

## Search and Seizure

### 311.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Both the United States and the Wisconsin Constitutions provide every individual with the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures. This policy provides general guidelines for Beloit Police Department personnel to consider when dealing with search and seizure issues.

### 311.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Beloit Police Department to respect the fundamental privacy rights of individuals. Members of this department will conduct searches in strict observance of the constitutional rights of persons being searched. All seizures by this department will comply with relevant federal and state law governing the seizure of persons and property.

The Department will provide relevant and current training to officers as guidance for the application of current law as well as local community standards and prosecutorial considerations to specific search and seizure situations as appropriate.

### 311.3 SEARCHES

The U.S. Constitution generally provides that a valid warrant is required in order for a search to be valid. There are, however, several exceptions to the rule that permit a warrantless search.

Examples of law enforcement activities that are exceptions to the general warrant requirement include, but are not limited to, searches pursuant to the following:

- Valid consent
- Incident to a lawful arrest
- Legitimate community caretaking interests
- Vehicle searches under certain circumstances
- Exigent circumstances
- Statutory authority

Certain other activities are recognized by federal and state courts and by certain statutes as legitimate law enforcement activities that also do not require a warrant. Such activities may include seizure and examination of abandoned property and observations of activities and property located on open public areas.

Because case law regarding search and seizure is constantly changing and subject to interpretation by the courts, each member of this department is expected to act in each situation according to current training and his/her familiarity with clearly established rights as determined by case law.

Whenever practicable, officers are encouraged to contact a supervisor or other available resource to resolve questions regarding search and seizure issues prior to electing a course of action.

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#### **311.4 SEARCH PROTOCOL**

Although conditions will vary and officer safety and other exigencies must be considered in every search situation, the following guidelines should be followed whenever circumstances permit:

- (a) Members of this department will strive to conduct searches with dignity and courtesy.
- (b) Officers should explain to the person being searched the reason for the search and how the search will be conducted.
- (c) Searches should be carried out with due regard and respect for private property interests and in a manner that minimizes damage. Property should be left in a condition as close as reasonably possible to its pre-search condition.
- (d) In order to minimize the need for forcible entry, an attempt should be made to obtain keys, combinations or access codes when a search of locked property is anticipated.
- (e) When the person to be searched is of the opposite sex as the searching officer, a reasonable effort should be made to summon an officer of the same sex as the subject to conduct the search. When it is not practicable to summon an officer of the same sex as the subject, the following guidelines should be followed:
  1. Another officer or a supervisor should witness the search.
  2. The officer should not search areas of the body covered by tight-fitting clothing, sheer clothing or clothing that could not reasonably conceal a weapon.

#### **311.5 DOCUMENTATION**

Officers are responsible to document any search and to ensure that any required reports are sufficient including, at minimum, documentation of the following:

- Reason for the search
- Any efforts used to minimize the intrusiveness of any search (e.g., asking for consent or keys)
- What, if any, injuries or damage occurred
- All steps taken to secure property
- The results of the search including a description of any property or contraband seized
- If the person searched is of the opposite sex, any efforts used to summon an officer of the same sex as the person being searched and the identification of any witness officer

Supervisors shall review reports to ensure the reports are accurate, that actions are properly documented and that current legal requirements and department policy have been met.

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#### 311.5.1 PAROLE AND PROBATION SEARCHES

Any member conducting a search of an individual on parole or probation under the following conditions shall ensure the search is reported to the Department of Corrections:

- (a) Released under risk reduction sentence (Wis. Stat. § 302.043(4))
- (b) Released to extended supervision under the challenge incarceration program, (Wis. Stat. § 302.045(3m)(e))
- (c) Released after completing substance abuse program (Wis. Stat. § 302.05(3)(c)(4))
- (d) Mandatory release parole (Wis. Stat. § 302.11(6m))
- (e) Released to extended supervision for felony offenders not serving life sentences (Wis. Stat. § 302.113(7r))
- (f) Released to extended supervision for felony offenders serving life sentences (Wis. Stat. § 302.114(8g))
- (g) Special action parole release (Wis. Stat. § 304.02(2m))
- (h) Paroles from state prisons and house of correction (Wis. Stat. § 304.06(1r))
- (i) Placed on probation for a felony or any violation under Chapters 940, 948, or 961 (Wis. Stat. § 973.09(1d))
  - (a) Prior to any search of a probationers residence, vehicle, or storage unit under their control as provided in this subsection, a supervisor shall be notified, evaluate the reasonable suspicion and parameters of the search, and approve or disapprove any such search.
  - (b) Supervisor considerations should include conformity with the statutory requirements regarding reasonable suspicion of a crime or violation of a probationary condition, proximity of the probationer to the residence, vehicle, or storage unit, the likely presence of other persons or animals, whether keys are present to facilitate entry, etc.

As soon as practicable after completion of a search pursuant to this subsection, the Department of Corrections shall be notified via email by the member conducting the search. An updated email list shall be maintained in the sergeant and shift commander offices. The notification shall include all of the following:

- (a) The reasonable suspicion by the officer that the person is committing, is about to commit, or has committed a crime or violation of a condition of probation.
- (b) Date, time and location of the search.
- (c) Current status of the person under supervision.