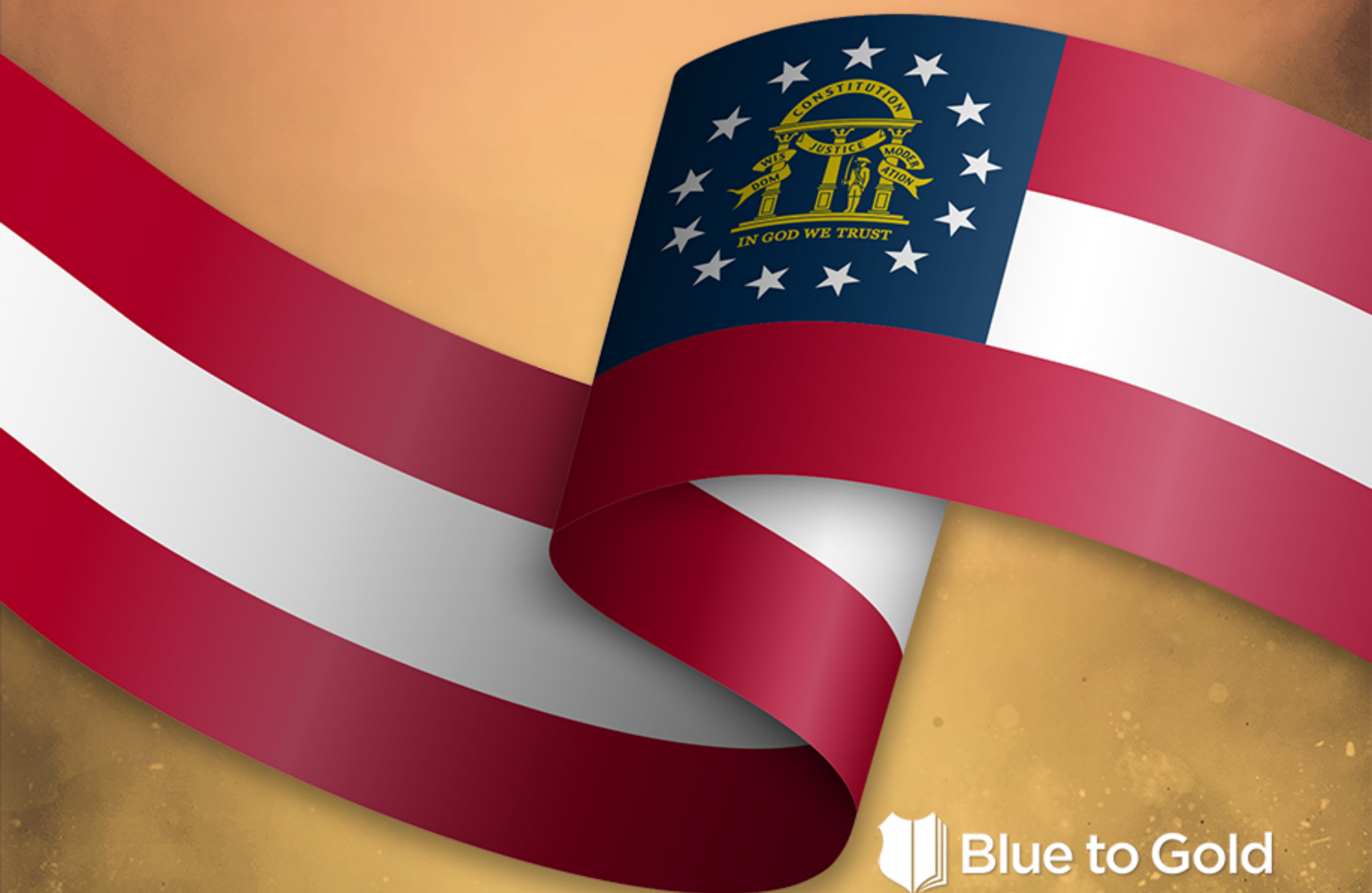


ANTHONY BANDIERO, ESQ.

GEORGIA

Search & Seizure Survival Guide

A FIELD GUIDE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT



Blue to Gold

Georgia Search & Seizure Survival Guide

A FIELD GUIDE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT



Anthony Bandiero, JD, ALM

Blue To Gold Law Enforcement Training, LLC
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

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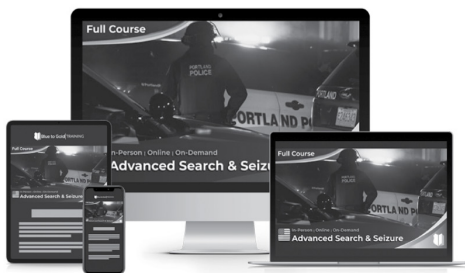
Georgia Search & Seizure Survival Guide
ISBN 979-8873162208
Last updated 12-2023

Note: This is a general overview of the classical and current United States court decisions related to search and seizure, liability, and confessions. As an overview, it should be used for a basic analysis of the general principles but not as a comprehensive presentation of the entire body of law. It is not to be used as a substitute for the opinion or advice of the appropriate legal counsel from the reader's department. To the extent possible, the information is current. However, very recent statutory and case law developments may not be covered.

Additionally, readers should be aware that all citations in this book are meant to give the reader the necessary information to find the relevant case. Case citations do not comply with court requirements and intentionally omit additional information such as pin cites, internal citations, and subsequent case developments. The citations are intended for police officers. Lawyers must conduct due diligence and read the case completely and cite appropriately.

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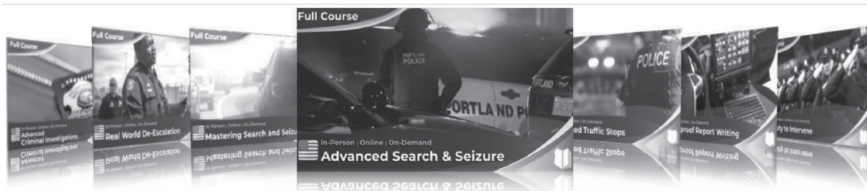


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Overview

Let's Start with the Basics	13
Consensual Encounters	47
Investigative Detentions.....	77
Arrests.....	113
Vehicles.....	160
Homes	208
Businesses & Schools	267
Personal Property.....	288
Technology Searches	297
Miscellaneous Searches & Seizures.....	322
Search Warrants	340
Law Enforcement Liability.....	365
Index	395

Note about case citations:

The case names cited throughout this book are not formatted according to the Bluebook citation style, which is widely recognized in legal writing. Instead, these citations are presented in a more straightforward manner, primarily to facilitate ease of reference for readers who may wish to delve deeper into the cases themselves. This approach is adopted to enhance the accessibility of the material, especially for those who might not be familiar with the intricacies of legal citation formats. By presenting case names in a clear and direct way, the book aims to encourage readers to explore these cases further, providing a gateway to understanding the legal principles and precedents discussed more deeply.

Table of Contents

Let's Start with the Basics.....	13
Fourth Amendment.....	14
Fifth Amendment	16
Three Golden Rules of Search & Seizure	17
The Right 'To be Left Alone'.....	19
Decision Sequencing.....	20
C.R.E.W.....	21
Fourth Amendment Reasonableness.....	23
Private Searches.....	26
“Hunches” Defined	30
Reasonable Suspicion Defined.....	33
Probable Cause Defined.....	36
Collective Knowledge Doctrine.....	39
What is a “Search” Under the Fourth Amendment?	42
What is a “Seizure” Under the Fourth Amendment?.....	44
Consensual Encounters	47
Consensual Encounters	48
Knock and Talks	52
Investigative Activities During Consensual Encounter	56
Asking for Identification	60
Removing Hands from Pockets.....	63
Transporting to Police Station.....	66
Consent to Search.....	68
Third-Party Consent	72
Mistaken Authority to Consent.....	75
Investigative Detentions	77

Specific Factors to Consider	78
Detaining a Suspect.....	81
Officer Safety Detentions.....	83
How Long Can Detentions Last?.....	85
Investigative Techniques During a Stop.....	87
Identifications - in the Field.....	89
Unprovoked Flight Upon Seeing an Officer	90
Detentions Based on an Anonymous Tip	92
Handcuffing and Use of Force	95
Detaining Victims or Witnesses.....	97
Patdown for Weapons.....	99
Patdown Based on Anonymous Tips	103
Plain Feel Doctrine.....	105
Involuntary Transportation	107
Detaining People Who Publicly Record Police Officers.....	110
Arrests	113
Lawful Arrest	114
Entry into Home with Arrest Warrant	119
Warrantless Entry to Make Arrest.....	121
Collective Knowledge Doctrine	123
Meaning of “Committed in the Officer’s Presence?”	126
Line-Ups	129
Protective Sweeps.....	132
When to “Un-arrest” a Suspect	136
“Contempt of Cop” Arrests.....	139
Arrests at Public Protests	142
Search Incident to Arrest	144
Search Prior to Formal Arrest	147
Search Incident to a “Temporary” Arrest.....	149

Attempt to Swallow Drugs	151
DUI Breath Tests	153
DUI Blood Tests.....	155
Searching Vehicle Incident to Arrest	157

Vehicles 160

General Rule.....	161
Scope of Stop Similar to an Investigative Detention	163
Community Caretaking Stops.....	165
Reasonable Suspicion Stops	167
Stops to Verify Temporary Registration	169
DUI Checkpoints	171
Information Gathering Checkpoints	173
Legal Considerations for Any Checkpoint	175
Ordering Passengers to Stay in, or Exit Vehicle.....	177
Consent to Search a Vehicle	179
Frisking People Who Ride in Police Vehicle	182
Searching Vehicle and Occupants for Weapons	184
K9 Sniff Around Vehicle	186
Searching Vehicle Incident to Arrest	189
Searching Vehicle with Probable Cause	192
Dangerous Items Left in Vehicle	195
Inventories	196
Identifying Passengers.....	200
Unrelated Questioning	202
Constructive Possession.....	204

Homes 208

Overview & Standing.....	209
Hotel Rooms, Tents, RVs, and so Forth.....	212

Knock and Talks	216
Open Fields	219
Curtilage	221
Plain View Seizure.....	224
Trash Searches.....	227
Consent to Search by Co-Occupants	229
Parental Consent to Search Child’s Room	232
Mistaken Authority to Consent.....	234
Protective Sweeps.....	236
Warrantless Entry Under Hot and Fresh Pursuit	239
Warrantless Arrest at Doorway	242
Warrantless Entry to Make Arrest.....	244
Warrantless Entry for an Emergency.....	245
Warrantless Entry for Officer Safety	247
Warrantless Entry for Arrest Team.....	249
Warrantless Entry to Investigate Child Abuse.....	251
Warrantless Entry to Protect Property	253
Warrantless Entry to Investigate Homicide Crime	255
Warrantless Entry to Prevent Destruction of Evidence.....	256
Warrantless Entry Based on “Ruse” or Lie.....	258
Convincing Suspect to Exit Based on “Ruse” or Lie.....	261
Detaining a Home in Anticipation of a Warrant	263
Surround and Call-Out	265
Businesses & Schools.....	267
Warrantless Arrest Inside Business.....	268
Customer Business Records.....	270
Heavily Regulated Businesses	272
Fire, Health, and Safety Inspections.....	274
Government Workplace Searches	276

School Searches	277
Student Drug Testing.....	281
SROs, Security Guards, and Administrators.....	283
Use of Force Against Students.....	286
Personal Property	288
Searching Containers.....	289
Single Purpose Container Doctrine	290
Searching Abandoned or Lost Property.....	292
Searching Mail or Packages.....	295
Technology Searches	297
Sensory Enhancements	298
Flashlights.....	299
Binoculars.....	301
Night Vision Goggles	303
Thermal Imaging.....	304
Cell Phones, Laptops, and Tablets	306
Cell Phone Location Records	307
Aerial Surveillance	309
Drones.....	311
Pole Cameras.....	314
Automatic License Plate Readers.....	317
GPS Devices	319
Obtaining Passwords.....	320
Miscellaneous Searches & Seizures	322
Cause-of-Injury Searches	323
Medical Procedures.....	325
Discarded DNA	328
Fingernail Scrapes	330

Arson Investigations	331
Airport & Other Administrative Checkpoints	333
Border Searches	336
Probationer & Parolee Searches	338
Search Warrants	340
Overview	341
Why Get a Warrant, Even if You Don't Need to?.....	342
Particularity Requirement	343
Anticipatory Search Warrant	345
Confidential Informants.....	347
Sealing Affidavits.....	349
Knock and Announce	351
Detaining Occupants Inside and in Immediate Vicinity	354
Frisking Occupants	357
Handcuffing Occupants.....	359
Entry into Home with Arrest Warrant	361
Wrong Address Liability	363
Receipt, Return, and Inventory,	364
Law Enforcement Liability	365
Exclusionary Rule.....	366
Exceptions to the Exclusionary Rule.....	368
Fruit of the Poisonous Tree	369
Standing to Object.....	370
Good Faith Exception.....	372
Attenuation.....	374
Inevitable or Independent Discovery.....	376
Duty to Protect	379
Duty to Intervene	381

Supervisor Liability.....	383
Unequal Enforcement of the Law	385
Behavior that “Shocks the Conscience”	386
Deliberate Indifference	388
Sharing Crime Scene Photos on Social Media.....	390
§ 1983 Civil Rights Violations	391
§ 242 Criminal Charges	392
Bringing Non-Essential Personnel Into the Home	393
Qualified Immunity	394
Index.....	395

"If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself."

— James Madison, Father of the Fourth Amendment, 1788



Consensual Encounters

Consensual Encounters

The most common police encounter is the consensual one. You don't need a specific reason to speak with people and consensual encounters are a great way to continue an investigation when you have neither reasonable suspicion nor probable cause. As the Supreme Court said, "Police officers act in full accord with the law when they ask citizens for consent."¹

Start a consensual encounter by asking a question: "Can I talk to you?" Not, "Come talk to me." Also, your conduct during the encounter must be reasonable. Lengthy encounters full of accusatory questioning will likely be deemed an investigative detention, not a consensual encounter.

Finally, your un-communicated state of mind has zero bearing on whether the person would feel free to leave. Therefore, even if you had probable cause to arrest, this factor will not be considered as long as the suspect did not know that you intended to arrest him.

Legal Standard

A consensual encounter becomes a seizure when:²

- Under the **totality of the circumstances**;
- A reasonably **innocent** person;
- Believes they do not have the freedom to **terminate** the encounter or **leave**; and
- Yields** to a show of authority or physical force.

Some factors courts consider include:

- How the initial contact was made (was an order given?)
- Use of flashing lights or sirens
- Uniform versus plain clothes
- Number of officers
- Demeanor of officer (conversational v. accusations)
- Display of weapons
- Physical touching or patdowns

¹ United States v. Drayton, 536 U.S. 194 (2002)

² CCDA Shanon Clowers

- Ordering person to move next to patrol car
- Blocking their vehicle
- Telling person they are free to leave
- Reading Miranda (not recommended for consensual encounters)
- Duration of the encounter
- Public versus private location
- And many others. Use common sense and talk to the person in a professional yet conversational tone.

Georgia Case Examples

These cases represent binding authority from Georgia, the 11th Circuit, or U.S. Supreme Court. It's important to confirm these cases are consistent with current state law and agency policy which may be more restrictive.

Police May Ask for Consent To Search:

In *State v. McMichael*, the Court of Appeals of Georgia dealt with the issue of whether a traffic stop had de-escalated into a consensual encounter, allowing for voluntary consent to search a vehicle. The court emphasized that a consensual encounter involves the voluntary cooperation of a private citizen in response to non-coercive questioning by law enforcement, and the individual must feel free to leave at any time. The court explained, "A consensual encounter has been defined as simply the voluntary cooperation of a private citizen in response to non-coercive questioning by a law enforcement official."¹

The Scope of Consensual Encounters:

The Court of Appeals of Georgia stated, "A first-tier, consensual encounter provides no Fourth Amendment protection. During such encounter, an officer may approach a citizen, ask the citizen questions, and request identification without any basis or belief that the citizen is involved in criminal activity, as long as the officer do[es] not detain the citizen or create the impression that the citizen may not leave."²

Briefly Asking Factory Workers Questions Was Not a Seizure:

This case examined the nature of interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals, particularly in the context of questioning by officers in a factory setting. The Court's decision

¹ *State v. McMichael*, 276 Ga. App. 735, (2005)

² *State v. Devine*, 276 Ga. App. 159 (2005)

turned on the proposition that the interrogations by the INS were merely brief, "consensual encounters," that did not pose a threat to personal security and freedom, and thus did not amount to seizures under the Fourth Amendment.¹

Suspect Fit Drug Courier Profile and Police Conduct Was Not a Consensual Encounter:

A suspect who fit the so-called "drug-courier profile" was approached at an airport by two detectives. Upon request, but without oral consent, the suspect produced for the detectives his airline ticket and his driver's license. The detectives, without returning the airline ticket and license, asked the suspect to accompany them to a small room approximately 40 feet away, and the suspect went with them. Without the suspect's consent, a detective retrieved the suspect's luggage from the airline and brought it to the room. When the suspect was asked if he would consent to a search of his suitcases, the suspect produced a key and unlocked one of the suitcases, in which drugs were found. Court found this was not a consensual encounter and suppressed the evidence.²

Non-binding Case Examples

These cases represent persuasive authority from other courts outside of Georgia and the 11th Circuit. Though not binding, they have been selected for inclusion here because if an officer in Georgia finds himself in a similar situation, the outcome will likely be the same, at least in federal court.

Order To Come Over and Talk Is Not Consensual:

Suspect was observed walking in mall parking lot after stores were closed. Officer said, "Come over here, I want to talk to you." Court held officer gave command to suspect and therefore needed reasonable suspicion. Evidence suppressed.³

Even if Police Have Probable Cause, They Can Still Seek a Consensual Encounter With the Suspect:

"Therefore, even assuming that probable cause existed at some earlier time, there was no violation of the Fourth Amendment...No Fourth Amendment privacy interests are invaded when an officer seeks a consensual interview with a suspect."⁴

Consensual Encounter and Search Valid After Officer Released Driver Following a Traffic Stop:

¹ INS v. Delgado, 104 S. Ct. 1758 (1984).

² Fla. v. Royer, 460 U.S. 491 (1983)

³ People v. Roth, 219 Cal. App. 3d 211 (1990)

⁴ People v. Coddington, 23 Cal. 4th 529 (2000),

Where the officer stopped a vehicle to issue a traffic citation, concluded the traffic stop, indicated to the driver that he was free to leave, but then asked if the driver had drugs and whether or not the officer could search the vehicle, consent to search was voluntary.¹ Many cops call this move the “two step.” After releasing the offender, the officer will turn towards his patrol car, stop, turn around, and in a Columbo-like manner say, “Sir, can I ask one more question before you leave....” It’s a solid way to separate the stop from the consensual encounter.

Whether Someone Feels “Detained” Is Based on Objective Facts:

“The test provides that the police can be said to have seized an individual ‘only if, in view of all of the circumstances surrounding the incident, a reasonable person would have believed that he was not free to leave.’ As the test is an objective standard—looking to a reasonable person’s interpretation of the situation in question... This ‘reasonable person’ standard also ensures that the scope of Fourth Amendment protection does not vary with the state of mind of the particular individual being approached.”²

Violation of a State Law Does Not Equal Automatic Fourth Amendment Violation:

Although the officers may have violated state law requirements in not informing the person answering the door during “knock and talk” investigation that he had a right to terminate the encounter, that circumstance did not render the consent to talk involuntary under the Fourth Amendment.³

¹ U.S. v. Rivera, 906 F.2d 319 (7th Cir. 1990)

² State v. McKellips, 118 Nev. 465, 469 (2002)

³ U.S. v. Cormier, 220 F.3d 1103 (9th Cir. 2000)

Knock and Talks

There is no Fourth Amendment violation if you try to consensually contact a person at his home. The key to knock and talks is to comply with social norms. Think about it this way, if the Girl Scouts could do it, you can too.

You must be reasonable when you contact the subject. Constant pounding on the door, for example, would likely turn the encounter into a detention if the subject knows that it's the police knocking (an objectively reasonable person would believe that police are *commanding* him to open the door). Additionally, waking a subject up at 4 a.m. was viewed as a detention requiring reasonable suspicion (see below). In other words, if the Girl Scouts wouldn't do then it's probably unreasonable.

What about "No Trespass" signs? Trying to have a consensual conversation with someone is not typically considered trespassing. The same goes with "No Soliciting" signs. Still, there will be situations when a no-trespassing sign along with other factors will indicate to a reasonable person that no one should approach the front door and knock. Still, these rules don't apply to calls for service where there is an ongoing issue, like a domestic violence call or loud party complaint.

Legal Standard

Knock and talks are lawful when:

- The **path** used to reach the door does not violate **curtilage** and appears available for **uninvited guests** to use;
 - If the house has multiple doors, you chose the **door reasonably believed** to be available for uninvited guests to make contact with an occupant;
 - You used typical, **non-intrusive methods** to contact the occupant, including making contact during a socially-acceptable time;
 - Your conversation with the occupant remained **consensual**;
 - When the conversation ended or was terminated, you **immediately left** and didn't snoop around.
-

Georgia Case Examples

These cases represent binding authority from Georgia, the 11th Circuit, or U.S. Supreme Court. It's important to confirm these cases are consistent with current state law and agency policy which may be more restrictive.

Knock and Talk Developed Into Search and Seizure:

The officers received an anonymous tip about marijuana use in an apartment and decided to perform a knock and talk, as they lacked sufficient evidence for a search warrant. Upon knocking, the resident...opened the door slightly, and the officers claimed to smell marijuana, leading to their entry and subsequent discovery of drugs. The trial court initially suppressed the evidence, expressing a general dislike for knock-and-talk procedures. However, the Court of Appeals vacated this decision, emphasizing the need for trial courts to adhere to legal principles rather than personal policy preferences. The court stated, "The trial court's findings as to disputed facts and credibility must be adopted unless clearly erroneous."¹

Officers May Knock on the Door Reasonably Believed To Be Used by the General Public:

The U.S. Supreme Court addressed the boundaries of the "knock and talk" exception in law enforcement, particularly focusing on where officers can lawfully approach a residence without a warrant. The case revolved around whether police officers could approach a residence at a location other than the front door under the "knock and talk" exception.

The case involved Officer Carroll, who, while searching for a suspect, approached the Carmans' house and entered their deck without a warrant. The Carmans argued that this violated their Fourth Amendment rights, as the "knock and talk" exception should not apply when officers approach areas of the residence other than the front door. The District Court initially ruled in favor of Carroll, but the Third Circuit Court of Appeals reversed this decision, asserting that the "knock and talk" exception requires officers to begin their encounter at the front door.

The Supreme Court, however, reversed the Third Circuit's decision, granting qualified immunity to Officer Carroll. The Court emphasized that the "knock and talk" exception allows officers to approach a residence in the same manner as any private citizen might, which includes areas like walkways, driveways, porches, and other places where visitors could be expected to go. The Court noted, "A government official sued under §1983 is entitled to

¹ State v. Able, 321 Ga. App. 632 (2013)

qualified immunity unless the official violated a statutory or constitutional right that was clearly established at the time of the challenged conduct."

The Court's decision highlighted the flexibility of the "knock and talk" exception, allowing law enforcement to approach different parts of a residence, not strictly limited to the front door, as long as those areas are accessible to the general public and used as common entrances. This ruling underscores the balance between law enforcement's need to perform their duties and the protection of individual privacy rights under the Fourth Amendment.¹

Non-binding Case Examples

These cases represent persuasive authority from other courts outside of Georgia and the 11th Circuit. Though not binding, they have been selected for inclusion here because if an officer in Georgia finds himself in a similar situation, the outcome will likely be the same, at least in federal court.

Knock and Talk at 4 A.M. Held Invalid:

Officers went to suspect's residence at 4 a.m. with the sole purpose to arrest him. There was no on-going crime and the probable cause was based on an offense that occurred the previous night. Violation of knock and talk because officers exceeded social norms.²

Command to Open Door Was Not a Consensual Encounter:

"Officers were stationed at both doors of the duplex and [an officer] had commanded [the defendant] to open the door. A reasonable person in [defendant's] situation would have concluded that he had no choice but to acquiesce and open the door."³

Constant Pressure To Consent To Search Held Unlawful:

During knock and talk officers continued to press defendant for permission to enter and search. Later consent-to-search was product of illegal detention.⁴

Officer's Statement That He Didn't Need a Warrant To Talk With Occupant Found To Have Tainted Consent To Enter:

Officers made contact with a suspected alien at his apartment. The officers asked to enter the apartment, and the occupant asked whether they needed a warrant for that. The officers said they "didn't need a warrant to talk to him." Based on the totality of the circumstances, the consent was involuntary, since a reasonable

¹ Carroll v. Carman, 135 S. Ct. 348 (2014)

² United States v. Lundin, 47 F. Supp. 3d 1003 (N.D. Cal. 2014)

³ United States v. Poe, 462 F.3d 997 (8th Cir. Mo. 2006)

⁴ United States v. Washington, 387 F.3d 1060 (9th Cir. Nev. 2004)

occupant would have thought that police didn't need a warrant to enter and talk.¹

Unless There Is an Express Order Otherwise, Officers Have the Same Right To Knock and Talk as a Pollster or Salesman:

“One court stated more than forty years ago: ‘Absent express orders from the person in possession against any possible trespass, there is no rule of private or public conduct which makes it illegal per se, or a condemned invasion of the person's right of privacy, for anyone openly and peaceably, at high noon, to walk up the steps and knock on the front door of any man's ‘castle’ with the honest intent of asking questions of the occupant thereof—whether the questioner be a pollster, a salesman, or an officer of the law.’”²

¹ *Orhorgaghe v. I.N.S.*, 38 F.3d 488 (9th Cir. 1994)

² *People v. Rivera*, 41 Cal. 4th 304 (2007)

Investigative Activities During Consensual Encounter

Just because you're engaged in a consensual encounter doesn't mean you can't investigate. However, be careful as to how you go about it. Be cool, low key, and relaxed. Make small talk and just present yourself as a curious cop versus someone looking to make an arrest (though that may be your goal).

During a consensual encounter, there are really three investigative activities you can engage in; questioning, asking for ID, and seeking consent to search.

“[L]aw enforcement officers do not violate the Fourth Amendment by merely approaching an individual on the street or in another public place, and asking him if he is willing to answer some questions, [or] by putting questions to him if the person is willing to listen.”¹

Asking for ID and running a subject for warrants doesn't automatically convert an encounter into a detention.² Hint, return ID as soon as possible so a reasonable person would still “feel free to leave.”³

Legal Standard

Questioning

Questioning a person does not convert a consensual encounter into an investigative detention as long as:

- Your questions are not **overly accusatory** in a manner that would make a reasonable person believe they were being detained for criminal activity.

Identification

Asking a person for identification does not convert a consensual encounter into an investigative detention as long as:

- The identification is **requested**, not demanded; and

¹ Fla. v. Royer, 460 U.S. 491 (1983)

² People v. Bouser, 26 Cal. App. 4th 1280 (1994)

³ United States v. Chan-Jimenez, 125 F.3d 1324 (9th Cir. Ariz. 1997)

- You **returned** the identification as soon as practicable; otherwise a reasonable person may no longer feel free to leave.

Consent to search

Asking a person for consent to search does not convert the encounter into an investigative detention as long as:

- The person's consent was **freely and voluntarily given**;
- He has **apparent authority** to give consent to search the area or item; and
- You did not exceed the **scope** provided, express or implied.

Georgia Case Examples

These cases represent binding authority from Georgia, the 11th Circuit, or U.S. Supreme Court. It's important to confirm these cases are consistent with current state law and agency policy which may be more restrictive.

Consensual Encounters Are Not Seizures:

This case clarified the boundaries of consensual encounters versus seizures under the Fourth Amendment. The Court stated, "law enforcement officers do not violate the Fourth Amendment by merely approaching an individual on the street or in another public place, by asking him if he is willing to answer some questions, by putting questions to him if the person is willing to listen, or by offering in evidence in a criminal prosecution his voluntary answers to such questions." This ruling emphasized that police questioning, in itself, does not constitute a seizure, and such encounters are considered consensual, not implicating Fourth Amendment interests.¹

Police Can Ask People if They Are Willing To Answer Questions:

The Court reinforced the principle that police interactions with individuals in public spaces, such as streets or buses, where they ask questions or request consent to search luggage, do not violate the Fourth Amendment's prohibition of unreasonable seizures. The Court noted, "Law enforcement officers do not violate the Fourth Amendment's prohibition of unreasonable seizures merely by approaching individuals on the street or in other public places and putting questions to them if they are willing to listen." This decision further established that such interactions are considered consensual and do not implicate Fourth Amendment interests.²

¹ Florida v. Bostick, 111 S. Ct. 2382 (1991).

² United States v. Drayton, 122 S. Ct. 2105 (2002)

Briefly Asking Factory Workers Questions Was Not a Seizure:

This case examined the nature of interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals, particularly in the context of questioning by officers in a factory setting. The Court's decision turned on the proposition that the interrogations by the INS were merely brief, "consensual encounters," that did not pose a threat to personal security and freedom, and thus did not amount to seizures under the Fourth Amendment.¹

Suspect Fit Drug Courier Profile and Police Conduct Was Not a Consensual Encounter:

A suspect who fit the so-called "drug-courier profile" was approached at an airport by two detectives. Upon request, but without oral consent, the suspect produced for the detectives his airline ticket and his driver's license. The detectives, without returning the airline ticket and license, asked the suspect to accompany them to a small room approximately 40 feet away, and the suspect went with them. Without the suspect's consent, a detective retrieved the suspect's luggage from the airline and brought it to the room. When the suspect was asked if he would consent to a search of his suitcases, the suspect produced a key and unlocked one of the suitcases, in which drugs were found. Court found this was not a consensual encounter and suppressed the evidence.²

Non-binding Case Examples

These cases represent persuasive authority from other courts outside of Georgia and the 11th Circuit. Though not binding, they have been selected for inclusion here because if an officer in Georgia finds himself in a similar situation, the outcome will likely be the same, at least in federal court.

Child Illegally Questioned at School While Officer Was Present:

A child was illegally seized and questioned by a caseworker and police officer when they escorted the child off private school property, and interrogated the child for twenty minutes about intimate details of his family life and whether he was being abused. The government argued that this was a consensual encounter, but no reasonable child in that position would have believed they were free to leave.³

Note: This case may have come out differently if they did not remove the child from school grounds. Involuntary transportation usually converts an encounter into an arrest.

¹ INS v. Delgado, 104 S. Ct. 1758 (1984).

² Fla. v. Royer, 460 U.S. 491 (1983)

³ Doe v. Heck, 327 F.3d 492 (7th Cir. 2003)

Consent to Search Was Involuntary After Arrest-Like Behavior:

Suspect did not voluntarily consent to the search of his person, and suppression of a handgun discovered was warranted, where the suspect was in a bus shelter, was surrounded by three patrol cars and five uniformed officers, an officer's initial, accusatory question, combined with the police-dominated atmosphere, clearly communicated to the suspect that he was not free to leave or to refuse the officer's request to conduct the search. The officer never informed the suspect that he had the right to refuse the search, and the suspect never gave verbal or written consent, but instead merely surrendered to an officer's command.¹

¹ U.S. v. Robertson, 736 F.3d 677 (4th Cir. 2013)

Asking for Identification

If you make a consensual encounter, you can always request that the subject identify themselves. But remember, there is no requirement that he do so. Additionally, there is likely no crime if the subject lied about his identity during a consensual encounter (however, possession of a fraudulent ID may be a crime).

I know a lot of officers don't understand how a person can lie about his identity and get away with it. But think about it, what law requires a person to identify himself during a consensual encounter? There may be a requirement the suspect identify himself during an investigative detention, but not a consensual one.

On the other hand, lying about ones' identity may help develop reasonable suspicion that the person is engaged in criminal activity, but this can't be the sole reason to detain or arrest the person.

Legal Standard

Asking a person for identification does not convert a consensual encounter into an investigative detention as long as:

- The identification is **requested**, not demanded; and
 - You **return the identification** as soon as practicable; otherwise a reasonable person may no longer feel free to leave.
-

Georgia Case Examples

These cases represent binding authority from Georgia, the 11th Circuit, or U.S. Supreme Court. It's important to confirm these cases are consistent with current state law and agency policy which may be more restrictive.

Consensual Encounters and Request for Identification:

The Court of Appeals of Georgia addressed the legality of requesting identification during a consensual police-citizen encounter. The court explained, "During such encounter, an officer may approach a citizen, ask the citizen questions, and request identification without any basis or belief that the citizen is involved in criminal activity, as long as the officer[] do[es] not detain the citizen or create the impression that the citizen may not leave."¹

ID Requests During Terry Stop:

¹ State v. Devine, 276 Ga. App. 159 (2005)

The Court of Appeals of Georgia discussed the circumstances under which law enforcement officers can request identification during an investigatory stop. The court clarified that during a second-tier encounter under *Terry v. Ohio*, if an officer has reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct, they may lawfully detain an individual briefly and request identification as part of the investigatory stop. The court noted, "In the course of a 'second-tier encounter' under *Terry v. Ohio*... if an officer has a reasonable, articulable suspicion of criminal conduct, he may lawfully detain an individual for a brief time and request identification as part of the investigatory stop."¹

Detaining a Subject for Identification Requires Reasonable Suspicion:

"When the officers detained [suspect] for the purpose of requiring him to identify himself, they performed a seizure of his person subject to the requirements of the Fourth Amendment."²

Non-binding Case Examples

These cases represent persuasive authority from other courts outside of Georgia and the 11th Circuit. Though not binding, they have been selected for inclusion here because if an officer in Georgia finds himself in a similar situation, the outcome will likely be the same, at least in federal court.

Providing a False Name Not a Crime Unless Lawfully Detained or Arrested:

Defendant's arrest was premised on his giving a false name. The state statute criminalizes a person's false representation or identification of himself or herself to a peace officer "upon a lawful detention or arrest of [that] person" The law applies only where the false identification is given in connection with lawful detention or arrest, and does not apply to consensual encounters with police. Since defendant's subsequent arrest was based upon an unlawful detention, and the search incident to the arrest was likewise unlawful, suppression is required of contraband seized after search incident to unlawful arrest.³

Asking for Identification, Among Other Activities, Held To Be Consensual:

Where a narcotics officer approached the defendant after she deplaned, identified himself and asked to speak with her; asked for her ticket, which she gave to him; asked for identification, which was produced; asked for permission to search her purse, which she

¹ *Craig Brown v. georgiacarry.org, Inc.*, 331 Ga. App. 890, (2015)

² *Brown v. Tex.*, 99 S. Ct. 2637 (1979)

³ *People v. Walker*, 210 Cal. App. 4th 165 (2012)

allowed; and asked whether a female officer could pat her down for drugs, to which she agreed; all consents were voluntary even though the defendant was visibly nervous and became more so as the interview progressed.¹

Consent To Search for Identification Valid:

Following a patdown of defendant, and after defendant was not “immediately forthright” about his identity, giving only his first name and providing several false dates of birth, the officer asked defendant if he had any identification. Defendant indicated that it could be found in his back pocket. The officer asked for, and was granted, consent to retrieve the identification from defendant's back pocket, but the pocket turned out to be empty. When asked if the identification might be located elsewhere, defendant suggested that it might be in his left front pocket, where the officer found not only an identification card, but what appeared to be cocaine.² Double prizes!

Holding Passenger’s Identification While Seeking Consent To Search From Driver, Held To Be an Unlawful Detention:

After stopping a car, the trooper obtained the driver’s license and the passenger’s identification card. After writing the citation, the trooper spoke to the driver outside the car. He handed the driver a citation and his license, but held onto the passenger’s identification. The trooper sought and obtained consent to search. The court held that since the passenger’s ID was still being held, the driver was not truly free to leave and the search was suppressed.³

¹ U.S. v. Galberth, 846 F.2d 983 (5th Cir. 1988)

² U.S. v. Chaney, 647 F.3d 401 (1st Cir. 2011)

³ United States v. Macias, 658 F.3d 509, (5th Cir. 2011)

Removing Hands from Pockets

Generally, you may ask a subject to remove his hands from his pockets without worrying about converting the encounter into a detention. Courts understand the importance of officer safety.¹ What if the subject refuses to comply? If you can articulate a legitimate officer safety issue, then ordering a suspect to show his hands may be deemed reasonable.

Moreover, an order to show hands may be considered a minimal interference with a person's freedom and therefore may fall under the "minimal intrusion doctrine."² However, I do not recommend ordering a person to show their hands unless you have a legitimate and articulated safety concern.

What if the suspect still refuses to show his hands and tries to leave? Remember, this is a consensual encounter and if you decided to detain the subject you would need reasonable suspicion. An order to show hands may be a minimal intrusion, but a detention is not.

Legal Standard

Asking a person to remove his hands from his pockets does not convert a consensual encounter into an investigative detention as long as:

- You **requested** that he remove his hands from his pockets; and
- You did it for **officer safety** purposes.

Ordering a person to remove his hands from his pockets may not convert a consensual encounter into an investigative detention if:

- You had a **legitimate safety reason** for ordering it; and
- You articulate that ordering the person to remove his hands was a **minimal intrusion** of his freedom.³

Non-binding Case Examples

These cases represent persuasive authority from other courts outside of Georgia and the 11th Circuit. Though not binding, they have been selected for inclusion here because if an

¹ People v. Franklin, 192 Cal. App. 3d 935 (Cal. App. 5th Dist. 1987)

² People v. Franklin, 192 Cal. App. 3d 935 (Cal. App. 5th Dist. 1987)

³ United States v. Enslin, 327 F.3d 788 (9th Cir. Cal. 2003)

officer in Georgia finds himself in a similar situation, the outcome will likely be the same, at least in federal court.

Asking Person To Remove Hands From Pockets Not a Detention:

State v. Baldwin: In this case, the Florida District Court of Appeal differentiated between a command and a polite request for a suspect to remove their hands from their pockets, emphasizing officer safety. The court stated, "a request for a defendant to remove hands from pockets for reasonable purpose of officer's safety, does not elevate a consensual encounter to a detention." This case highlights that a courteous request for safety does not necessarily convert a consensual encounter into a detention.¹

Legal Difference Between Mere Request and Command:

The California Court of Appeal in this case clarified that simply asking a suspect to remove their hands from their pockets does not constitute a detention. The court noted, "merely asking a suspect to take his hands out of his pockets is not a detention." The case underscores the distinction between a mere request and a command in the context of police encounters.²

Person Must Feel Free To Leave:

In re J.F.: The District of Columbia Court of Appeals discussed the fine line between a consensual encounter and a seizure, stating, "an officer's request that appellant take his hand out of his pocket may be considered merely a pre-seizure consensual encounter." This case illustrates how a consensual encounter can evolve into a seizure based on the perception of freedom to leave.³

Request Is Not the Same as a Command:

In Re Frank: Similar to People v. Frank V., this case by the California Court of Appeal also dealt with the distinction between a request and a command. The court observed, "A mere request that a citizen remove his hands from his pockets is not the same as a command to stop or stay." This decision further clarifies the difference between a request and a detention during police encounters.⁴

Direct Order To Remove Hands Likely a Seizure:

¹ State v. Baldwin, 686 So. 2d 682 (1996)

² People v. Frank V., 233 Cal. App. 3d 1232 (1991)

³ In Re J.F., 19 A.3d 304 (2011)

⁴ In Re Frank, 233 Cal. App. 3d 1232 (1991).

In *re Rafeal E.* the Appellate Court of Illinois found that a police command can transform a consensual encounter into a seizure. The court stated, "when a police officer approaches an individual and immediately tells him 'to remove his hands from his pockets,' a reasonable person would understand that statement as a command, not a request." This case demonstrates how a direct order from police can constitute a seizure.¹

Court Upheld Request Under Officer Safety:

The Florida District Court of Appeal in this case acknowledged that a request to remove one's hand from a pocket does not automatically lead to a seizure. The court stated, "such a request, when made to ensure an officer's safety, does not elevate a consensual encounter to a detention." This case highlights the importance of context, particularly officer safety, in determining the nature of police encounters.²

DC Court Upheld Request To Remove Hands:

The District of Columbia Court of Appeals held that a non-intimidating request by a police officer does not constitute a seizure. The court observed, "Officer's request that appellee remove his hands from his pockets, followed by two questions and appellee's voluntary answers, met the Supreme Court test for a pre-seizure, consensual encounter." This case underscores that certain police interactions can remain within the bounds of a consensual encounter.³

¹ *In re Rafeal E.*, 2014 IL App (1st) 133027 (2014)

² *R.J.C. v. State*, 84 So. 3d 1250 (2012)

³ *United States v. Barnes*, 496 A.2d 1040 (1985)

Transporting to Police Station

There is no Fourth Amendment violation if you consensually transport a subject to the police station for a consensual interview or to a crime scene. The key is that the subject's consent must be freely and voluntarily given.

Legal Standard

You may voluntarily transport a person in a police vehicle. However, if the person is a suspect to a crime and you are transporting the person for an interview, remember:

- Make it clear to the person that he is **not under arrest**;
- Seek **consent to patdown** the suspect for weapons; if the patdown is denied, do not patdown and you probably should not transport.

Georgia Case Examples

These cases represent binding authority from Georgia, the 11th Circuit, or U.S. Supreme Court. It's important to confirm these cases are consistent with current state law and agency policy which may be more restrictive.

Unreasonable Search During Transport to Mental Health Facility:

In *Lindsey v. State*, the defendant, Lindsey, was detained under a probate court order for a mental health evaluation. During a patdown search before being placed in a patrol car, the officer found methamphetamine in Lindsey's pocket. The court ruled that the full search of Lindsey's person before placing him in the patrol car was an unreasonable intrusion, as the officer lacked probable cause to believe Lindsey had committed any crime. The court stated, "An inventory search which is not necessary to achieve the recognized custodial goals of such a search is not permissible."¹

Involuntary Transportation to Station Will Normally Be an Arrest:

In the case of *Dunaway v. New York*, the U.S. Supreme Court addressed the issue of whether police actions violated the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments. The case revolved around the petitioner, Dunaway, who was taken into custody without probable

¹ *Lindsey v. State*, 282 Ga. App. 644 (2006)

cause, transported to a police station, and detained for interrogation. The Court scrutinized whether this constituted an unreasonable seizure under the Fourth Amendment.

The Court's analysis centered on the nature of the seizure and the lack of probable cause. The key excerpt from the case is:

"We first consider whether the Rochester police violated the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments when, without probable cause to arrest, they took petitioner into custody, transported him to the police station, and detained him there for interrogation. [...] There can be little doubt that petitioner was 'seized' in the Fourth Amendment sense when he was taken involuntarily to the police station. And respondent State concedes that the police lacked probable cause to arrest petitioner before his incriminating statement during interrogation."¹

Non-binding Case Examples

These cases represent persuasive authority from other courts outside of Georgia and the 11th Circuit. Though not binding, they have been selected for inclusion here because if an officer in Georgia finds himself in a similar situation, the outcome will likely be the same, at least in federal court.

No Violation When a Person Agrees To Accompany Police:

Appellate courts have held that when a person agrees to accompany the police to a station for an interrogation or some other purpose, the Fourth Amendment is not violated.²

No Seizure After Agreeing To Accompany Police to the Station and Staying for Five Hours:

No seizure where defendant went with police to station and stayed there five hours before probable cause developed for his arrest.³

Detention Ended When Suspect Consented To Go to Police Station:

Law enforcement officer's Terry stop of automobile ended when defendant, who was riding in the automobile, agreed to go to police station, rather than when defendant was arrested several hours later.⁴

¹ *Dunaway v. New York*, 1979 U.S. LEXIS 126

² *In re Gilbert R.*, 25 Cal. App. 4th 1121 (Cal. App. 2d Dist. 1994)

³ *Craig v. Singletary* 27 F.3d 1030 (11th Cir.1997)

⁴ *United States v. Kimball*, 25 F.3d 1 (1st Cir. 1994)

Consent to Search

Absent good reason, you should routinely seek consent to search a person or his property even if you have reasonable suspicion or probable cause. Why? Because this will add an extra layer of protection to your case. For example, let's imagine you have probable cause to search a vehicle for drugs but still receive consent to search, the prosecution essentially needs to prove that consent was freely and voluntarily given.¹ If that fails, the prosecutor can fall back on your probable cause.

Without consent your case depends entirely on articulating P.C. Why not have both? Plus, juries like to see officers asking for consent. Either way, do your prosecutor a solid and write a complete and articulate report.

Legal Standard

Asking a person for consent to search does not convert the encounter into an investigative detention as long as:

- The person's consent was **freely and voluntarily given**;
- He had **apparent authority** to give consent to search the area or item; and
- You did not exceed the **scope** provided, expressed or implied. Scope is determined by objectively viewing the situation from the suspect's position.² Where would a reasonable person think you would search? It's not based only on where police think evidence would be found. .
- Courts may look at four factors when evaluating whether or not the scope of search was exceeded: **time, duration, area, and intensity**.³ See case examples below.
 - Time: Was the search executed within the time frame contemplated by the suspect?
 - Duration: Was the search unreasonably lengthy?
 - Area: Did officers search areas where the item sought could be found?

¹ *Bumper v. North Carolina*, 391 U.S. 543 (1968)

² *State v. Russetta*, 123 Nev. 299 (2007)

³ See *State v. Russetta*, 123 Nev. 299 (2007)

- Intensity: Did the methods used to search exceed the bounds of consent?

Things that help consent:

- Telling person they do not have to allow the search
- Telling person what you are searching for
- Fewer officers
- Plain clothes
- No weapons displayed
- No trickery such as hinting “no prosecution”
- Relatively short contact before consent given
- Friendly tone of voice, not threatening or commanding.
- Giving Miranda warnings (especially if person is in custody)
- All factors about the person giving consent such as: age, experience with the police, physical and mental condition, fluency in English.

Things that hurt consent:¹

- Display of weapons or hand on weapon
- Large number of police, especially uniformed
- Deceit or trickery about either purpose or outcome
- Officer’s threatening demeanor, tone of voice
- A claim that police have authority to do the search anyway such as false claim that police have a warrant
- Negatives about the person giving consent (young, lower intelligence, drunk, poor English).

Georgia Case Examples

These cases represent binding authority from Georgia, the 11th Circuit, or U.S. Supreme Court. It’s important to confirm these cases are consistent with current state law and agency policy which may be more restrictive.

Consent to Search by Absent Co-Occupant Is Invalid:

In the case of *Preston v. State*, decided by The Court of Appeals of Georgia, the court addressed the issue of consent to a warrantless search when given by an occupant other than the defendant. The case involved Nkosi Wade Preston, who shared a residence with

¹ Id.

Stephanie Jones. Jones, not present at the residence, consenting to a search of their home, accusing Preston of various illegal activities. When law enforcement arrived, they arrested Preston on an unrelated charge and searched the residence without informing him of Jones's consent or the reason for the search. Preston did not object to the search. The court found that the search had violated the Fourth Amendment, as the officers did not inform Preston, present at the door, about the search being based on Jones's consent. The court emphasized, "We know of no widely shared social expectations that support third parties entering a residence without first explaining to the occupant who has opened the door that an absent co-occupant has given them permission to do so."¹

The Officer Has the Burden To Prove Consent Was Voluntary:

In the Supreme Court case *Bumper v. North Carolina*, the Court addressed the issue of whether a search can be justified as lawful on the basis of consent when that "consent" has been given only after the official conducting the search has asserted that he possesses a warrant. The Court held that there can be no consent under such circumstances, stating, "When a prosecutor seeks to rely upon consent to justify the lawfulness of a search, he has the burden of proving that the consent was, in fact, freely and voluntarily given. This burden cannot be discharged by showing no more than acquiescence to a claim of lawful authority."²

Consent Is Based on the Totality of the Circumstances:

In *Schneckloth v. Bustamonte*, the Supreme Court dealt with the issue of consent in the context of law enforcement searches. The Court held that the voluntariness of consent to search must be determined from the totality of all the circumstances, and knowledge of the right to refuse consent is not a prerequisite to establishing a voluntary consent. The Court stated, "It is only by analyzing all the circumstances of an individual consent that it can be ascertained whether in fact it was voluntary or coerced."³

Non-binding Case Examples

These cases represent persuasive authority from other courts outside of Georgia and the 11th Circuit. Though not binding, they have been selected for inclusion here because if an officer in Georgia finds himself in a similar situation, the outcome will likely be the same, at least in federal court.

“I Don’t Care”:

¹ *Preston v. The State*, 296 Ga. App. 655, 675 S.E.2d 553 (2009)

² *Bumper v. North Carolina*, 391 U.S. 543 (1968)

³ *Schneckloth v. Bustamonte* is 412 U.S. 218 (1973)

Suspect was stopped for speeding. He was suspected of drug possession and officer asked for consent to search. Suspect responded, “I don’t care.” Search revealed crack cocaine. Suspect’s statement implied consent to search.¹ Note: this type of consent is not ideal and officers should try to get unambiguous consent to search.

Patdown of Suspect Who Wanted To Get Out of Vehicle Upheld:

Vehicle was stopped for an equipment violation. Driver wanted to get out and see proof that his taillight was broken. Officer said only on the condition that he be subject to a patdown. Suspect said, “that was fine” and stepped out. Patdown revealed drugs. Suspect voluntarily consented to patdown.²

Search of Van Two Days After Written Consent Received Was Upheld as Reasonable:

In-custody suspect gave written consent to search van for forensic evidence of a rape. Van was searched two days later by different agents. Under these particular circumstances, the time of the search was reasonable.³ Note: Ideally, the suspect would have been told the search would be executed two days later. But since he was in custody and never revoked consent, the court upheld it.

Request for a “Real Quick” Search Exceeded After 15 Minutes and Unscrewing Speaker Box:

With defendant agreeing to the officer’s request to “check (defendant’s car) real quick and get you on your way,” the scope of that consent was exceeded at some point before the search had continued for fifteen minutes without finding anything, and certainly when the officer later pulled a box from the trunk and removed the back panel to the box by unscrewing some screws.⁴

Directly “Touching” Genitals Outside Implied Consent:

Officer got consent to search for drugs and “within seconds” reached down the defendant’s crotch and felt the suspect’s genital area searching for drugs. This area was not included in the consent to search. Note, searching “near” genital area is often upheld.⁵

¹ United States v. Polly, 630 F.3d 991 (10th Cir. Okla. 2011)

² State v. Cunningham, 26 N.E.3d 21 (Ind. 2015)

³ U.S. v. White, 617 F.2d 1131 (5th Cir. 1989)

⁴ People v. Cantor, 149 Cal.App.4th 961 (2007)

⁵ U.S. v. Blake, 888 F.2d 795 (11th Cir. 1989)

Third-Party Consent

You may seek consent to search a residence from co-occupants or others in control of property belonging to another person. However, the situation changes when there is a present non-consenting co-occupant. If one occupant tells you to “Come on in and bring your friends!” and another yells “Get the hell out, I’m watching Netflix!” Well, you must stay out.

What about areas under the exclusive control of the consentor? For example, the “cooperative” tenant says you can still search his bedroom? Or a shed that he has exclusive control over in the backyard? There is no case that deals directly with this issue, but if the area is truly under the exclusive control of the consenting party, and you can articulate that the non-consenting party has no reasonable expectation of privacy in that area, it would likely be reasonable to search just that area. But one issue remains; you still may not be able to access the area under the cooperative tenant’s control without walking through common areas—common areas would still be off limits because the non-consenting party has authority over them.

The best practice is to wait until the non-consenting occupant has left the residence and then seek consent from the cooperative occupant. In other words, if the non-consenting occupant goes to work, a store, or is lawfully removed, the remaining occupant can consent to a search. Still; do not search areas under the exclusive control of the non-consenting party. This may include file cabinets, “man-caves,” purses, backpacks, and so forth.

Finally, if the consenting party has greater authority over the residence, then police may rely on that consent. For example, if a casual visitor or babysitter objected to police entry, it may be overruled by the homeowner. Remember, you may not search personal property under the exclusive control of the visitor or babysitter.

Legal Standard

Spouses and Co-Occupants:

Spouses or co-occupants may consent to search inside a home if:

- The person has **apparent authority**;

- Consent is only given for **common areas**, areas under his **exclusive control**, or areas or things the person has **authorized access** to; and
- A **non-consenting** spouse or co-occupant with the same or greater authority **is not present**.

Articulating Greater Authority:

An occupant with greater authority over the premises may consent to search over areas either under his exclusive control or common areas if:

- The co-occupant had **greater authority** over the area searched;
- You did not enter or walk through **any area** where the non-consenting occupant had **equal** or **greater authority**;
- You **did not search** any property under the **exclusive control** of the non-consenting occupant; and
- Your search **did not exceed the scope** provided by the consenting occupant.

Georgia Case Examples

These cases represent binding authority from Georgia, the 11th Circuit, or U.S. Supreme Court. It's important to confirm these cases are consistent with current state law and agency policy which may be more restrictive.

Third-Party Cannot Give Consent To Search:

The police, without a warrant, searched a travel trailer rented by Looney based on the consent of the property owner, who was Looney's landlord. The Court of Appeals of Georgia stated, "Generally, a landlord cannot give valid consent to a search of his or her tenant's quarters." The court concluded that the search was unlawful and the evidence obtained should have been suppressed.¹

If an Occupant Invites Police Inside, Police May Assume Other Occupants Wouldn't Object Unless They Speak Up:

In the case of *Georgia v. Randolph*, the Supreme Court of the United States addressed the issue of whether a warrantless search of a residence is lawful with the permission of one occupant when another occupant, who is present at the scene, expressly refuses to consent. The Court held that "a physically present co-occupant's stated refusal to permit entry prevails, rendering the warrantless search unreasonable and invalid as to him." This decision was made

¹ *Looney v. State*, 293 Ga. App. 639, (2008)

in the context of a domestic dispute where the wife, after returning to the marital home, informed the police of her husband's cocaine use and consented to a search of their home, while the husband objected. The Court emphasized the importance of the refusal of a present co-occupant in determining the legality of a warrantless search. This ruling underscores the balance between law enforcement interests and the constitutional rights of individuals in shared living situations.¹

If Non-Consenting Occupant Is Arrested or Leaves, Remaining Occupant May Consent To Search Despite Prior Objection:

Police could conduct a warrantless search of defendant's apartment following defendant's arrest, based on consent to the search by a woman who also occupied the apartment, although defendant had objected to the search prior to his arrest and was absent at the time of the woman's consent because of his arrest.²

Non-binding Case Examples

These cases represent persuasive authority from other courts outside of Georgia and the 11th Circuit. Though not binding, they have been selected for inclusion here because if an officer in Georgia finds himself in a similar situation, the outcome will likely be the same, at least in federal court.

Consent of Wife Valid After Non-Consenting Husband Left Residence:

"The consent of one who possesses common authority over premises or effects" generally "is valid as against the absent, non-consenting person with whom that authority is shared."³

¹ Georgia v. Randolph, 547 U.S. 103 (2006)

² Fernandez v. California, 571 U.S. 292 (2014)

³ United States v. Cordero-Rosario, 786 F.3d 64 (1st Cir. P.R. 2015)

 CONSENSUAL ENCOUNTERS

Mistaken Authority to Consent

If you're a prudent officer you normally ask for consent to search, even if you have P.C.. Why? Because valid consent adds an extra layer of protection for your criminal case.

But sometimes you may think you're dealing with an occupant who has the authority to consent, but later find out you were wrong. For example, the consent was received from a guest, not homeowner. Here, courts will look to see if your mistake was reasonable.

For example, if an adult female answers the door and consents to a search and cops look around the apartment and it's fairly obvious that only a man lives there, then courts expect officers to stop searching and ask more questions about her connection to the apartment. In the end, she may be an overnight guest with no apparent authority over the defendant's property.

Legal Standard

If you mistakenly receive consent from a person who had "apparent authority," courts will employ a three-part analysis to determine if your mistake was reasonable:

- Did you believe some **untrue fact**;
- Was it **objectively reasonable** for you to believe that the fact was true under the circumstances at the time; and
- If it was true, would the consent giver have had **actual authority**?

Georgia Case Examples

These cases represent binding authority from Georgia, the 11th Circuit, or U.S. Supreme Court. It's important to confirm these cases are consistent with current state law and agency policy which may be more restrictive.

Consent by Third Party With Apparent Authority:

In *Sevilla-Carcamo v. State*, the Court of Appeals of Georgia discussed the concept of third-party consent, focusing on actual or apparent authority over the area to be searched. The court noted, "The key to third party consent is actual or apparent authority over the area to be searched."¹

¹ *Sevilla-Carcamo v. State*, 335 Ga. App. 788, 2016)

Consent in the Presence of an Objecting Co-Occupant:

This Supreme Court of Georgia case arose from a situation where Randolph's wife gave police officers permission to search their home, despite Randolph's objection. The court stated, "Where the police have obtained consent to search from an individual possessing, at best, equal control over the premises, that consent remains valid against a co-habitant, who also possesses equal control, only while the cohabitant is absent."¹

Police May Rely on Apparent Authority:

In *Illinois v. Rodriguez*, the Supreme Court of the United States addressed the validity of a warrantless entry based on the consent of a third party who the police reasonably believe possesses authority over the premises, but who in fact does not. Justice Scalia, delivering the opinion of the Court, stated, "The Fourth Amendment generally prohibits the warrantless entry of a person's home, whether to make an arrest or to search for specific objects. The prohibition does not apply, however, to situations in which voluntary consent has been obtained, either from the individual whose property is searched, or from a third party who possesses common authority over the premises." This case involved the arrest of Edward Rodriguez in his apartment by law enforcement officers, who gained entry with the consent and assistance of Gail Fischer, who had lived there with Rodriguez for several months but did not have actual authority over the premises at the time of the search."²

Non-binding Case Examples

These cases represent persuasive authority from other courts outside of Georgia and the 11th Circuit. Though not binding, they have been selected for inclusion here because if an officer in Georgia finds himself in a similar situation, the outcome will likely be the same, at least in federal court.

Police May Assume That the Adult Who Answered the Door Had Authority:

Police were trying to locate a robbery suspect and knocked on his door. A visitor answered and consented to their request to enter. "Police may assume, without further inquiry, that [an adult] person who answers the door in response to their knock has the authority to let them enter."³

¹ *State v. Randolph*, 278 Ga. 614, (2004).

² *Ill. v. Rodriguez*, 497 U.S. 177 (1990)

³ *People v. Ledesma*, 39 Cal. 4th 641 (Cal. 2006)

Qualified Immunity

You work in a dynamic and unpredictable environment. Therefore, you encounter situations where you are tasked to solve unique problems despite no direct training or case law to guide them. Qualified immunity protects you whenever you venture into constitutionally-unchartered territories.

Legal Standard

Even if a constitutional violation occurred and evidence is suppressed under the exclusionary rule, there is no § 1983 violation when:

- You violated a constitutionally or federally right; but
- That right was **not clearly established** at the time of the violation.

Georgia Case Examples

These cases represent binding authority from Georgia, the 11th Circuit, or U.S. Supreme Court. It's important to confirm these cases are consistent with current state law and agency policy which may be more restrictive.

Officer That Attempted Knock and Talk on Side Door, Versus Front Door, Entitled to Qualified Immunity:

It is an open, undecided issue, with authority going both ways, as to whether it is lawful for an officer to conduct a “knock and talk” at other than the front door. A trooper was sued by homeowners because he knocked on a side door, instead of the front door. The Supreme Court determined that the officer was entitled to qualified immunity in that the issue is the subject of conflicting authority.¹

No Qualified Immunity for Prison Guard Who Obviously Violated Rights:

Guard who handcuffed a shirtless prisoner to a hitching post for seven hours as punishment was not eligible for qualified immunity since it obviously violated the Fourth Amendment.²

¹ Carroll v. Carman, 135 S. Ct. 348 (2014)

² Hope v. Pelzer, 536 U.S. 730 (2002)

AIRPORT & OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKPOINTS 333

ARRESTS

“Contempt of Cop” Arrests, 139
Collective Knowledge Doctrine, 39, 123
Drugs, attempt to swallow, 151
DUI blood tests, 155
DUI breath tests, 153
Lawful, 114
Line-Ups, 129
Meaning of “Committed in the Officer’s Presence?” 126
Private searches, 26
Protective sweeps, 132
Public protests, arrests at, 142
Search, “temporary” arrest, 149
Search, incident to, 144
Search, prior to formal arrest, 147
Vehicle search, incident to, 157
Warrant, entry with, 119
Warrantless entry, 121
When to “Un-arrest” a Suspect, 136

ARSON INVESTIGATIONS, 331

BORDER SEARCHES, 336

BUSINESSES & SCHOOLS

Customer business records, 270
Fire, health, and safety inspections, 274
Government workplace searches, 276
Heavily regulated businesses, 272
School searches, 277
SROs, security guards, and administrators, 283
Student drug testing, 281
Use of force against students, 286
Warrantless arrest inside business, 268

C.R.E.W., 21,

CAUSE-OF-INJURY SEARCHES, 323

CHECKPOINTS

Airport & other administrative, 333
DUI, 171

COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE DOCTRINE, 123

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS, 347

CONSENSUAL ENCOUNTERS, 47

DECISION SEQUENCING, 20

DISCARDED DNA, 328

DUI

blood tests, 155
breath tests, 153
checkpoints, 171

FIFTH AMENDMENT, 16

FINGERNAIL SCRAPES, 330

FOURTH AMENDMENT, 14

Reasonableness, 23
Search, 42
Seizure, 44

“HOMES

Child’s room, parental consent to search, 232
Co-occupants, consent to search, 229
Curtilage, 221
Detaining a home in anticipation of a warrant, 263
Fresh pursuit, 239
Hot pursuit, 239
Hotel rooms, 212
Knock and talks, 216
Mistaken authority to consent, 234
Open fields, 219
Overview and standing, 209
Plain view seizure, 224
Protective sweeps, 236
RVs, 212
“Ruse” or lie, convincing suspect to exit, 261
Surround and call-out, 265
Tents, 212
Trash searches, 227
Warrantless arrest at doorway, 242

Warrantless entry based on “ruse” or lie, 258
 Warrantless entry for an emergency, 245
 Warrantless entry for officer safety, 247
 Warrantless entry to investigate child abuse, 251
 Warrantless entry to investigate homicide crime, 255
 Warrantless entry to make arrest, 244
 Warrantless entry to prevent destruction of evidence, 256
 Warrantless entry to protect property, 253

HUNCHES, 30

INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITIES, 56

INVESTIGATIVE DETENTIONS

Anonymous tip, 92
 Detaining a suspect, 81
 During stop, 87
 Factors to consider, 78
 Field identifications, 89
 Flight, upon seeing officer, 90
 Handcuffing, 95
 Involuntary Transportation, 107
 Length of detention, 85
 Officer safety detentions, 83
 Patdown, 99, 103
 Plain Feel Doctrine, 105
 Recording of Officer, 110
 Use of force, 95
 Victims, detaining, 97
 Witnesses, detaining, 97

KNOCK AND ANNOUNCE, 351

KNOCK AND TALKS, 52

Homes, 216

LAW ENFORCEMENT LIABILITY

Attenuation, 374
 Behavior that “shocks the conscience”, 386
 Deliberate indifference, 388
 Duty to intervene, 381
 Duty to protect, 379
 Exclusionary rule, 366
 Exclusionary rule, exceptions, 368
 Fruit of the poisonous tree, 369

Good faith exception, 372
 Inevitable or independent discovery, 376
 Non-essential personnel, bringing into the home, 393
 Qualified immunity, 394
 Section 1983 civil rights violations, 391
 Section 242 criminal charges, 392
 Social media, sharing crime scene photos on, 390
 Standing to object, 370
 Supervisor liability, 383
 Unequal enforcement of the law, 385

LEFT ALONE, RIGHT TO BE, 19

MEDICAL PROCEDURES, 325

MISCELLANEOUS SEARCHES & SEIZURES

Airport & other administrative checkpoints, 333
 Arson investigations, 331
 Border searches, 336
 Cause-of-injury searches, 323
 Discarded DNA, 328
 Fingernail scrapes, 330
 Medical procedures, 325
 Probationer & parolee searches, 338

PATDOWNS

Based on anonymous tip, 103
 For weapons, 99

PERSONAL PROPERTY,

Abandoned or Lost Property, 292
 Searching containers, 289
 Mail or Packages, 295
 Single Purpose Container Doctrine, 290

PLAIN FEEL DOCTRINE, 105

PRIVATE SEARCHES, 26

PROBABLE CAUSE, 36

PROBATIONER & PAROLEE SEARCHES, 338

PROTECTIVE SWEEPS

Arrests, 132

Homes, 236

REASONABLE SUSPICION

Border search, 336
 Community caretaking, 165
 Confidential informants, 347
 Consensual encounters, 48
 Defined, 33
 Detaining a suspect, 81
 Drug testing, students, 281
 Handcuffing, 95
 Hands in pockets, removing, 63
 Hot pursuit, 239
 Hunches, 30
 Identification, asking for, 60
 K9, 186
 Knock and talks, 52, 216
 Length of detention, 85
 Passengers, 177, 200, 204
 Protective sweep, 132, 236
 Recording of police, 110
 School search, 277, 283
 Stops, 56, 167
 Unrelated questioning, 202
 Vehicles, 167, 169

REASONABLENESS, 23

RIGHT 'TO BE LEFT ALONE', 19

SEARCH WARRANTS

Anticipatory search warrant, 345
 Confidential informants, 347
 Detaining occupants inside and in immediate vicinity, 354
 Frisking occupants, 357
 Handcuffing occupants, 359
 Knock and announce, 351
 Overview, 341
 Particularity requirement, 343
 Receipt, return, and inventory, 364
 Sealing affidavits, 349
 Serving arrest warrant at residence, 361
 Wrong address liability, 363

SEARCH

Arrest, incident to, 144
 Border searches, 336
 Cause of injury searches, 323
 Child's room, parental consent to search, 232

Consent to search a vehicle, 179
 Co-occupants, consent to search by, 229
 Defined, 42
 Government workplace searches, 276
 Prior to formal arrest, 147
 Private Searches, 26
 Probationer & parolee searches, 338
 School searches, 277
 Searching vehicle incident to arrest, 189
 Searching vehicle with probable cause, 192
 Technology searches, 298-320
 "Temporary" arrest, 147
 Trash searches, 227
 Vehicle search, incident to arrest, 189

SEIZURE (See also MISCELLANEOUS SEARCHES & SEIZURES)

Defined, 44

TECHNOLOGY SEARCHES

Aerial surveillance, 309
 Automatic license plate readers, 317
 Binoculars, 301
 Cell phones, laptops and tablets, 306
 Cell phone location records, 307
 Drones, 311
 Flashlights, 299
 GPS devices, 319
 Night vision goggles, 303
 Obtaining passwords, 320
 Pole cameras, 314
 Sensory enhancements, 298
 Thermal imaging, 304

VEHICLES

Checkpoints, DUI, 171
 Checkpoints, information gathering, 173
 Checkpoints, legal considerations, 175
 Community caretaking, 165
 Consent to search a vehicle, 179
 Constructive possession, 204
 Dangerous items left in vehicle, 195
 Frisking people who ride in police vehicle, 182
 General rule, 161
 Inventories, 196
 K9 sniff around vehicle, 186

Ordering passengers to stay in, or exit vehicle, 177
Passengers, identifying, 200
Reasonable suspicion, 167
Scope of stop similar to an investigative detention, 163
Searching vehicle and occupants for weapons, 184
Searching vehicle incident to arrest, 189

Searching vehicle with probable cause, 192
Temporary registration, verification of, 169
Unrelated questioning, 202

**WRONG ADDRESS LIABILITY,
363**



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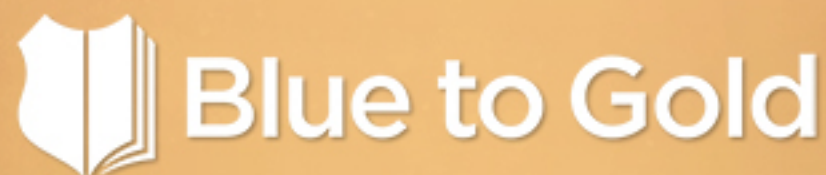
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Search & Seizure

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