

Police accountability and police misconduct affect law enforcement

[Law](#)



Police accountability The police enforce the law and are tasked with preserving law and order in the society. They are an essential aspect of society, as they respond to citizens in distress, and people feel safe and secure wherever they are due to their presence. The police investigate criminal incidences, collect evidence and help detectives in catching criminals.

While going about their daily routines, the police have to do their work keeping in mind their obligation to fight crime. No direct supervision occurs most of the time to most police officers, therefore they make decisions on their own based on the situation at hand (Brooks 13). They use their mind, experience and training to make important decisions while still have to uphold a high level of proper conduct. A misjudgment on their case may result to public outcry and the blame falls on the police. Still a good decision made according to a police officer may not be deemed the same by other parties due to, for instance, the occurrence of collateral damage. Police officer base their decision on unusual observation or distrusting look on a person. Other times when they are in direct contact with danger. Another reason may be the inappropriate time and place for a person, group to be or activity to occur.

The decision itself brings unpleasant consequences such as blame to the officer and deeming the officer as incompetent. Sometimes an officer may be sued by an aggrieved party and eventually lose his job as a law enforcer (Brooks 15). The police department will be as well affected by the negative attention and will be seen by the public as not worth trusting.

In an example of an officer on night patrol, the law enforcer may decide to

stop a vehicle passing on a highway.

The decision to stop it may be based on the vehicle appearance, such as a broken headlight, or peculiar observation of the driving pattern, such as speeding. The officer will ask for the required documents for driving, state the reason for stopping and after that will decide whether to let the driver continue on his journey or to arrest the driver if fault has been found. If he arrests the vehicle owner without any clear reason, the officer will be at fault and may be charged. If the vehicle owner is at fault and resists arrest, the officer may have to use force. The police officer may use excessive force and injure the vehicle owner, or may draw out his weapon and shoot the driver. The decision he will take at that time shall have consequences, and the officer shall be held accountable. The law enforcer may have used it in self-defense, but it shall be duly investigated and held liable for his actions if found on the wrong (Brooks 25).

A police officer has the burden of making the best decision according to the situation presented to him. It may not satisfy all parties but he or she shall be held accountable for his or her actions.

Work Cited

Brooks, Laure. *Police Discretionary Behavior: A Study of Style*. New York: Kindle Books, 2007. Print.