

Safety & Security, Insights for Businesses

REPORTING AN INCIDENT TO POLICE STATION (non-urgent situations)

If you want to report an incident that has taken place, after the fact (such as theft or criminal damage), call the Brunswick Police Station or report it on the Police Assistance Line (please note that theft cannot be reported via the Police Assistance Line).

When making a report to Police at the Station, it's important to:

- get the responding Officer's name and rank
- get the responding Officer's email address, (assisting with your follow up)
- get the responding Officer to SMS you the incident number (also important if you are making claims for damage etc)

Police understand the frustration when you call them and they aren't able to attend immediately. It's important to understand that when you call the Police Station to report an incident – there's a lot of triaging that takes place when dispatching for jobs, so they may not be able to attend immediately.

The Brunswick Police Station currently closes at 10pm Sunday through to Wednesday nights, but is open 24hrs on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

Following up on your report

The investigation starts straight away (once incident is reported by you), and Police are required to keep you informed, regardless of the outcomes.

If you report an incident but the person who took the report is moved to a different station, the incident report usually will stay with the station that it was reported at.

If you have reported an incident and haven't heard back, follow-up using the responding Officer's contact information. Failing that, ask to speak to a Sergeant at the station.

CALLING 000 (active incidents, active illegal activity, active threatening behaviour)

Some people may feel as though they are wasting resources if they call 000 – but that's not the case. Call 000 when there is an active incident/illegal activity or threatening behaviour.

It's important to continually update police if you have called 000 for assistance. You can call them back to let them know if the circumstances have changed:

- Has it gotten better and the threat has decreased?
- Has gotten worse and the threat is greater?
- Has the offender left?

Updates also help responding police understand the situation they are getting into, and whether further assistance may be needed.

CRIME STOPPERS - REPORTING INTELLIGENCE OR SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

Crime Stoppers is a great and easy reporting tool. This can be used if you witness activity that is suspicious, dangerous, or potentially illegal.

Once reported, it will go to the local police station and provide them with intelligence around people who may be about to complete (or have completed) illegal activity. You can do this anonymously, or with your details, and report as much or as little detail as you wish.

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TRENDS, DATA AND THE IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING

In Spring and warmer months, those who are socially disadvantaged or who have mental health issues are faced with scenes of togetherness and joy. As they may not have the same experiences, this causes them to react to that in ways that are antisocial.

When there is a full moon, there is generally also increased illegal and anti-social behaviour.

In Brunswick, there is a level of acceptance and a level of fear towards persons who may be socially disadvantaged or unwell, which correlates with a lack of reporting and increased activity.

The less reporting that takes place, the less resources that can be made available to Police to be able to appropriately respond.

Businesses must report all instances. Police use that information and data to increase their response ability, awareness, and request for additional resources to deliver appropriately for the community.

If it's not reported, the police don't have the data to be able to build cases for greater support. Police, like most of society, is data led. They need the data to build cases for additional support or resources.

Remember, it's the squeaky wheel that gets attention, and it's a partnership between businesses and Police. Police need you to report.

DE-ESCALATION AND PROTECTION

Firstly, you are allowed to not let someone in your store and refuse their entry. Your safety is paramount.

Whilst your store and your stock is your livelihood, that doesn't come before your own safety, or that of your staff. You and your staff are the most important persons.

When trying to de-escalate a situation, tone is everything. Keep that in mind when communicating with someone.

You are allowed to tell someone that they are making you uncomfortable and you need them to leave the store, and to repeat this message in a clear and non-threatening tone.

- If the person becomes aggravated, you should get yourself into a safe place (such as a backroom with the door locked, if possible) and call 000 immediately.
- Distance = Time. If you have natural/actual boundaries within your shop (such as a counter or display case), position it between yourself and them.

TIPS:

Police can come into your store to offer advice on store/shop layout and current or potential security/safety adjustments.

Have a plan around managing store safety. How can you get staff/customers out of your shop in the event it's needed? How can you signal to other staff that you need assistance in a discreet manner? Think about this and document a process or procedure that all staff can follow and refer to.

PARAMETERS AROUND CITIZEN ARREST

You can detain/hold someone if you see them do something illegal. But this is not recommended, and you do so at your own risk. You and your staff's safety is paramount. Your safety is not worth the risk.

If you do perform a citizen's arrest, it's important when calling 000 that you clearly outline that you have done this, as Police don't want you to be in danger, and this will assist them in triaging your situation and organising a response.

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PERSONS ASKING FOR FOOD, DRINK OR MONEY.

If they are asking for assistance with food, water, sleeping locations or anything, politely don't give it to them.

Don't offer assistance to people who may be impacted by substances, mentally unwell or homeless. Whilst it may not feel right, assisting them will establish an expectation.

Kindly ask them to move on, or inform them that your shop is not for them today.

You can direct them to services that are nearby, if you feel comfortable. Food relief services can be found here (and there are a few in close proximity to Sydney Road): <https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/living-in-merri-bek/community-services/public-health/food-security/food-access-and-security/>

Begging is illegal.

GRAFFITI – MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION

Graffiti cleaning must be immediate, time and time again. Business owners and property owners must be vigilant in cleaning it off and reporting it.

Timely reporting and cleaning assists Police and will eventually be a deterrent for offender's. But it does take time.

Businesses are able to collect free graffiti removal kits (which have been provided by Merri-bek City Council) from the Sydney Road Brunswick Association, located at 454 Sydney Road Brunswick.

Businesses are also able to arrange free paint vouchers through Merri-bek City Council directly, for redemption at select businesses. To arrange a voucher, call 9240 1111.

If there are repeat offences of graffiti in the same location, think about how else you can intervene to stop it. Can you put in a planter box? Can you get a mural installed? Can you increase lighting? Whilst it can seem like nothing helps, every bit slowly works towards long term solutions. If you would like to brainstorm ideas, please feel free to contact the Sydney Road Brunswick Association on 9380 2005.

HELPFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Brunswick Police Station Sergeant Portfolio Holders Details

Neighbourhood Policing Sergeant

Sergeant Ardalan Yavari

ardalan.YAVARI@police.vic.gov.au

Sergeant Yavari has just arrived at Brunswick Police Station and will be your direct contact for any community issues you may have. Please refer to this website for further details around how Sergeant Yavari can assist you: <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/neighbourhood-policing>

Liquor Licence Sergeant

Sergeant Geoffrey Kwist

geoffrey.Kwist@police.vic.gov.au

After-Hours Contact Form

Sergeant Sonia Aliquo

sonia.aliquo@police.vic.gov.au

Brunswick Uniform Officer in Charge Email

brunswick-uni-OIC@police.vic.gov.au

Please note: The Brunswick Officer in Charge email inbox is not monitored 24 hours and is not a crime reporting mechanism, however it can be used for you to communicate your complaints or compliments about our members.

Crime reports will not be recorded or actioned through the Officer in charge email account.

Crime Stoppers

If you have information that could help solve a crime and you do not need police assistance, you can make an anonymous report to Crime Stoppers.

This can be done by calling: 1800 333 000

Or, reporting online: <https://www.crimestoppersvic.com.au/report-a-crime/>

Alternatively, you can contact the Brunswick Police Station on 8378 6000 or attend in person bearing in mind that at times our staff may take time to respond to your enquiry due to the amount of persons calling or attending the Police Station to report crime/get advice.

Online Reporting to Police

Online Reporting provides you with the same service you would receive at a police station at a time or place convenient to you. You can submit a report online for lost property; theft (but not shoptheft); property damage; absence from residence and Partysafe registration.

Once your report has been progressed, you will get a notification with support information and a police reference number. This will be sent either by email or by post.

This can be done by visiting: <https://onlinereporting.police.vic.gov.au/>

You can also call 131 444 to report some non-urgent crime and events anytime, anywhere 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These are events where offenders have left but a report is still required, such as burglary (including at a commercial property or a home with no occupant present); theft (including theft of a motor vehicle but excluding shoptheft); property damage (up to \$5000); lost property; and, general enquiries.

All calls to the Police Assistance Line are recorded and retained by Victoria Police. This is both for training and, if required, for policing purposes.