

# Ethics of policing: knocking before entering



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A Discussion on the Ethics of Policing: Knocking Before Entering

The profession of policing is difficult in itself but when the idea of ethics is introduced it makes this concept even more demanding and hard to control. In society there has to be order and there are times when enforcing these societal norms of order have to be done by means that are questionable, and sometimes are considered unethical as well. Police are taught this in the academy before they ever get their badges and are let out on the streets to work as actual police officers. Of course it would be nice to think that law and order was easily obtainable and that violence did not have to be a part of maintaining order, but in reality it is. The question under debate is whether or not the police should have to knock before entering a building or home when they are aware that a felon is behind that closed door. Now some would say they don't know who else is in the house so of course, instead of possibly scarring a child for life by simply busting the door down, they should knock first. However, a situation such as this is not that cut and dry, and nowhere as easy as it might seem. There are many scenarios that can come into play in a situation such as this one under discussion.

Let's take for example; the police are outside the known premises of an extremely dangerous felon. They are aware that he is inside the house that they have surrounded. This felon has been able to escape before due to the police having to follow protocol and announce themselves and they don't want the same thing to happen again. Also, the police realize that to allow this felon to escape is placing more people in the city and neighborhood at greater risk of coming face to face with a dangerous criminal and they also

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could get killed in the crossfire of it all. So, in a scenario such as this, should the police have to knock before barging in Personally the author feels that they should not. Due to the fact that this guy has ran from the police and gotten away on other occasions, and has also put more lives in danger then the police should do whatever is necessary to prevent this felon from escaping for a second time. It is instances like these where specific protocols have to be dropped to the wayside for the betterment of the surrounding communities. Otherwise, as was said there is a potential risk for someone getting hurt very badly or even killed. This is something that the police want to avoid at all costs but due to the underlying circumstances they sometimes have a very difficult time of ensuring the stability of their actions and those of the offender.

On the flip side of this coin we of course have those who would state that if the police drop all ethics in a situation such as this, and provoke violence then of course the person that they are attempting to restrain and arrest is going to be more aggressive in his actions. By barging in and creating more chaos the police will then be placing more lives on the line by their own actions. This is something that many would say has to be avoided, even if it would mean losing the opportunity to capture the offender. However, if the offender keeps escaping due to ethics such as this, the possibility of more crime by this one person is more prone to occur. So, the dilemma is still left unsolved as to what the police should actually do. At the same time, it can still be said that police are doing the right thing by knocking first because there are certain restrictions placed on them in a legal context. There is not only the question of arresting the person correctly but of how it will turn out in a court of law. If the police simply barge into the premises unannounced

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and go about tearing the place apart by chasing after the suspect and possibly injuring others that might be in the house or building during this time, then it just might be thrown out of court due to their actions. This is not something that the police or the prosecuting attorney would want to see happen either.

Now, the right way of doing this could be a scenario similar to the one outlined in this paragraph. The police are aware of the suspects' residence where he is hiding. Before going to the premises they contact their chief officer and let him know of the situation transpiring. They could in fact get an order from the court to use force if necessary and also obtain a search warrant to go through the premises looking for the offender. This could possibly lead to the arrest of the offender in a far more suitable and positive outcome for everyone involved. However, this all takes time, even though the process can be expedited by the seriousness of the problem it still allows for leeway of the suspect possibly escaping yet again. Even so, these are the factors that the police must deal with if they want to follow the proper protocols set up by law enforcement. By not going this ethical route the police are making themselves open to adverse discussion by news reporters and other public publications. If it gets out to the public that the police are using means that are highly unacceptable by a societal stand point then it can create disappointment from the community and disharmony in the compatibility of people in society and the police working in partnership together. For example, if a person in a community is aware that someone who committed a crime is hiding in a neighbors house then they are going to be more hesitant to tell the police if they are aware that the last incident resulted in violent behavior that escalated into something more yet could

have been controlled if only the police had followed their routine protocol. At this same time there would still be others who would agree with the police force's actions, stating that they did what they had to do in the community's best interests. However, the statistics would probably show a split of 50 % to 50% of disharmony and disapproval of those actions in question.

In conclusion, unfortunately, unless a suspect is known to have committed a very serious crime like murder or rape, the right way to go about making an arrest would be to announce their presence and request the door be opened. Then if there is refusal by the party on the other side of the door, they have a legal right to use excessive force to capture and restrain the suspect in question. This is the logical and most ethical way to go about executing police action in this type of scenario.