



Lori Droste
Councilmember, District 8

Action Calendar
Tuesday, May 24, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmembers Lori Droste and Terry Taplin

Subject: Revisions to Section 311.6 *Warrantless Searches of Individuals on Supervised Release Search Conditions* of the Berkeley Police Department Law Enforcement Services Manual

Recommendation

Revise Section 311.6 *Warrantless Searches of Individuals on Supervised Release Search Conditions* of the Berkeley Police Department (BPD) Law Enforcement Services Manual to enable officers of the Berkeley Police Department to conduct detentions and warrantless searches individuals on parole/probation consistent with and supportive of the provisions in the probationer's/parolee's release conditions. The proposed revisions are shown in strikethrough and double-underline below:

Officers shall not detain and search a person on probation or parole solely because the officer is aware of that person's probation or parole status. The decision to detain a person and conduct a probation or parole search, or otherwise enforce probation or parole conditions, should be based upon articulable facts that support a need to enforce and/or confirm compliance with probation or parole conditions.~~should be made, at a minimum, in connection with articulable facts that create a reasonable suspicion that a person may have committed a crime, be committing a crime, or be about to commit a crime.~~ In the conduct of all such detentions and searches, officers shall consciously avoid the application of bias, shall not use such detentions or searches as a means to harass or annoy, and shall not conduct such detentions and searches in a manner that targets or is discriminatory toward any protected class.

Policy Committee Recommendation

On April 18, 2022, the Public Safety Committee adopted the following action: M/S/C (Taplin/Wengraf) to send the item with a qualified positive recommendation, as revised by the committee and subject to legal review. Section 311.6 was revised to read: In accordance with

California law, individuals on probation, parole, Post Release Community Supervision, or other supervised release status may be subject to warrantless search as a condition of their probation. Officers shall only conduct probation or parole searches to further a legitimate law enforcement or rehabilitative purpose. Searches shall not be conducted in an arbitrary, capricious, or harassing fashion. In the conduct of all such detentions and searches, officers shall consciously avoid the application of bias, shall not use such detentions or searches as a means to harass or annoy, and shall not conduct such detentions and searches in a manner that targets or is discriminatory toward any protected class. Vote: All Ayes.

Problem or Summary Statement

Existing provisions of the BPD Law Enforcement Services Manual do not permit BPD officers to conduct warrantless searches and seizures of probationers/parolees in a manner that would be consistent with the conditions of their release. The restrictiveness of these provisions places those on probation/parole on nearly equal footing with respect to Fourth Amendment rights as those not on probation/parole. Not only is this circumstance at odds with the nature and purpose of probation/parole, it also prevents officers from effectively implementing the conditions of release imposed by sentencing judges. This limits officers' ability to proactively address recidivism and therefore presents a potentially significant risk to public safety.

Background

Probation/parole is a prison/jail sentence that is suspended on the condition that the offender follow certain prescribed rules and commit no further crimes. As part of these terms, individuals released on probation/parole are often required to waive all or a portion of their Fourth Amendment rights (which would otherwise normally guard against unreasonable search and seizure) in order to secure their release.

Fundamentally, these waivers reflect the fact that for a probationer/parolee, the full term of what would otherwise have been an incarceration is not yet complete. More practically, courts often impose these waivers as a condition of probation/parole because they recognize that both in general and for the individual in question, there may be a higher likelihood of recidivism or additional crimes, which must be guarded against.

When determining the extensiveness/intrusiveness of such Fourth Amendment waivers, sentencing justices will usually consider the nature and severity of the crime. Probation is typically issued with terms that allow for an individual's: 1) person; 2) property; 3) residence; and/or 4) vehicle to be searched at any time. Allowing only for a search of the person only would constitute a "one-way" search clause, whereas allowing for all four would constitute a "four-way" search clause. In extreme cases, an offender's terms may include these terms and an additional term allowing for the search of any/all of the individual's electronic devices, resulting in a "five-way" search clause. This is considered the most complete and intrusive of search terms.

Current Situation and Its Effects

Currently, an individual on probation or parole in Berkeley would be on nearly equal footing as someone who is not on probation or parole when it comes to search and seizure. This would, for example, mean that someone with a history of crimes involving firearms could not have their person or vehicle searched by BPD officers unless there were “articulable facts” that could be given to indicate that the individual had committed, was committing, or would commit a crime. In the case of a crime involving a firearm, such articulable facts would likely come only after a serious threat to public safety had already manifested. Although such risks would rightly not normally be sufficient to justify a search and seizure, in the case of probation and parole, courts typically recognize both a heightened risk and a diminution of Constitutional rights associated with a provisional release.

To give another particularly disturbing example, there is currently a sex offender residing in Berkeley whose crimes were so severe that the judge deemed that a “five-way” search clause was necessary in the offenders probation/parole conditions. Moreover, the court imposed a number of heightened restrictions on the individual in recognition of the seriousness of their offense, including prohibitions on the possession of images of children and on sleeping in any dwelling where children were present. Under current section 311 policies, BPD would generally not be permitted to search the individuals’ electronic devices to ensure that the judge’s order was being followed.

Criteria Considered

Effectiveness

This policy would apply only to searches and seizures involving individuals on probation or parole; the Fourth Amendment rights of others would not be affected. With regard to individuals on probation or parole, however, BPD would be able to more easily and effectively enforce the conditions of those individuals release, and guard against recidivism.

Fiscal Impacts

By potentially averting crimes, this policy change could serve to reduce policing costs since crime prevention is typically less costly than after-the-fact investigation, remediation, etc. Additionally, by serving to reduce recidivism, this policy could reduce overall costs to the criminal justice system.

Environmental Sustainability

The proposed policy would not result in any appreciable impacts with respect to environmental sustainability.

Equity

Regardless of whether this policy change is adopted, it will remain incumbent upon the Berkeley Police Department to respect the Fourth Amendment rights of individuals who are not on probation or parole; and for those on probation or parole, to limit such intrusions to those that are explicitly noted in the conditions of their release. BPD will also remain responsible for exercising its authority and responsibilities in a manner free of discrimination or bias. Since the practice of this revised policy would be no more or less likely than the existing policy to suffer from the effects of bias, this proposal is not anticipated to have any appreciable negative impacts on equity as it relates to BPD conduct. Additionally, impacts from crime tend to fall disproportionately on lower-income communities and people of color. If the fuller use of court-ordered avenues for search and seizure succeed in averting crimes, this proposed policy change could have the effect of promoting greater equity with respect to impacts from crime.

Attachments

Current Berkeley Police Department Law Enforcement Services Manual

Search and Seizure

311.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Both the federal and state Constitutions provide every individual with the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures. This policy provides general guidelines for Berkeley Police Department personnel to consider when dealing with search and seizure issues.

311.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Berkeley Police Department to respect the fundamental privacy rights of individuals. Members of this department will conduct searches in strict observance of the constitutional rights of persons being searched. All seizures by this department will comply with relevant federal and state law governing the seizure of persons and property.

The Department will provide relevant and current training to officers as guidance for the application of current law, local community standards and prosecutorial considerations regarding specific search and seizure situations, as appropriate.

311.3 SEARCHES

The U.S. Constitution generally provides that a valid warrant is required in order for a search to be valid. There are, however, several exceptions that permit a warrantless search.

Examples of law enforcement activities that are exceptions to the general warrant requirement include, but are not limited to, searches pursuant to the following:

- Valid consent
- Incident to a lawful arrest
- Legitimate community caretaking interests
- Vehicle searches under certain circumstances
- Exigent circumstances

Certain other activities are recognized by federal and state courts and by certain statutes as legitimate law enforcement activities that also do not require a warrant. Such activities may include seizure and examination of abandoned property, and observations of activities and property located on open public areas.

Because case law regarding search and seizure is constantly changing and subject to interpretation by the courts, each member of this department is expected to act in each situation according to current training and his/her familiarity with clearly established rights as determined by case law.

Whenever practicable, officers are encouraged to contact a supervisor to resolve questions regarding search and seizure issues prior to electing a course of action.

Search and Seizure

311.4 SEARCH PROTOCOL

Although conditions will vary and officer safety and other exigencies must be considered in every search situation, the following guidelines should be followed whenever circumstances permit:

- (a) Members of this department will strive to conduct searches with dignity and courtesy.
- (b) Officers should explain to the person being searched the reason for the search.
- (c) Searches should be carried out with due regard and respect for private property interests and in a manner that minimizes damage. Property should be left in a condition as close as reasonably possible to its pre-search condition.
- (d) In order to minimize the need for forcible entry, an attempt should be made to obtain keys, combinations or access codes when a search of locked property is anticipated.
- (e) When the person to be searched is of the opposite sex as the searching officer, a reasonable effort should be made to summon an officer of the same sex as the subject to conduct the search. When it is not practicable to summon an officer of the same sex as the subject, the following guidelines should be followed:
 - 1. Another officer or a supervisor should witness the search.
 - 2. The officer should not search areas of the body covered by tight-fitting clothing, sheer clothing or clothing that could not reasonably conceal a weapon.

311.5 ASKING IF A PERSON IS ON PROBATION OR PAROLE

In an effort to foster community trust, officers should not ask if a person is on probation or parole when a person has satisfactorily identified themselves, either verbally or by presenting identification documents.

Officers may determine probation or parole status through standard records checks conducted in the course of a traffic safety or investigative stop. Officers should only ask when necessary to:

- (a) Protect the safety of others, the person detained, or officers;
- (b) Further a specific law enforcement investigative purpose (for example, sorting out multiple computer returns on a common name);
- (c) To confirm probation and parole status subsequent to a records check.

If an officer needs to ask the question, "Are you on probation or parole?" the officer should do so while treating the person with dignity and respect, and being mindful that people may take offense at the question.

311.6 WARRANTLESS SEARCHES OF INDIVIDUALS ON SUPERVISED RELEASE SEARCH CONDITIONS

In accordance with California law, individuals on probation, parole, Post Release Community Supervision, or other supervised release status may be subject to warrantless search as a condition of their probation. Officers shall only conduct probation or parole searches to further a

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legitimate law enforcement purpose. Searches shall not be conducted in an arbitrary, capricious, or harassing fashion.

Officers shall not detain and search a person on probation or parole solely because the officer is aware of that person's probation or parole status. The decision to detain a person and conduct a probation or parole search, or otherwise enforce probation or parole conditions, should be made, at a minimum, in connection with articulable facts that create a reasonable suspicion that a person may have committed a crime, be committing a crime, or be about to commit a crime.

311.7 DOCUMENTATION

Officers shall document, via MDT disposition, Field Interview, Incident or Case Report, any search of a person, vehicle or location. Officers should consider documenting, as applicable, the following:

- Reason for the search
- Any efforts used to minimize the intrusiveness of any search (e.g., asking for consent or keys)
- What, if any, injuries or damage occurred
- All steps taken to secure property
- The results of the search, including a description of any property or contraband seized
- If the person searched is the opposite sex, any efforts to summon an officer of the same sex as the person being searched and the identification of any witness officer

Supervisors shall review reports to ensure the reports are accurate, that actions are properly documented and that current legal requirements and department policy have been met.

