

STRATFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT 	Type of Directive: Policy and Procedure	Updated: NEW
	Title: Field Interviews	No. 7.29
	Issuing Authority: Chief Joseph McNeil	Issued: 5/21/2025
	Reference: A.S. 3.5.5	

I. Definition of a Field Interview

A field interview is an investigative interaction between a patrol officer and an individual in the field based on reasonable suspicion that the person may be involved in criminal activity or possesses relevant information regarding an incident. The purpose of the interview is to gather intelligence, verify identity, assess potential threats, and document pertinent details.

II. Policy Statement

Patrol officers conducting field interviews must adhere to legal standards, ensure respectful interactions, and document encounters appropriately to support law enforcement objectives while safeguarding individual rights.

III. Procedure

A. Legal Foundation

1. Officers may initiate a field interview when there is reasonable suspicion based on articulable facts indicating potential criminal activity or relevant information.
2. The individual is not obligated to answer questions unless legal detention is established.
3. Interviews must comply with constitutional protections, including the Fourth and Fifth Amendments.

B. Officer Conduct & Safety

1. Maintain a professional and non-confrontational demeanor.
2. Position yourself to maximize situational awareness and maintain a safe reactionary gap.
3. Conduct interviews in well-lit and open areas when feasible.
4. Request identification when appropriate but avoid coercive behavior. If the subject refuses to surrender ID do not arrest solely for this. Connecticut is not a stop and ID

state. You can still arrest someone on developed probable cause if you don't know their name.

C. Questioning Techniques

1. Use open-ended questions to elicit detailed responses. (ex. What are you doing....?)
2. Avoid leading or suggestive questions that may influence testimony. (ex. You were in that shed, weren't you?")
3. Note discrepancies in responses and verify information when possible.

D. Documentation Requirements

1. Record key details such as time, location, reason for the interview, and subject information.
2. If applicable, document observations that support reasonable suspicion.
3. Ensure reports are clear, objective, and free of bias or assumptions.

E. Additional Considerations

1. If the subject becomes uncooperative or hostile, disengage if there is no legal basis for detention.
2. If probable cause develops, transition the interaction to an investigative detention and follow arrest procedures if necessary.
3. Notify a supervisor in cases involving sensitive circumstances, such as interviews of juveniles or individuals with limited understanding of legal rights.