross walk or traffic light. It is an offense to do so and increases the chance that a car will not see you which could result in harm.
- Legally, the driver and all passengers in a vehicle need to wear a seatbelt.
- A child who is under 40 lbs and under 4'9" is still required to be in a booster seat for safety reasons.



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Keeping Your Children Safe

There are many things you, as parents, can do to help keep your children safe

1. **Communicate** – Ask your children how they are feeling, what is going on in school and who their friends are. It is okay to ask to meet their friends' parents.
2. **Get Involved** - Be aware of what they are doing and show that you are interested in activities they are involved with.
3. **Enrol them in sports and/other activities** that they may be interested in.

There are many free recreational activities through the City of Surrey. You can visit www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation for a copy of the recreation guide to learn about programs near your home.

There are also many volunteer opportunities for youth through the City of Surrey, visit <http://www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/6028.aspx> for more details.

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Missing Persons

If a child, friend or relative goes missing you should contact police. You do not have to wait a certain time period to report someone missing. The police will gather information from you about the missing person and their usual habits. Police will ask for a photo and any other information that could help to locate the missing person.

If you are attending a large event with children make a safety plan beforehand on what to do if you get separated. This could involve arranging a common meeting place or letting children know they can ask an authority figure such as a police officer for assistance.

Domestic Violence

Violence in the home can be in the form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse. It can happen in any relationship and affects people regardless of gender, age, or ethnic origin. Domestic violence is not a private or family matter, it is against the law. If you or someone you know is the victim of domestic violence there is help available. You can contact police, Surrey RCMP Victim Services at **604-599-7600** or VictimLink BC at **1-800-563-0808** as they can provide assistance in many different languages.

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Bullying

Bullying is when someone intentionally does or says something to hurt another person. This behavior is often repetitive and deliberate. Bullying can be: physical (hitting, shoving), verbal (insults, teasing), social (exclusion, rumours) or cyber (online, social media).

General Tips to Prevent Bullying

- Spend time with your children to help foster a trusting relationship. If your children trust you and know they have your support, it will be that much easier for them to talk to you when they have a problem.
- Be a good role model and teach your children about respecting others regardless of their cultural background, gender or ability.
- Educate your children on the different forms of bullying and the consequences prior to it actually happening. Encourage them to speak up if they see someone being bullied.
- Keep in contact with other parents and school staff to stay informed on what is going on for your child.
- Encourage your son or daughter to join groups or clubs that can boost confidence and self-esteem and offer opportunities to strengthen peer relationships and form friendships.

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Internet Safety

The internet is used by more and more people and has become a part of our daily lives. It is easily accessible through computers within the home, school, library and cell phones. As parents, you can play a role in making sure your children use the internet in a safe manner. Some concerns can include: inappropriate material, bullying, harassment or frauds/scams.

TIPS:

- Monitor your children while they are using the internet.
- Do not give out your personal information such as full name, date of birth, social insurance number, etc. If you are filling out a form for a specific service, ensure it is done through putting the website address into the URL address bar. Do not provide personal information through links or emails.
- Be careful on what you post online – whether they are messages or pictures. Once something is on the internet, it is hard to get rid of and can affect you when you apply for a job.

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Gangs

A gang is an organized group that commits a crime in order to gain money, power and or recognition. Youth can join gangs regardless of their ethnic origin or financial situation.

Signs that someone you know could be getting involved include:

- Staying out late.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Spend less time with family and usual friends.
- Secretive about new friends/ sudden change in friends.
- Money or items that they usually do not have or can afford.
- Preference for certain colour of clothing (gang colours).
- Graffiti on personal items such as notebooks or bedroom walls.
- Tattoos or makings of gang symbols on hands or body.

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Drugs

As a parent, it is important to educate your children on the harmful effects drug can have. The best way to do this is to educate yourself first. Education and awareness is key to prevention.

Did you know...

- Alcohol and tobacco are the most commonly abused substances by youth.
- Prescription drugs such as pain killers may also be used to get high and have serious effects, especially if the medication was not subscribed to the person who was taking it.
- Common household items such as glues, cleaning fluids and sprays can be abused and have serious health effects.