

# A.R.E.S. Safety Around Law Enforcement

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Think of how terrible our society would be if there were no laws, or nobody to enforce the laws even if there were laws. As a society we depend highly on good people to go into the career of law enforcement to help keep our society civilized.

There are many types of law enforcement. Highway patrol, Sheriff, City Police, FBI, ATF, Game Wardens, and others. All of these law enforcement folks knew the job was dangerous when they accepted the badge and took the oath. However, it is our responsibility to make sure we do not make their job harder. As A.R.E.S responders to emergencies and disasters we are very likely to encounter law enforcement when deployed out or in our every day lives This file is intended to remind our A.R.E.S folks that some common sense can help to make sure we do not make the job of law enforcement more difficult.

If you see this:



The officer is at ease and it is fine to smile, wave (use ALL your fingers), wish the officer a nice day and thank the officer for the good work they do.

If you see this:



Do not approach the officer (especially from an angle he cannot easily see you). The officer is not at ease. His mind is in an elevated danger status and he does not need any interference. Any interference may wind up with you being handcuffed also.

The job of law enforcement is to keep the peace and order generally in society and to enforce the laws. In the process of doing their job, law enforcement will order citizens to comply with an order from law enforcement. If the citizen chooses not to comply with the orders of law enforcement, the situation begins to escalate. The officer or law enforcement now has to start considering the options available and which option will be best to gain compliance.



Tazer



PR-24 / baton



Pepper Spray

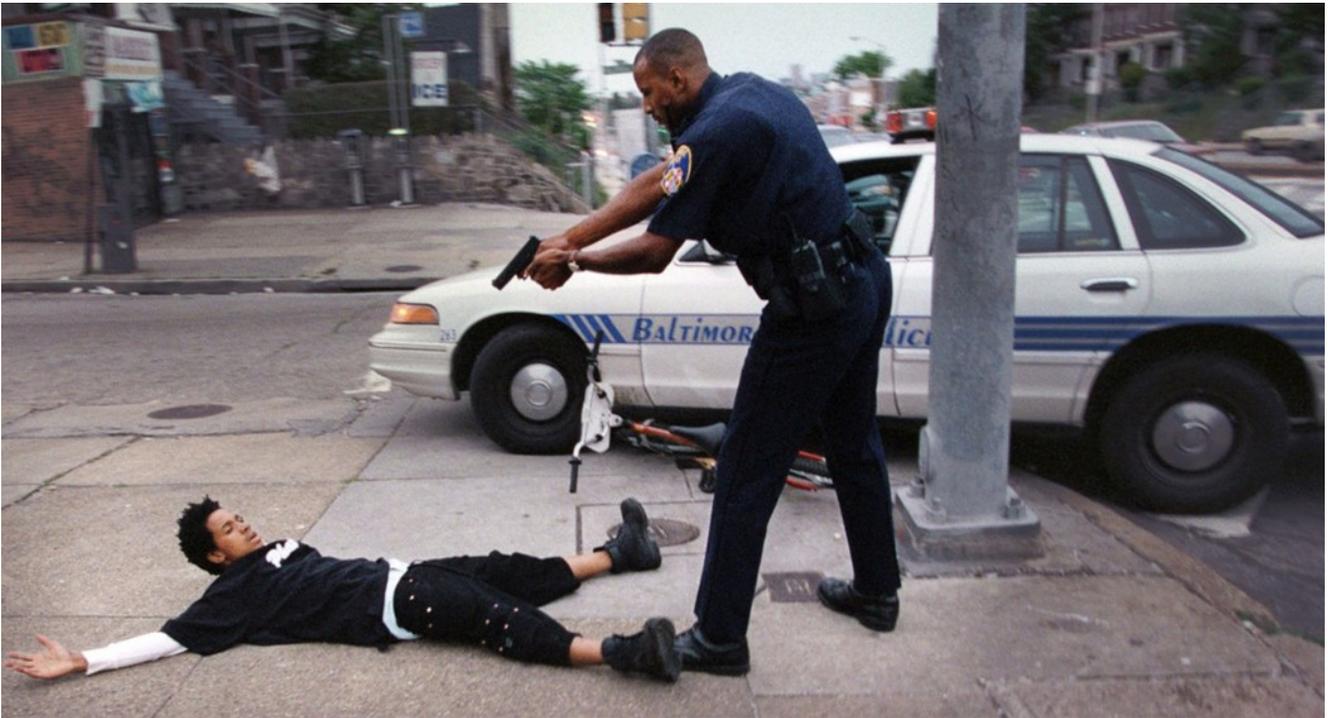
Above we see some “non lethal” options. The officer may have: pepper spray, PR-24 baton, or Taser. These are considered “non lethal” options the office may use to gain compliance if a citizen does not comply with a lawful direction. None of these options are pleasant to the citizen. All three will inflict pain and are designed to place the citizen into a significantly disadvantaged state until such time as the officer can apply handcuffs and restrain the citizen.

The “Taser” is an option for many law enforcement officers. It can deliver 50,000 volts or more (milliamps of current). It is designed to override and temporarily scramble the electrical system of the person being targeted. The person may become briefly disoriented, and loses control of muscle movement. The citizen/suspect drops to the ground and is then handcuffed. While the “Taser”(brand name) is considered a “non lethal” option, there are those that claim that it has been used with lethal results. The Taser fires out two barbed probes with wires attached up to about 20 feet away. The barbed probes will not feel good penetrating your skin. They will not feel good when they are removed. It will not feel good when 50,000 + volts passes down the wires, through the probes, and into your body. You are best off living your entire life without being “tased” by a “Taser”. Tasers frequently are aimed with a laser dot sighting system. If you see a red laser dot on your person when an officer is around, it is likely either from a firearm, Taser, or taser like device. Regardless of which it is.... do what the officer says or the results will not be pleasant.



Taser probe “non lethal” being fired from a shotgun.

If you see this:



Keep well away!!! Remain silent. Do not make sudden movements.

This officer is on high mental alert. He is prepared to pull the trigger and end this suspect's life in a split second if necessary. This officer is by himself presently. He does not have back up officers nearby. Many things are going through the mind of the officer. Does this suspect have a weapon he intends to try and use on me? Will I have to shoot this suspect? Does this suspect have friends nearby that will try and help him and attack me? Will I have to shoot his friends if they come to help him? Where are my back up officers? All these thoughts going through the mind of the officer instantly and repeatedly. This officer DOES NOT need citizens saying stupid things, doing stupid things, or otherwise interfering. If you are not a victim, witness, or otherwise involved... it is best to calmly, slowly and silently leave the area and go about your own business. In his heightened state of alertness you really DO NOT want the officer mistaking you for someone about to assist the suspect.

If law enforcement has weapons drawn it is because they have been alerted to a situation they are unsure of and or may require the use of deadly force. Even when law enforcement has a weapon ready for use, you may notice they are still mindful of safety.



Notice the officer's finger is not on the trigger.  
His finger is up on the side of the weapon as an extra safety measure.

In this picture we see the officer has his pistol drawn and aimed. This indicates that a threat exists nearby where the use of deadly force may be needed in a very short time. However, we can tell that the officer is being as mindful of safety as much as possible, as his finger is on the side of the gun and not on the trigger. The split second it takes for the officer to put his finger on the trigger and squeeze the trigger is the time the officer makes a final lethal decision.



Revolver: Close range protection



Semi-automatic pistol: Close range protection.

Many law enforcement will carry a side arm or service weapon. This will typically be a revolver or semi-automatic pistol. These are more accurate at closer ranges and typically used for close in danger. It is generally impractical to carry around a rifle or shotgun due to their larger size and weight. When law enforcement has a pistol in their hand, it is either the only weapon they have presently available, they anticipate the need for close in protection, or both.



Police Shotgun

The police shotgun is a larger and more powerful weapon than the pistol. The shotgun does not fire a bullet. The shotgun fires a “shell”. The “shell” can be filled with various projectiles.



Two shotgun shells.

The lower shell is transparent and you can see the pellets/projectiles inside it.

Shotgun shells can include:



Police shotgun shells generally have Buckshot or Slug shells in them. Buckshot is several medium size round pellets. A slug is a larger single projectile.



Police may also use a "non lethal" shotgun shell filled with rubber balls the size of buckshot for crowd/riot control.



The shotgun is a very versatile weapon for law enforcement use due to the larger power and varied types of projectiles it can deploy. It is not as light and compact as the pistol and generally not practical to carry under normal conditions.



Some law enforcement carry a high power rifle such as this AR-15.

Some law enforcement use a rifle such as the one pictured above. The rifle allows law enforcement to more accurately target at much longer distances than a pistol would. This rifle would also easily take down a suspect wearing a bullet proof vest, where a pistol might not. If you see law enforcement hurrying around with a rifle like this in their hands, they are probably doing so due to the accuracy and need to take out someone they don't want to get that close to.

So..... how does knowing about law enforcement weapons help me stay safer around law enforcement? The larger the weapon you see, the further away from the law enforcement you need to be.



If you see this: time to get far far away!!!



If you see this: try not to laugh too hard.

Not all law enforcement is good. Not all law enforcement is bad. All law enforcement is made up of imperfect humans. They have friends and family and loved ones they want to go home to at the end of the day. Sometimes..... they don't get to go home at the end of the day. They wear a badge, they take an oath, but sometimes they pay the ultimate price.

If you see this:



and this:



and this:



Say a prayer for the officer's family left behind.

Let's make sure we take a bit of thought to make sure that we don't contribute to making their job any more difficult than it is. They are all around us in our communities. Let's make sure we all practice safety around law enforcement.