7. What to Look out for When Being Searched

There are a few tricks that officers use to push the boundaries of what is legal when searching people.

It is usual for one officer to search and another to take notes whilst this is going on. Try to focus on what the searching officer is doing, after all, there is no need to respond to the officer asking you questions during the search.

Remember what the police are searching for

If an officer tells you that they are searching for “bladed articles”, then you might expect them to start looking through your wallet for small blades, or bank cards that may have had their corners sharpened. Ok, you probably won’t expect it but it is something that they can do.

If an officer tells you that they have seen someone matching your description, graffiting a slogan on a wall, then what might they be looking for? Perhaps chalk, perhaps a spray can. Both of these items might be found in a pocket, but definitely not a wallet. If the police start looking through your wallet then you should probably question what they are doing.

Protect your personal details

If you have chosen not to give the police any of your personal details, which you are entitled to withhold, then you may not be happy with them reading your private material. If in the course of the search they come across an item with your name on, they may choose to record this as part of a description of you.

> **To avoid difficult situations, don’t carry any items that can be used to identify you, eg. a driving license or bank card. If you are carrying a phone, lock it! This will prevent officers casually looking through it.**