



# Understanding Street Checks

## What is a street check?

Fundamentally, they are conversations between a police officer and a member of the public. They may only be conducted if there are **clear grounds** that it may further an investigation or prevent crime, disorder and victimization.

The subject of a street check is not under detention and is under no obligation to provide information to the questioning officers unless there is a legal requirement.

The Edmonton Police Service conducts street checks and we follow policies and training to ensure oversight related to fair and impartial policing.

## What is carding?

Street checks are often incorrectly associated with **carding**. The Edmonton Police Service **does not** practice “carding”. Carding is the practice of randomly requesting personal information **when there are no reasonable grounds**.

## Why do officers use street checks?

Street checks are an important tool for crime prevention initiated by officers in response to crime trends, public safety concerns and may result from a call for service or proactive policing.

## When would an officer conduct a street check?

Street checks are used when a police officer is responding to a call for service, or when he or she sees something that looks unusual – a person in need of assistance, or someone performing a suspicious activity.

A street check may also be initiated proactively based on geographical crime trends, as more patrols and street checks occur in areas with high levels of criminal activity. Residents who live in these areas want police to pay close attention to who is walking around in their neighbourhood.

**Example:** If a police officer observes a person peering into backyards at 3:00 a.m. or checking locks on vehicles in a parking lot, that person would likely be the subject of a street check. The information gathered is then recorded in a “street check report” by the police officer and retained by

the local police agency. If criminal activity was reported in the same area as the street check, police would have a starting point to investigate the crime. Information contained in the street check could identify a witness, evidence, or even a suspect.

## **Street Check Reviews**

In 2016 and again in 2018, the EPS and Edmonton Police Commission (EPC) completed a comprehensive street check review and external audit that resulted in a series of changes to further improve the program, which include:

- Extensive training for recruits, frontline patrol members, patrol supervisors and beat patrol members.
- Quality assurance reviews/auditing twice a year to measure if administration and reporting on checks is fair and equitable and make recommendation.
- Recruit practices that place an emphasis on diversity to better reflect the community the EPS serves.