



# Copwatch Training Manual

United Against Police Terror

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>COPWATCH MISSION</b>	<b>3</b>
PURPOSES AND GOALS	3
PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES	4
MEMBERSHIP	4
<b>COPWATCH TEAMWORK AND ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>8</b>
EMPOWERING ALL MEMBERS	8
COPWATCH ACTIVITIES	9
DON'T JOIN COPWATCH IF...	10
<b>THE LAW</b>	<b>11</b>
TYPES OF STOPS	11
TYPES OF VIOLATIONS	12
EXTRA LEGAL INFO	13
<b>COPWATCH TACTICS</b>	<b>18</b>
DIFFUSE SITUATIONS	18
EMPOWER COMMUNITY	18
<b>SHIFT PRACTICES</b>	<b>19</b>
BEGIN SHIFT	19
DURING SHIFT	20
END SHIFT	23
<b>TECHNICAL SUPPORT</b>	<b>23</b>
VIDEO CAMERA	23
POLICE SCANNER	24
<b>HOW TO DEAL WITH POLICE</b>	<b>25</b>
RESPONDING TO THREATS TO ARREST YOU	25
<b>HOW TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA</b>	<b>27</b>
GET A CONTACT	28
MEDIA Q&A	28
<b>HOW TO FILE A POLICE COMPLAINT</b>	<b>29</b>
WHAT IS ABUSE?	29
THE COMPLAINT PROCESS	30
<b>FEDERAL COMPLAINTS</b>	<b>33</b>
SPECIAL LITIGATION SECTION	33
POLICE CODES	33

# Copwatch Training Manual

## United Against Police Terror – Copwatch Training Manual

We are providing training manuals from different cities for your reference in starting a local Copwatch. While you might not be able to apply every tactic to your specific location – different neighborhoods, cities and regions can require different approaches for success – use these manuals to develop an effective strategy for your community. Join us today in fighting police terrorism!

### Introduction

This handbook is intended to introduce you to the main concepts of police observation. It is far from complete and we learn more every day as advocates across the country tailor Copwatching methods to suit individual situations. Use this handbook to promote conversation within your organization and to provide a basis for forming your own police monitoring project. While this can be challenging, the rewards for our community are beyond measure. Good luck. Hope this helps.

Copwatch is made up of both students and residents from the community who have become outraged by the escalation of police misconduct, harassment and brutality in recent years. We have joined together to fight for the rights of all members of our community by taking on the task of directly monitoring police conduct. We walk the streets and watch the police. Although it is important to resist police brutality by taking cops to court, filing complaints, and having demonstrations, we believe that it is crucial to be in the streets letting the police know that THE PEOPLE will hold them accountable for their behavior in the community. We have no single political or religious belief. Our volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds. What we share is the belief that citizen participation in these issues and monitoring of the police is a crucial first step towards building a movement capable of stopping police violence and of challenging the increasingly powerful role of police in our society.

If you have been a victim of police abuse, witnessed abuse or are simply fed up with police misconduct and want to do something about it, give us a call. We will train you to Copwatch. We also need **artists, writers, researchers, outreach workers, donors, organizers** and others to help. We are an all-volunteer group, so your help is ALWAYS needed!

## **Copwatch Mission**

Copwatch is a non-violent, non-confrontational citizen advocacy organization. We strive to help end police misconduct, brutality, and abuse of power through direct observation of the police in the streets and advocating for their victims after the event.

We take it upon ourselves to police the police. While we know it is impossible to be at the scene of every situation with the police, we intend to be in the streets at times when police misconduct is most probable. We will document on paper and on film as much of the police activity as we can.

We will build a reputation as advocates for the victims of police misconduct within the community. We will be advocates for people who feel the police have mistreated them. We will make all our documents available to such people, and their lawyers on request. We will archive all documentation so that if a person first chooses not to pursue a claim against the police, and later decides to, the documentation will be available. We will erase any unusable video.

We will attempt to de-escalate situations whenever possible and we will encourage people to solve problems nonviolently without the involvement of police. We want to help expand community support for victims of police crime, to educate community members about their rights, to encourage others to exercise their rights to observe the police, and to mobilize the community to protest injustices.

## **Purposes and Goals**

### **D) To reduce police violence through accountability.**

- 1) Directly observe the police on the street
  - a) Watch and document incidents
  - b) Maintain principles of nonviolence while asserting the rights of the detained
  - c) Be a witness for the detained person
  - d) Demonstrate citizen monitoring for those observing an incident
  - e) Educate the public about police conduct
  - f) Follow up with public pressure in legal proceedings
  - g) Support brutality victims in defense of false charges
  - h) Encourage and assist people in filing complaints or even pursuing litigation against police

- i) Lobby to stop discriminatory legislation and policies that increase police powers over people's civil and human rights

## **II) To empower and unite the community by looking out for each other.**

- 1) Educate the community about their rights
  - a) Distribute literature and publish findings
  - b) Do Know Your Rights training and any other classes, forums, demonstrations that can help the public understand the real situation.
- 2) Expand community support for victims of police crime and community-based efforts to organize against brutality.**
- 3) Encourage people to solve problems WITHOUT police intervention. Explore alternatives to calling the police.**
- 4) Encourage people to exercise their right to observe the police and to advocate for one another.**

## **Principles and Guidelines**

Copwatch cannot guarantee the safety of its participants and members. Be aware that this type of community activism involves risks. We try to protect each other by setting up a support and advocacy structure that can react quickly if problems should arise or if arrests occur. Prospective members of Copwatch are required to go to several training sessions before they can become members. We ask that participants and members act according to tenets of training and, in all situations, avoid actions that endanger the safety of others.

## **Membership**

1. We do not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, culture, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, or disability.
2. No employee of law enforcement agencies—public or private—may participate in Copwatch.
3. Those interested in Copwatch are expected to attend three training sessions before becoming a member. The first session will teach Copwatch principles, the

second session will teach state and local laws, and the final session consists of a ride along as an observer during a patrol.

### **Member Responsibilities**

1. Understand the Copwatch principles, demands, and program.
2. Complete the Copwatch training sessions.
3. Follow Copwatch rules and procedures.
4. Be knowledgeable of all information necessary to conduct a Copwatch patrol, including the relevant laws, the specific tasks of each Copwatch position, etc.
5. Treat everyone you come in contact with in a friendly and polite manner.
6. Treat all members respectfully; respect the viewpoints and privacy of other members.
7. Contribute constructively to the group.
8. Be truthful in providing information to law enforcement and legal authorities.
9. Do not represent personal viewpoints as viewpoints of Copwatch.
10. Do not engage in personal, political, or outside activities while participating in Copwatch activities and/or patrols.
11. Wear Copwatch identifying clothing while on patrol.
12. Refrain from wearing Copwatch patrol apparel at any event at which one is participating as a protestor.
13. Commit to at least one patrol per month or some other aspect of Copwatch work, as well as at least one planning meeting every other month.
14. If team members have the time/energy after patrols, participate in debriefing sessions.
15. At appropriate times, engage in positive criticism/self-criticism.
16. Maintain regular contact with your team coordinator. (Failure to stay in contact with your coordinator or to go on a patrol within a three-month-period requires members to retrain.)

17. Fulfill tasks in a timely manner.

## **Non-Violence Principles**

Copwatch discourages police brutality and harassment by making cops aware that they are being watched and holding them accountable for their actions. We record incidents of harassment and abuse, follow through on complaints, and educate those who don't know their rights or who don't believe that police harassment exists. The last thing we want is for a cop to arrest someone because the cop is angry with us. We want cops to treat people with respect and to observe their rights. Cops often forget that arrestees are citizens with rights. To discourage cops from hassling the members of our community, we may have to be diplomatic. We must be firm in demanding that rights be respected, yet we must avoid endangering someone who is already in some trouble. It is very important to remain as calm as possible while observing the police! Generally, your presence will increase the level of anger and tension. Remember that the goal is to prevent unnecessary arrests. We must be careful not to escalate the situation. The danger is that while on the street the cops can be observed, but behind closed doors we have no way of monitoring the cops.

To support this program, we must learn exactly what our rights are. Sometimes asking cops to cite sections of the Penal Code, which pertain to the situation, will remind them that they are acting outside of the law. Take strength in the fact that you are within your rights to observe the police. Remember that your body language can make cops nervous. Try to keep hands visible at all times. Don't make sudden moves.

On the streets we are serving the people. Our effectiveness will be greatly enhanced if the community trusts us. When the streets are quiet and there is no police activity, a Copwatch member can spend time distributing *Know Your Rights* cards, pamphlets or just getting to know people. Explain to the people that you are with Copwatch and tell them about the program. Get into conversations. If people know that you are trying to help and that you care, that in itself will be empowering.

Depending on how familiar and comfortable you are, you can assist people with problems that arise. Stay security conscious. Don't promise help you cannot give or follow up on. Be very careful of what personal information, organizational information, "gossip," or other information about patrol team members you share with people in the community. Don't talk trash about the cops with people or engage in similarly negative interactions. Do not share your personal address, phone number or email with strangers. If people want a means to contact you, give them the Copwatch website, phone number, and email (on all literature).

We want our community to solve problems without police intervention when possible. If we can bring calm to a situation instead of the police, we are doing well. This

portion is intentionally vague because it requires your judgment. Do not stick your nose where it does not belong. Do not endanger yourself. Be wise.

Nonviolence requires humility, discipline, and clarity. While acting as a member of Copwatch, you may have to face insults and intimidation from police without retaliation; you may have to not only refuse to get into fights, but also to refuse using abusive language directed at cop. During our most intense moments, you will have to understand that we fight injustice rather than against persons doing injustice.

Remember to treat everyone you come in contact with in a respectful, friendly and polite manner. Avoid the use of any terms that may be perceived as derogatory or insulting.

Maintain a legal and safe distance from any police incident or contact. While observing the police, you may speak with the officers and walk or stand next to them when they are on a routine patrol.

Avoid quick or sudden changes in your position when you are observing a police/citizen contact. Never make sudden moves toward the police or break into a run for any reason.

Do not use flash cameras or video lighting when officers are engaging in a routine stop of someone. If a stop escalates into unnecessary use of force, you have the right to record the scene using flash bulbs or video light.

If you are a witness to someone being beaten or treated roughly, calmly ask the officer(s) involved to stop or ask, "Why are you doing this?" Warn them that you will place yourself between them and the victim if this is a form of nonviolence that you are comfortable employing.

Never speak for anyone else when you are talking to authorities. Never use any other organization's name except Copwatch.

Copwatching is mentally and emotionally exhausting, so if you are tired and irritable before or during your shift, try to find someone to replace you. Copwatch is not the place to be if you are not prepared to deal with intense or frustrating situations.

Be helpful to the citizen being stopped/arrested without making their situation worse. Our goal is to lessen the incidents of harassment and violence, not to escalate them.



## **Copwatch Teamwork and Activities**

### **Empowering All Members**

As a member of Copwatch, you are entitled to be a part of group decisions. We want all members to be able to speak in public, host forums, and train. Team coordinators should share responsibilities with members of the team. Team members should volunteer for different tasks. We always have something to do.

### **Trust**

Teamwork is an essential part of Copwatch. We engage in all activities — from patrols to “flyering” — in groups. No patrol should happen with less than four people. It is important that you have a trusting, professional relationship with your patrol team and all members of Copwatch. Teams must not be wholly composed of friends or partners; familiarity can cause problems on occasion. You’re welcome to hold non-patrol activities with your team and to get to know all Copwatch members.

### **Empathy**

During the course of Copwatch work, you will encounter people who agree with what we do and those who do not. Do not spend time debating with people while doing Copwatch work and encourage others to stay focused on what we need to do.

## Copwatch Activities

1. **Community outreach:** These include events where we do outreach about Copwatch and police issues. Events in this area include but are not limited to films, benefit shows, and tabling.
2. **Community education:** Events with a specifically educational purpose, such as Know Your Rights forums.
3. **Patrols:** Teams (4-8 members) are generally encouraged to do one 3-4 hour patrol per month. Copwatch typically does three types of patrols:
  - a. **Driving:** We drive around in a car with 3-5 people using the scanner and observance of our surroundings to determine stops.
  - b. **Walking:** Such patrols give us a lot of public interaction. In addition to PR, it's a good place to observe because there is everyone from homeless people to youth cruising around. They all tend to get harassed for loitering or other violations.
  - c. **Protests:** From time to time, we go out on protests to document occurrences between protesters and police. These patrols are quite different from regular patrols in the way they are conducted. It is important that the people who go out on these patrols are familiar with the equipment, are able to act as interveners, can handle pressure and confrontation, and not let themselves get distracted. When patrolling a march, you must stay with your group and not join in the protest or turn your focus to friends.

## Don't Join Copwatch if...

1. **You're a cop.** No employees of any law enforcement agency may be a part of Copwatch. Copwatch is an all-civilian group.
2. **You're a hothead.** Copwatch is not a game. We are going against a well-trained, heavily armed organization that is prone to violence and racism, and all we have to defend ourselves is a camera, a notepad, and the law. If you decide you want to take on the police by cussing them out, insulting them, or getting in their face, you may put other Copwatch members as well as the people being held by the police in danger, which means you put the entire Copwatch program in danger. If you cannot keep your cool and stay disciplined, even in the face of a racist, aggressive cop, then Copwatch isn't for you.
3. **You want to take revenge on or fight with a cop.** Copwatch does not initiate violent confrontations with the police. Observing and recording their actions is OUR ROLE in fighting police brutality and racism on the streets. In cases in which the police attack arrestees or members of Copwatch, we support an individual's right of self-defense, but our job is not to start or incite fights.
4. **You want to "dialogue" with the police.** Copwatch's goal is not to work with the police. Our task is to monitor them for racism and abuse. The only way to do that is to remain completely independent from them. If you want to work with the police, then this is not the organization for you.
5. **You're not willing to make a serious commitment to Copwatch.** This is potentially dangerous activism. If you shirk your responsibilities, other people can get hurt. We must remember our training, know the laws, and know our rights. This takes practice and a bit of study in addition to going out on regular patrols. That said, if you have legal, moral, or personal reasons to avoid confrontation with the police and/or the possibility of arrest, there is still a place for you in Copwatch. We also need help with legal defense, fundraising, filing complaints, training new members, conducting public relations, etc. If you are

serious about joining Copwatch but cannot go out on patrols, we can still find a place for you. <https://www.usa.gov/laws-and-regs>

6. **You cannot work in a democratic organization.** Free discussion and criticism are vital for any grassroots political group. It's also our best defense against police infiltration. All members of Copwatch have an equal voice in making major decisions for the organization. If you have a hard time listening to the suggestions and criticisms of others, if you tend to speak out of turn or interrupt others, or if you get impatient with meetings and group discussions, then Copwatch may not be for you.

## The Law

It is helpful for members to understand a few key legal concepts before going out to observe the police. There are several sources of law. The laws that are most relevant to Copwatch are the state laws found in the [California Penal Code](#) and the local laws which are part of the [Los Angeles Municipal Code](#), the [Burbank Municipal Code](#), and the [West Hollywood Municipal Code](#).

There are federal laws that you probably won't run into much on the streets. However, it is worth knowing that everyone's civil rights are, at least theoretically, protected under the [U.S. Constitution](#) and [federal law](#). In fact, the right to observe the police is constitutionally protected activity based on our right to free speech.<sup>1</sup>

## Types of Stops

### Consensual Stops

This is when the cop approaches and begins talking to you. The cop may even ask to see your ID. You do NOT have to show it. Ask the cop "Am I free to go?" or "Am I being detained?" You do NOT have to talk to the cop or even remain in the area unless the cop says "No, you can't go" and has a reasonable suspicion to detain you. However, the cop doesn't have to tell you why you are being detained.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Recording governmental officers engaged in public duties is a form of speech through which private individuals may gather and disseminate information of public concern, including the conduct of law enforcement officers. *Glik v. Cunniffe*, 655 F.3d 78, 82 (1st Cir. 2011).

## Detentions

The police are allowed to detain you if they have a “reasonable suspicion” to believe that you have committed or are about to commit a crime. The officer must have some reason for stopping you, but the officer does not have to tell you what that reason is. They can’t just say that you don’t look like you live in the neighborhood or that they “had a hunch.” The detention should be limited in its purpose and scope. They can conduct a pat search of the outside of your clothing to check for weapons, but **you DO NOT HAVE TO CONSENT TO A SEARCH of your pockets, bags, or vehicle.** You do not have to answer any questions except to identify yourself and give your address.

## Types of Violations

### Arrests

This means that you are in police custody and you are being charged with a crime. You will be thoroughly searched as part of the booking process. **California Penal Code Section 841** says that “person making the arrest must inform the person to be arrested of the intention to arrest him, of the cause of the arrest, and the authority to make it, except when the person making the arrest has reasonable cause to believe that the person to be arrested is actually engaged in the commission of or an attempt to commit an offense, or the person to be arrested is pursued immediately after its commission, or after an escape.”<sup>2</sup> Even though police often won’t tell you, **you have the right to remain silent and the right to a lawyer. Don’t give up these rights.**

### Infractions

These are minor offenses such as jaywalking, illegal parking, open container of alcohol in public, being in certain parks after curfew, being a minor in possession of spray paint or large marking pens, etc. When an officer sees this kind of activity, they can ask to see ID. If you have ID and you do not have any outstanding warrants, the cop should just write you a ticket and be done with it.

If you don’t have ID on you, **the cop HAS THE OPTION OF TAKING YOU TO THE STATION TO VERIFY YOUR IDENTITY OR SIMPLY WRITING YOU A TICKET AND LETTING YOU GO.**<sup>3</sup> This is up to the officer. You aren’t supposed

---

<sup>2</sup>[http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=841.#:~:text=The%20person%20making%20the%20arrest,of%20or%20an%20attempt%20to](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=841.#:~:text=The%20person%20making%20the%20arrest,of%20or%20an%20attempt%20to)

<sup>3</sup> California Code, Penal Code - PEN § 853.5 “in which a person is arrested for an infraction, a peace officer shall only require the arrestee to present his or her driver's license or other satisfactory evidence of his or her identity”

to have to go to jail for infractions. You would not expect to be searched during this kind of stop.

## **Misdemeanors**

These are crimes punishable by up to a year in jail such as shoplifting, trespassing, resisting, delaying or interfering with an officer in the course of their duty. Expect that you will be searched, arrested, and taken to jail until you are either arraigned, bailed out, or released on your own recognizance. There are certain misdemeanors where the officer has the discretion to write you a citation or to take you into custody.

Remember: don't talk to the officer about your case and do not discuss it with people you meet in jail. Sometimes people in jail can be used to get information about your case (informants).

## **Felonies**

These are major crimes punishable by a year or more in prison. Murder, rape, robbery, and many drug related crimes are felonies. Expect that you will be searched thoroughly and will be in custody at least until you are taken before a judge and allowed to enter a plea (this is arraignment).

## **Extra Legal Info**

### **Answering Questions**

Legally, when a person is arrested or detained by a police officer, they do not have to answer any questions to the officer other than to provide a name and address. You have the right to remain silent, but DO NOT lie to a cop. That is a crime.

### **Resisting or Obstructing an Officer**

**California Penal Code Section 148.a** states that “every person who willfully resists, delays, or obstructs (any police officer) in the discharge or attempt to discharge”<sup>4</sup> of their duty, is punishable by fine or imprisonment. The police will often threaten Copwatchers with this charge but remember you do have the right to observe so long as you are not attempting to interfere with the officer. **Section 148(g)** states “The fact that a person takes a photograph or makes an audio or video recording of a public officer or peace officer, while the officer is in a public place or the person taking the photograph or making the recording is in a place he or she has the right to be, does not

---

<sup>4</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=148.&lawCode=PEN](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=148.&lawCode=PEN)

constitute, in and of itself, a violation of subdivision (a), nor does it constitute reasonable suspicion to detain the person or probable cause to arrest the person.”<sup>5</sup>

## Use of Force to Effect Arrest

[California Penal Code Section 835.a](#) explains that the only “legal” use of force by an officer is that used in order to attain an arrest. “Any peace officer who has reasonable cause to believe that the person to be arrested has committed a public offense may use reasonable force to effect the arrest, to prevent escape or to overcome resistance.”<sup>6</sup>

## Assault by an Officer

[California Penal Code Section 149](#) makes it illegal for a cop to assault or beat any person “without lawful necessity.”<sup>7</sup>

## Police Search Powers

Police may detain someone if they have “reasonable suspicion” that specific facts connect that person to a specific crime. In this case, the cops can also pat someone down to feel for a weapon, and if they feel something that feels like a weapon, they can go into that person’s clothing to look for it. Otherwise the cops can only search someone’s pockets, backpack, or belongings if that person has been arrested for a specific crime, has a search clause as a condition of probation, or if you gives the police permission, which nobody is obliged to do.

## Police Seizure Powers

Police may not confiscate someone’s belongings unless they are illegal or that person has been arrested for a crime. If possessions are confiscated, the **California Penal Code** entitles the owner to a receipt (**Section 1535**)<sup>8</sup> and a return of the possessions after the resolution of the case (**Section 1537**)<sup>9</sup>. Any evidence obtained

---

<sup>5</sup>[https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=148.&lawCode=PEN#:~:text=\(g\)%20The%20of%20that%20a%20of%20itself%2C%20a%20violation%20of](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=148.&lawCode=PEN#:~:text=(g)%20The%20of%20that%20a%20of%20itself%2C%20a%20violation%20of)

<sup>6</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=835a.&lawCode=PEN](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=835a.&lawCode=PEN)

<sup>7</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=149](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=149)

<sup>8</sup> “When the officer takes property under the warrant, he must give a receipt for the property taken (specifying it in detail) to the person from whom it was taken by him, or in whose possession it was found; or, in the absence of any person, he must leave it in the place where he found the property.”

[https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=1535](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=1535)

<sup>9</sup> “The officer must forthwith return the warrant to the magistrate, and deliver to him a written inventory of the property taken, made publicly or in the presence of the person from whose possession it was taken, and of the applicant for the warrant, if they are present, verified by the affidavit of the officer at the foot of the inventory, and taken before the magistrate at the time, to the

through the seizure may be suppressed from being used in court if the seizure was illegal. **(Section 1538.5)**<sup>10</sup>

## Gang Profiling

Sometimes cops use petty laws to stop people in order to take their pictures. These photos are often used to create files on people and to portray people as “gang members”. Detaining people to take photos merely because they are suspected gang members is impermissible.<sup>11</sup>

**The California Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention (S.T.E.P.) Act California Penal Code Section 186.22 states:** “Criminal street gang” means any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one its primary activities the commission of one or more of the criminal act enumerated in paragraphs (1) to (25) inclusive of subdivision (e), having a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang activity.”<sup>12</sup>

## Panhandling

**Los Angeles Ordinance 171664** only prohibits “aggressive” solicitation which usually includes unwanted physical contact or abusive language.<sup>13</sup> There is no law against panhandling in West Hollywood. **California Penal Code Section 647.c** states “Every person who willfully and maliciously obstructs the free movement of any person on any street, sidewalk, or other public place or on or in any place open to the public is guilty of a misdemeanor.”<sup>14</sup> In Burbank, **Ordinance 5-3-502** states that nighttime (sunset to 9am) solicitation upon private residential premises is unlawful.<sup>15</sup>

---

following effect: ‘I, R. S., the officer by whom this warrant was executed, do swear that the above inventory contains a true and detailed account of all the property taken by me on the warrant.’”

[https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=1537](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=1537)

<sup>10</sup> A defendant may move for the return of property or to suppress as evidence any tangible or intangible thing obtained as a result of a search or seizure on either of the following grounds: (A) The search or seizure without a warrant was unreasonable. (B) The search or seizure with a warrant was unreasonable because any of the following apply: (i) The warrant is insufficient on its face, (ii) The property or evidence obtained is not that described in the warrant, (iii) There was not probable cause for the issuance of the warrant, (iv) The method of execution of the warrant violated federal or state constitutional standards, (v) There was any other violation of federal or state constitutional standards

[https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=1538.5](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=1538.5)

<sup>11</sup> *People vs. Rodriguez*, (1993) 21 Cal.App.4th 232

<sup>12</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&division=&title=7.&part=1.&chapter=11.&article=](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&division=&title=7.&part=1.&chapter=11.&article=)

<sup>13</sup> [http://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/1996/96-0146\\_ORD\\_171664\\_08-17-1997.pdf](http://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/1996/96-0146_ORD_171664_08-17-1997.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=647c](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=647c)

<sup>15</sup> “It shall be unlawful for any person to go upon private residential premises between the hours of sunset and nine o’clock (9:00) A.M. for the purpose of engaging in any form of peddling or solicitation, unless such person has been previously requested or invited to do so by the owner or occupant of said premises.”

<https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/Burbank/?Burbank05/Burbank0503.html>



## Lodging

**California Penal Code Section 647(e)** states that any person “Who lodges in any building, structure, vehicle, or place, whether public or private, without the permission of the owner or person entitled to the possession or in control of it” is guilty of disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor.<sup>16</sup>

## Trespassing

**California Penal Code Section 602** outlines trespassing violations. It is a misdemeanor to “refuse to leave after being asked to do so.”<sup>17</sup> In order to assist the Sheriff’s Department in the prosecution of trespassers on your residential or commercial property, the West Hollywood Sheriff’s Department has implemented a **Letter of Agency** program. Owners, managers, or tenants of a property can authorize Deputies of the West Hollywood Sheriff’s Station to arrest and remove any person present on the property without lawful business.<sup>18</sup> Burbank **Ordinance 5-3-501** also states that “no person shall trespass upon the real property of another where signs forbidding trespass are posted at each corner of the property.”<sup>19</sup>

## Drinking in Public

**Los Angeles Municipal Code 13.18.010** makes it a misdemeanor for anyone to drink in public. Being drunk or stoned is not illegal, but under **California Penal Code Section 647(f)** anyone “Who is found in any public place under the influence of intoxicating liquor, any drug, controlled substance, toluene, or any combination of any intoxicating liquor, drug, controlled substance, or toluene, in a condition that they are unable to exercise care for their own safety or the safety of others, or by reason of being under the influence of intoxicating liquor, any drug, controlled substance, toluene, or any combination of any intoxicating liquor, drug, or toluene, interferes with or obstructs or prevents the free use of any street, sidewalk, or other public way” is guilty of a misdemeanor.<sup>20</sup> Having alcohol on your breath is NOT a crime.

---

<sup>16</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=647.&lawCode=PEN](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=647.&lawCode=PEN)

<sup>17</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=602](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=602)

<sup>18</sup>

<https://www.weho.org/city-government/city-departments/public-works/code-compliance/letter-of-agency-trespass-arrest-authorization>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/Burbank/?Burbank05/Burbank0503.html>

<sup>20</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=647.&lawCode=PEN](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=647.&lawCode=PEN)

## Open Container

**California Business and Professions Code Section 25620** states “Any person possessing any can, bottle, or other receptacle containing any alcoholic beverage that has been opened, or a seal broken, or the contents of which have been partially removed, in any city, county, or city and county owned park or other city, county, or city and county owned public place, or any recreation and park district, or any regional park or open-space district shall be guilty of an infraction if the city, county, or city and county has enacted an ordinance that prohibits the possession of those containers in those areas or the consumption of alcoholic beverages in those areas.”<sup>21</sup>

## Bicycles

**The Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 56.15** currently allows the riding of bicycles on sidewalks as long as it is done without "a willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property." There is no law in Burbank that prohibits riding a bicycle on a sidewalk. **The City of West Hollywood Ordinance Number 09-823** prohibits the riding of bicycles on sidewalks where there are established bike lanes, but in all other locations, bicycles are permitted on sidewalks as long as they are operated in a manner that does not disregard the safety of pedestrians.<sup>22</sup>

## Obstructing Sidewalk

**California Penal Code Section 647(c)** states anyone “who willfully and maliciously obstructs the free movement of any person on any street, sidewalk, or other public place or on or in any place open to the public is guilty of a misdemeanor.

**Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 41.18** states that “[n]o person shall stand in or upon any street, **sidewalk** or other public way open for pedestrian travel or otherwise occupy any portion thereof in such a manner as to annoy or molest any pedestrian thereon or so as to **obstruct** or unreasonably interfere with the free passage of pedestrians.”<sup>23</sup>

**Burbank Municipal Code Section 5-3-207** states “[n]o person shall place or deposit upon any public **sidewalk** or parkway, any movable or immovable object of any

---

<sup>21</sup> [http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&sectionNum=25620](http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&sectionNum=25620)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.weho.org/home/showdocument?id=30385#:~:text=prohibits%20the%20riding%20of%20bicycles,disregard%20the%20safety%20of%20pedestrians.&text=be%20courteous%20and%20sidewalk%20friendly,for%20reading%20and%20ride%20safely>

<sup>23</sup> [http://argylecivic.org/uploads/3/4/9/5/34953415/lamc\\_41.18.pdf](http://argylecivic.org/uploads/3/4/9/5/34953415/lamc_41.18.pdf)

character whatsoever”<sup>24</sup> (an anti-vagrancy law that will be used to harass homeless people).

## **Minors in Possession of Tobacco**

**California Penal Code Section 308(b)** states that it is unlawful for any person under the age of 21 years to purchase, possess, use tobacco products, cigarette papers, or any other paraphernalia related to the use of tobacco products. (fine is \$75 or 30 hours of community service).<sup>25</sup>

## **Copwatch Tactics**

Our main tactic in Copwatch will be to discourage police brutality and harassment by letting the cops know that their actions are being recorded and that they will be held accountable for their acts of harassment and abuse. To this end we will:

1. Record incidents of abuse and harassment
2. Follow through on complaints
3. Publicize incidents of abuse and harassment
4. Advocate for the victims of police abuse or harassment
5. Work with the Police Review Board
6. Educate those who don't believe that police harassment exists

## **Diffuse Situations**

People don't want to be arrested. As Copwatchers, we don't want to escalate a situation to where police arrest someone as a way of getting back at us. We want cops to treat people with respect and to observe their rights. Often, cops forget that homeless people and others actually have rights, so we will remind them. We document and try to inform the cops when we feel that they are violating policy or the law. Attempting to stop someone from being arrested often has serious consequences for the person being detained as well as for the reputation of Copwatch as being a nonviolent organization.

In a physical encounter with police, we must realize that the cops have weapons, prisons, courts and judges to back them up. In addition, we do not want people to be

---

<sup>24</sup><https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/Burbank/?Burbank05/Burbank0503.html#:~:text=5%2D3%2D207%3A%20OBSTRUCTI%20PUBLIC%20SIDEWALKS%20AND%20PARKWAYS%3A,object%20of%20any%20character%20whatsoever.>

<sup>25</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520162SB7](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520162SB7)

nervous when they see Copwatch coming to help them. We want to keep people from going to jail in the first place and not send them to jail with more serious charges.

## **Empower Community**

As people on the streets serving the public, we are not only concerned with the cops. We are concerned about the PEOPLE. Our effectiveness as Copwatchers will be greatly enhanced if we are trusted by the community. During our shifts, we must try to get to know the people who hang out on the street. For this reason, we will try to schedule people who know the area with those who are newer to the scene. This aspect of Copwatch depends on the willingness of the members to get to know and appreciate the street community.

When the streets are quiet and there is no police activity, a Copwatcher can spend time distributing the “Know Your Rights” cards or just getting to know people. Introduce yourself. Explain to people that you are with Copwatch and that you want to hear their stories. If people know that you are trying to help and that you care, that can be empowering.

Depending on how familiar and/or comfortable you are, you can assist people with problems that arise. We want our community to solve problems wherever possible **WITHOUT POLICE INTERVENTION**. If you can help folks resolve a conflict, communicate, understand each other you are doing great. It is crucial that we move our communities away from the idea that we are totally dependent upon police for justice and safety.

## **Shift Practices**

### **Begin Shift**

You can do a walking shift, a bicycle shift, or a driving shift. Walking shifts are great for getting to know folks and having lots of community interaction. Driving shifts get you to the scene much faster. Be careful when driving to park your car away from the police. Note:

1. Be sure your warrant status, bike, or car is up to date. Don't give the cops any opportunity to bust you. Assume that this could happen.
2. Identification can be very helpful if the police detain you.

3. Have a partner for safety. It is VERY important not to confront the police alone. You must have a witness and someone who can verify YOUR story in case of a problem.
4. Organize to meet your partner at a mutually agreeable time and location.
5. Make sure that you are not carrying anything illegal! No weapons or drugs.
6. Wear a Copwatch shirt
7. Be sure that you or your partner brings things you will need to Copwatch:
  - a. Incident Forms
  - b. Copwatch Manual
  - c. Complaint Forms
  - d. Copwatch Literature to Distribute
  - e. Tape recorder, Scanner, Video Recorder, Cameras
  - f. List of Penal Codes

## **During Shift**

Shifts can last for approximately 3-5 hours. You and your partner(s) can decide where you will go if there has not been a request for Copwatchers to be in a certain neighborhood.

Please be on time for your shift. If you are unable to work your shift please call one of your partners and the shift coordinator so that you can get a substitute. Try to be on the street for as much of your shift as possible (don't spend an hour in a coffee shop). Be where people can see and talk to you.

After each incident, take time to fully fill out the incident report and return it to the office. We will enter this information into the database.

As you observe a situation, one partner records what officers are saying or doing, while the other one quietly gets information from witnesses. Consult and share information. Get a firm grasp of the situation FIRST. Record as much information as possible. **Witness names** and **phone numbers** as well as **officer's badge numbers** are most important. In fact, under [California Penal Code Section 830.10](#), every officer must wear either a number or a nameplate when they are in

uniform.<sup>26</sup> It also helps to write down when, where and what time the incident happened. If there has been an injury, encourage the person to see a doctor and take pictures of the injuries as soon as possible.

Distribute Copwatch literature while you are observing a stop so that people understand that you are not just there to be entertained but are actually trying to help. Remember that you have the right to watch the cops. You DO NOT have the right to interfere. Interfering with a cop is a violation of **California Penal Code Section 148** (delaying, obstructing or resisting arrest). If a cop wants to send you a message, they will arrest you for **148** and then, even if they don't press charges, you still had to go through the unpleasant experience of being arrested.

When you observe police, remember that you don't want to make the cop more nervous than they already are. Keep your hands visible at all times. Don't approach an officer from behind or stand behind them. Don't make any sudden movements or raise your voice to the cop. Try to keep the situation calm. If an officer tells you to step back, tell the officer that **YOU DO NOT WANT TO INTERFERE, YOU SIMPLY WISH TO OBSERVE.**

### **More Assertive Style:**

1. Ask victims if they know why they are being arrested or detained
2. Get the badge number. Ask the cop if you can't see it.
3. If the stop seems vague, ask the cop to name the Penal Code Section that they are enforcing.
4. Have educational conversations with people standing around.
5. Don't piss the cop off if you can help it. Don't let it get personal. **NO NAME CALLING!!!**
6. Identify yourself as 'Copwatch'.
7. Try to stay until the stop is concluded. Remember that Rodney King was just a traffic stop originally.

---

<sup>26</sup> "Any uniformed peace officer shall wear a badge, nameplate, or other device which bears clearly on its face the identification number or name of the officer."  
[https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=830.10#:~:text=830.10.,1989%2C%20Ch.](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=830.10#:~:text=830.10.,1989%2C%20Ch.)

8. If a person wants to take action, give them complaint forms or refer them to the COPWATCH office.

### **Be Careful:**

1. Don't inadvertently collaborate in a crime (don't become a look-out, warning if police are coming, etc.)
2. Don't let people use the COPWATCH name to shield illegal stuff.
3. You may get arrested at times, but Copwatch will support you.
4. Talking to cops is a bad idea. It can undermine your credibility with the community as well as giving the police information about you and the group.
5. Taking pictures or videotaping can be a problem if the detainee doesn't want you to. Respect them. Tell them that you are working to stop police misconduct. If this doesn't satisfy them, turn off the camera. Remember that you are representing Copwatch with every act and every word.
6. Don't make promises that you/we can't keep. Don't tell people that we will get them a lawyer or take the cops to court if you cannot follow through. Tell people that we will work with them to get justice. Invite them to a meeting.
7. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" if you are asked legal questions. Better than giving out wrong information.

### **In Case of Your Arrest**

If you are arrested, the police must tell you why you are being arrested. You will want to get the badge number of the officer who is arresting you and remember, you have **the right to remain silent**. Don't talk about your case to anyone except your lawyer, there are lots of video cameras and informants in jail! The court must provide you with a lawyer if you can't afford one. You have the right to speak to a lawyer before arraignment.

If you are arrested, you will be searched with or without your permission. As soon as possible, and in no case later than three hours after booking, you have the right to three phone calls: to a friend or relative, to a lawyer, and to a bail bondsman.

## **IF SOMEONE ELSE IS ARRESTED**

Find out where they are being held, what the charges are, and how much bail will cost. Call the following:

### *In Los Angeles:*

Call (213)473-6100 24 hours a day/7 days a week to obtain information about who is in custody and in which location they are jailed.

**Devonshire Area Jail (TEMPORARILY CLOSED)**  
10250 Etiwanda Avenue  
Northridge, California 91325  
818-832-0969  
Visiting Hours: 7 days a week, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Foothill Area Jail**  
12760 Osborne Street  
Pacoima, California 91331  
818-756-8865  
Visiting Hours: 7 days a week, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Harbor Area Jail (TEMPORARILY CLOSED)**  
2175 S. John S. Gibson Boulevard  
San Pedro, California 90731  
310-726-7999  
Visiting Hours: 7 days a week, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Hollywood Area Jail**  
1358 North Wilcox Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90028  
213-972-2975  
Visiting Hours:  
7 days a week, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. weekdays  
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. weekends

**Metropolitan Detention Center**

**77TH Street Regional Jail**  
7600 South Broadway  
Los Angeles, California 90003  
213-473-4851  
Visiting Hours: 7 days a week, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Pacific Area Jail**  
12312 Culver Boulevard  
Los Angeles, California 90066  
310-482-6488  
Visiting Hours: 7 days a week, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Southwest Area Jail (TEMPORARILY CLOSED)**  
1546 West Martin Luther King Boulevard  
Los Angeles, California 90062  
213-485-2615  
Visiting Hours: 7 days a week, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Valley Jail Section (Van Nuys Station)**  
6240 Sylmar Avenue  
Van Nuys, California 91401  
818-374-9643  
Visiting Hours: 7 days a week, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Wilshire Area Jail (TEMPORARILY CLOSED)**  
4861 West Venice Boulevard



180 North Los Angeles Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012 213-356-3400  
Visiting Hours: 7 days a week, 10:00 a.m.  
to 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Los Angeles, California 90019  
213-473-0495  
Visiting Hours: 7 days a week, 10:00 a.m.  
to 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

### *In Burbank:*

**Burbank Police Station and Jail Facility**  
200 N. 3rd St Burbank, CA 91502  
(818) 273-6949

## **End Shift**

Fill out and save all completed incident reports. Be sure that they are legible and that you put your name on it in case office people need to do follow-up. Return scanner and any other equipment for the next Copwatchers to use. Please check the equipment and leave a note if there is anything wrong with it.

Enter all incident reports into our online database.

## **Technical Support**

## **Video Camera**

Some points to keep in mind when filming:

1. Don't film people who obviously don't want to be filmed. Tell people you are with Copwatch and ask their permission. We want them to know we are there to support them.
2. Don't film criminal conduct if you see any. Focus on the police.
3. When you film, try not to record yourself getting into arguments with the police. It is very frustrating when we have good footage of an event, but a hostile commentary from the videographer. Try to let the situation speak for itself. Let your partner do the talking if it is necessary.
4. Be sure to date and time stamp the footage (press the button which gives the date and time on the screen.). Try to video location markers, street signs etc. to verify the location.

5. You have the right to videotape, despite what some cops will tell you. If people or cops are in a public place, they don't have a reasonable expectation of privacy so you can tape them. You cannot make audiotape recordings of people without their knowledge.

## Police Scanner

This scanner is a portable radio that is used to monitor police radio communications. The scanner controls that a Copwatcher may want to use:

1. **VOLUME:** This knob is on the top of the scanner and it adjusts the volume coming out of the speaker or headphone. It also turns off the scanner so remember this when you are finishing your shift.
2. **SQUELCH:** This knob, right next to the volume knob, is adjusted to cut out the static between messages. It's like the mute button on an FM tuner.
3. **MANUAL/SCAN:** These are two buttons on the front of the scanner. When the scanner is first turned on, it is in scan mode, meaning that it flips through all 1000 channels repeatedly until it comes to a channel being used. It will monitor this channel until the transmission is ended and then resume scanning. Sometimes, you might want to stay on just one channel to monitor an important exchange. To do this, press the MANUAL button. The scanner will stay on the current channel. Every time you press the MANUAL button, you go up one channel. Pressing the SCAN button resumes scanning. When using the scanner, you are basically listening for locations. You want to find out WHERE to go to observe the police. Don't be distracted by all of the other conversation happening on the scanner.

Also, in recent years, the police have reduced their use of radios and rely more on cell phones and computer terminals in their cars. Don't worry if you aren't hearing much. There might not be much going on.

If the scanner starts to act funny, the batteries are probably going dead.

Also, try to be discreet when using the scanner. It can easily make people on the street think that you are a cop or are working in some official capacity for the state. Keep it in your backpack and use headphones.

## **How to Deal with Police**

Don't ever leave or quit filming a scene until the situation is completely over. Not even if you were on your way home. If you need to change batteries or tapes, you should do so discreetly without a big fuss. Equipment problems should be handled smoothly and professionally.

Many people don't want to be filmed. Remember, you aren't filming them; you are filming the police. You can make this apparent by following the police with the camera when he/she walks to and from his patrol car, away from the suspects, etc. The announcement, that you are there to observe the police, at the beginning of the intervention is done partly for this purpose. When people tell us not to film, the intervener says that we are not filming them, we are filming the police. Generally, this works. If you believe that the situation is seriously enough, you should film no matter what, it is within your rights when you are on public property.

## **Responding to Threats to Arrest You**

“You're resisting arrest.”

**Reply:** No, we're not. No one here is intentionally preventing or obstructing you from effecting an arrest, search, or transportation by using force against the peace officer or anyone else. We are acting nonviolently.

**Key words:** intentionally preventing or obstructing, force

“This is an unlawful assembly.”

**Reply:** No, it's not. We are not resisting your execution of process. We are not recklessly using physical force or violence or threatening to use force or violence. All we are doing is legally observing you and recording your actions.

**Key words:** physical force, violence, not resisting execution of process

“You're committing disorderly conduct.”

**Reply:** No, we're not. We are stepping away as you requested, we're not in your way, and we're not obstructing public safety. We are standing a safe distance away. We are not using profane language or gestures.

**Key words:** refusal, order to disperse

“You’re obstructing a public thoroughfare (street, sidewalk, etc.).”

**Reply:** No, we’re not. We are not rendering impassable nor are we rendering this passage unreasonably inconvenient or hazardous. We are performing a public service. We are not obstructing traffic and have obeyed a reasonable request or order to move.

**Key words:** impassable, unreasonably inconvenient, reasonable request or order

“You’re interfering with (or obstructing) a police officer.”

**Reply:** No, we’re not. We are not, with criminal negligence, interrupting, disrupting, impeding, or otherwise interfering. We are not threatening any officer’s safety. All we are doing is legally observing you and recording your actions.

**Key words:** criminal negligence, interrupting, disrupting, impeding, interfering

“You’re obstructing governmental operations.”

**Reply:** No, we’re not. We are not recklessly hindering an official proceeding by noise or violent or tumultuous behavior or disturbance and have not continued after explicit official request to desist.

**Key words:** official request, disturbance, recklessly hindering

“You’re assaulting a police officer.”

**Reply:** No, we’re not. We are not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to you or any other peace officer, nor are we threatening anyone with imminent bodily injury. No one here is in physical contact with you nor is anyone here trying to touch you. We are not threatening any officer’s safety.

**Key words:** imminent bodily injury, officer’s safety, touching

“You’re interfering with our ability to apprehend the suspect.”

**Reply:** No, we’re not. We are not preventing or hindering you from performing any of your duties. We are not here with intent to hinder the arrest, prosecution, conviction, or punishment of anyone (or with intent to hinder the arrest, detention, adjudication, or disposition of a child for engaging in delinquent

conduct that violates a penal law of the grade of felony). All we are doing is observing the situation from a safe distance.

**Key words:** hindering, preventing

## **How to Deal with the Media**

1. Be courteous to the reporters.
2. Be prepared to give the reporters a first and a last name and to be asked to take a picture or appear on camera. If you do not want to do this, then you are in no way obligated to, but keep in mind it doesn't help for you to be there to offer any information about the group since the reporters can't use it without a source.
3. Keep in mind when talking to the media that you are doing so as a representative of Copwatch. If your personal views differ from those of Copwatch, save them and focus on Copwatch's message. It is preferable not to share personal information, personally held political views and patrolling habits with the press.
4. Don't act too eager when conducting an interview. This makes it weird for the person interviewing. We should act like we are used to talking to the press, discussing police brutality and that we can be used as a reliable source.
5. Keep your answers brief to reduce the chance that your statements will be used out of context or reveal unintended information about internal operations.
6. Watch your body language and tone. If you're nervous or defensive, it will show. Relax, but stay professional.
7. During patrols, refer all questions to the propaganda/PR person. Everyone has a role during Copwatch and being distracted by a reporter on a deadline detracts from it. It's ok to speak to the media after patrols but stay on task during patrol.
8. If you're not sure about the answer to a question, offer to get back to the press.
9. If you wouldn't say it on tape during patrol, don't say it to the media.

## **Get a contact**

Make sure to get a reporter's business card or contact information (name, phone, fax, email, and which is best to use), find out if they regularly cover police, and when the story you've been interviewed for is running (date and time).

## **Media Q&A**

### **What is it that Copwatch does?**

We are an all-volunteer group that regularly videotapes the police during traffic stops or during routine stops.

### **How did Copwatch come about?**

People who were concerned with police brutality and racism in the city started Copwatch. We learned the laws, obtained legal support, studied other Copwatch tactics and learned our rights before patrolling.

### **Why do you feel Copwatch is necessary?**

Nearly every industry and profession in America, from doctors to lawyers to clothing manufacturers, has an independent oversight group that monitors abuses within that industry. The police need this kind of oversight as well. We employ the police with our tax dollars—we should have the right to monitor their performance.

### **Is there a problem with police brutality?**

Yes, there is a prevalent problem with over-reaction by the police, the killing of **Feras Morad, Martin Hernandez, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Sean Monterossa** are all examples of police brutality. Another big problem is the “blue wall of silence” or “blue-line” in which officers won't criticize the conduct of other officers publicly. We try to overcome this wall by documenting police activities on videotape.

### **Is Copwatch “anti-cop”?**

As a group we are all anti-police brutality.

### **Aren't you just defending criminals instead of hard-working police?**

Our goal is to ensure police do not abuse people's rights.

### **Do you think Copwatch is effective?**

Yes. When there are people watching you and recording you, you change your behavior.

### **Do you catch a lot of brutality on camera?**

We're not patrolling to catch instances of brutality on camera, but to prevent it by letting the police know that we may be anywhere with cameras. We do our best to turn over footage of abuse to media, Internal Affairs, and to the victim's and their families.

### **What are the goals of Copwatch?**

To establish Copwatch groups throughout the region and to establish civilian overview boards. We also demand an end to "shoot to kill" policies and high-speed chases.

### **How do the police react to Copwatch?**

They generally keep their distance.

### **Do you think that people who are stopped by the police appreciate your presence?**

Once they realize that we are not part of law enforcement or a television show, the response is usually quite positive.

### **Why did you join Copwatch?**

It has been proven that police departments cannot be trusted to monitor their own behavior without bias, and if my use of a camera and knowledge of the law helps others, then I feel like my efforts in the fight against police brutality are well worth it.

## **How to File a Police Complaint**

Those on the street may ask why we encourage people to file complaints and how to file a complaint. Copwatch encourages people to file complaints because if a public record of police abuse exists that may be actionable by public officials and lawyers. While we may not have faith that abusive cops will be fired, our struggle for justice must be fought on every level.

### **What is abuse?**

The police are only allowed to use force in proportion to the force used by the suspect, and only in order to restrain the suspect during a lawful detention or arrest. Use of racial/ethnic slurs, anti-gay epithets or profanity against the public is generally frowned upon officially.

## The Complaint Process

How to file complaints depends on the police department. In Los Angeles, complaints received by the Los Angeles Police Department are processed through the Internal Affairs Division and can be filed:

- **in-person** at any police facility in Los Angeles, Internal Affairs Group, or at the Office of the Inspector General.



**Central Community Police Station**

251 East Sixth Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90014  
213-486-6606

**Devonshire Community Police Station**

10250 Etiwanda Avenue  
Northridge, CA 91325  
818-832-0633

**Foothill Community Police Station**

12760 Osborne  
Pacoima, CA 91331  
818-756-8861

**Harbor Community Police Station**

2175 John S. Gibson Blvd.  
San Pedro, CA 90731  
310-726-7700

**Hollenbeck Community Police Station**

2111 E. First Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90033  
323-342-4100

**Hollywood Community Police Station**

1358 N. Wilcox  
Hollywood, CA 90028  
213-972-2971

**Mission Community Police Station**

11121 Sepulveda Blvd  
Mission Hills, CA 91345  
818-838-9800

**Newton Community Police Station**

3400 Central Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90011  
323-846-6547

**North Hollywood Community Police Station**

11640 Burbank Boulevard  
North Hollywood, CA 91601  
818-623-4016

**Northeast Community Police Station**

3353 San Fernando Road  
Los Angeles, CA 90065  
323-561-3211

**Olympic Community Police Station**

1130 South Vermont  
Los Angeles, CA 90006  
213-382-9102

**Pacific Community Police Station**

12312 Culver Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90066  
310-482-6334

**Rampart Community Police Station**

1401 W. Sixth Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
213-484-3400

**77th Community Police Station**

7600 Broadway  
Los Angeles, CA 90003  
213-485-4164

**Southeast Community Police Station**

145 W. 108th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90061  
213-972-7828

**Southwest Community Police Station**

1546 West Martin Luther King Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90062  
213-485-2582

**Topanga Community Police Station**

21501 Schoenborn Street  
Canoga Park, CA 91304  
818-756-4800

**Van Nuys Community Police Station**

6240 Sylmar Avenue  
Van Nuys, CA 91401  
818-374-9500

**West Los Angeles Community Police Station**

1663 Butler Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90025  
310-444-0701

**West Valley Community Police Station**

19020 Vanowen Street  
Reseda, CA 91335  
818-374-7611

**Wilshire Community Police Station**

4861 West Venice Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90019  
213-473-0476

**Internal Affairs Group**

**Office of Inspector General**

201 N. Figueroa Street, Suite 1600  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
(800) 339-6868 24-hour toll free hotline

500 West Temple Street, Suite 383  
Los Angeles, CA 90012.  
(213) 974-6100 (Monday-Friday 7:00am-5:00pm PT)

You can obtain a “Complaint of Employee Misconduct” form from any police facility listed above or City Council field office if you would like to fill out the form by yourself. Due to COVID-19, please call the field office first to confirm that they are open.

**City Hall Office**

200 N. Spring Street, Room 460  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone: (213)473-7001  
Office Hours: M-F 9:00AM - 5:00PM

**Highland Park Field Office**

5577 N. Figueroa Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90042  
Phone: (323)550-1538  
Office Hours: M-F 9:00AM - 5:00PM

**Glassell Park Field Office**

3750 Verdugo Road  
Los Angeles, CA 90065  
Phone: (323)341-5671  
Office Hours: T-F 9:00AM - 5:00PM

**North Hollywood Field Office**

5240 N. Lankershim Blvd., Ste 200  
North Hollywood, CA 91601  
Phone: (818) 755-7676 | Fax: (818) 755-7862  
Office Hours:

**Reseda District Office**

19040 Vanowen St.  
Reseda, CA 91335  
Phone: (818) 774-4330 | Fax: (818) 756-9179  
Office Hours: M-F 9:00AM – 5:00PM

**Hollywood District Office (By Appointment Only)**

6501 Fountain Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90028  
Phone: (323) 957-6415  
Office Hours:

**Cahuenga District Office**

3330 Cahuenga Blvd W., Suite 505  
Los Angeles, CA 90068  
*By appointment only*

**Sherman Oaks District Office**

14930 Ventura Blvd, Suite 210  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403  
Phone: (818) 728-9924  
Office Hours:

**Los Angeles District 8 Office**

8475 S. Vermont Ave  
Los Angeles, CA 90044  
Phone: (213) 485-7616  
Office Hours:

**Central Los Angeles District Office**

4301 S. Central Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90011  
Phone: (323) 846-2651  
Office Hours: M-F 9:00AM-5:00PM

**Los Angeles District 10 Office**

1819 S. Western Avenue (Enter from Manhattan Place)  
Los Angeles, CA 90006  
Phone: (323) 733-8233 | Fax: (323) 733-5833  
Office Hours:

**West LA District Office**

1645 Corinth Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90025  
Phone: 310-575-8461  
Office Hours:

**Westchester District Office**

7166 W. Manchester Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90045  
Phone: 310-568-8772  
Office Hours:

**Community Service Center:**

9207 Oakdale Ave., Suite 200  
Chatsworth, CA 91311  
Phone: (818) 882-1212 | Fax: (818) 701-5254  
Office Hours:

**Echo Park District Office**

1722 Sunset Blvd.  
Echo Park, CA 90026  
Phone: (213) 207-3015 | Fax: (213) 207-3031  
Office Hours:

**El Sereno Field Office**

4927 E. Huntington Drive North, Suite 100  
Los Angeles, CA 90032  
Phone: (323) 226-1646 | Fax: (323) 226-1644  
Office Hours:

**Boyle Heights Field Office**

**Downtown Los Angeles District Office**

6380 Wilshire Blvd #800,  
Los Angeles, CA 90048  
Phone: (323) 866-1828  
Office Hours

**Van Nuys District Office**

14410 Sylvan Street, Suite 215,  
Van Nuys, CA 91401  
Phone: (818) 778-4999 | Fax: (818) 778-4998  
Office Hours:

**Sun Valley District Office**

9300 Laurel Canyon Blvd., 2nd Floor,  
Sun Valley, CA 91331  
Phone: (818) 771-0236 | Fax: (818) 767-7821  
Office Hours:

**Pacoima City Hall**

13520 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite 209 | Pacoima, CA 91331  
Tel: (818) 485-0600 | Fax: (818) 896-9250  
Office Hours:

**Sylmar District Office**

14117 Hubbard Street #D1 | Sylmar, CA 91342  
Phone: (818) 756-8409 | Fax: (818) 362-4857  
Office Hours:

**Sunland-Tujunga District Office**

7747 Foothill Blvd. | Tujunga, CA 91042  
Tel: (818) 352-3287 | Fax: (818) 875-4554  
Office Hours:

2130 E. 1st Street, Suite 241

Los Angeles, CA 90033

Phone (323) 526-9332 | Fax (323) 526-9366

Office Hours:

**Northeast Los Angeles Field Office**

2035 Colorado Boulevard

Los Angeles, CA 90041

Phone: (323) 254-5295 | Fax: (213) 485-8788

Office Hours:

**Harbor District Office**

630 S. Beacon St., Rm 552

San Pedro, CA 90731

Phone: (310) 732-4515

Office Hours:

**Watts District Office**

1513 E. 103<sup>rd</sup> St.,

Los Angeles, CA 90002

Phone: (323) 568-2083

Office Hours:

Complaints may also be filed online at:

[http://assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/1a\\_Online%20Complaint%20Form.pdf](http://assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/1a_Online%20Complaint%20Form.pdf)

You may also call the 24-hour toll free hotline at (800) 339-6868

**Burbank** Complaints should be filed online here:

<https://www.burbankpd.org/online-services/complaint-form/>

These complaints involve allegations such as excessive force, any discharge of firearms, or criminal activity such as theft. Complaints such as rude behavior or improper procedure are forwarded to the individual officer's division for investigation. In every case, the person making the complaint will be contacted during the investigation for additional information and will be notified by mail of the final disposition.

Encourage complainants to report abuses to their city council member, the mayor, their state representatives, judges, the [ACLU](#), [NLG](#), [LULAC](#), and [NAACP](#). They

can get many of these numbers from the area [League of Women Voters](#), which is listed online or by calling information (411).

## **Federal complaints**

Complainants can file federal civil rights complaints with the Department of Justice. The most effective means of filing a complaint is to write a letter to the Section explaining the situation about which you are complaining, with as much detail as possible. If you are aware of similar incidents involving others, please include that information as well. Please include information on how to contact you if we need further information (such as an address and telephone number). Also, do not include original documents as DoJ cannot guarantee their safe return. Address all complaints to:

## **Special Litigation Section**

P.O. Box 66400  
Washington, D.C. 20035-6400  
(202-514-6255) or fax (202-514-0212 or 202-514-6273).

## **Police Codes**

### **Ten Codes**

10-1 .....	Receiving Poorly	10-22 .....	Disregard
10-2 .....	Receiving Well	10-23 .....	Standby
10-4 .....	Acknowledgement	10-28 .....	Vehicle Registration
10-5 .....	Relay	10-29 Local ...	Local check for Wants only (Persons or Plates)
10-6 .....	Busy	10-29 NCIC ....	Check for All Wants
10-7 .....	Out-of-Service	10-34 .....	Are you Clear?
10-8 .....	In-Service	10-35 .....	Dangerous Person Alert
10-9 .....	Repeat	10-36 .....	Are you Clear?
10-10 .....	Remain in Service	10-87 .....	Meet the Officer 10-10
10-13 .....	Advise Road or Weather Conditions	10-88 .....	Request for Cover Unit
10-16 .....	Prisoner	10-89 .....	Bomb Threat
10-17 .....	Report Routine	10-97 .....	Arrived at Scene
10-19 .....	Return to Station	10-98 .....	Finished Late Assignment
10-20 .....	Location (Emergencies Only)		
10-21 .....	Phone your Station		
10-21H.....	Phone your Home		

## **Eleven Codes**

11-6 .....	Discharging Firearms	11-48 .....	Furnish Transportation
11-7 .....	Prowler	11-49 .....	Vehicle Stop – No License Check
11-8 .....	Person Down	11-50 .....	Vehicle Stop – License Check (10-20 Only)
11-10 .....	Conduct an Investigation	11-51 .....	Pedestrian Stop/Field Interview
11-11 .....	Pickup or Area Check	11-52 .....	Are You O.K.?
11-12 .....	Injured Animal	11-53 .....	Security Check
11-13 .....	Dead Animal	11-55 .....	Hazardous Chemical Spill
11-14 .....	Dog Bite	11-60 .....	Investigate Water Leak
11-15 .....	Ball Game in Street	11-66 .....	Signals Out of Order
11-24 .....	Abandoned Vehicle	11-71 .....	Fire
11-27 .....	Felony Record – No Want	11-80 .....	Serious Injury Accident
11-28 .....	Misdemeanor Record – No Want	11-81 .....	Minor Injury Accident
11-29 .....	No Want	11-82 .....	Non-Injury Accident
11-30 .....	Incomplete Phone Call	11-83 .....	No Detail Accident
11-31 .....	Calling for Help	11-84 .....	Traffic Control
11-40 .....	Notify if Ambulance Needed	11-85 .....	Request for Tow Truck
11-41 .....	Ambulance Needed	11-86 .....	Special Detail
11-42 .....	Ambulance not Needed	11-88 .....	Assist Disabled Motorist
11-44 .....	Coroner's Case	11-99 .....	Officer needs Help
11-45 .....	Attempt Suicide		
11-46 .....	Report of Death		
11-47 .....	Injured Person		

## **California Penal Codes**

187 .....	Homicide	496 .....	Possession of Stolen Property
207 .....	Kidnapping	502 .....	Drunk Driving (23152)
211 .....	Robbery	503 .....	Auto Theft (10851)
242 .....	Battery	504 .....	Tampering with Vehicle (10852)
245 .....	A.D.W.	505 .....	Reckless Driving (23103)
246 .....	Shooting at Dwelling	518 .....	Extortion
261 .....	Rape	537 .....	Defrauding InnKeeper
273a .....	Child Abuse or Neglect	586 .....	Illegal Parking
278 .....	Child Abduction	594 .....	Vandalism
288 .....	Child Molest	595 .....	Runaway Vehicle (20002b)
314 .....	Indecent Exposure	597 .....	Cruelty to Animals
330 .....	Gambling	602 .....	Trespass
374 .....	Illegal Dumping/Littering	647(b) .....	Prostitution
415 .....	Disturbance	647(f) .....	Drunk
417 .....	Person with Weapon (Describe)	653m .....	Phone Threat
451 .....	Arson	5150 .....	Mental Case
459 .....	Burglary	11350 .....	Possession of Dangerous Drugs
470 .....	Forgery	11357 .....	Possession of Marijuana
480 .....	Felony Hit and Run (20001)	12020 .....	Possession of Illegal Weapon
481 .....	Hit and Run (20002A)	12025 .....	Carrying Concealed Weapon
487 .....	Grand Theft		
484/488 .....	Petty Theft		

## **Other Codes**

Code 3 .....	Emergency (Lights and Siren)	Code 8 .....	Restroom
Code 4 .....	No Further Help Needed	Code 10 .....	SWAT Alert
Code 5 .....	Stakeout	Code 11 .....	SWAT Staging Location
Code 6 .....	Remain Clear of Area	Code Blue .....	Bus/Taxi in Trouble
Code 7 .....	Eating	Emergency .....	I Want the Air

