

One of the best ways to have police be accountable is for the public they serve to know them. If I saw any of the police officers in my town out of uniform, I would not recognize them. Familiarity can bring comfort, or at least tolerance.

To bring that about I suggest:

Every police station post a list of all streets with addresses of occupants. Each officer is assigned a section of the area he or she regularly patrols.

Once every other week, each police officer should knock on 5 doors and introduce himself or herself and use a series of 5 standard prompts (for example):

1. How long have you lived here?
2. Have you noticed any problems or issues in the neighborhood or the town?
3. Do your children know how to contact the police in an emergency?
4. Does a senior citizen have police contact or senior services contact for an emergency (e.g., power outage)?
5. Tell how long you have been on the force, and relate an interest of yours (e.g., sports team or movies).

We also need to be sure that police officers have training and backup to prevent smaller actions from escalating.

1. All police should have body cams.
2. Every person on the force has an annual course or refresher on de-escalation tactics.
3. No officer should ever be alone. Two should be the minimum for patrol.

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