

mouth, be it gum, a cigarette or pencil, is a session of several hours with an old-time pillory.

"Without courtesy a policeman is a failure; with it, he helps earn all citizens' respect and thereby builds a great profession." Experience has shown the truth of this remark to be almost axiomatic.

Telephone manners go beyond the mere use of courteous words. Polite language can be offensive if the manner and intonation in which it is spoken imply rudeness or indifference. More important than your choice of words is the way you deliver them, for the listener's impression of the police will be based, though perhaps unconsciously, not so much on what you say as on how you say it and possibly on what you leave unsaid. A reassuring, business-like voice indicating a sincere desire to help will do more for the Force, and for you in the discharge of your duty, than all the flowery phrases in the world.

Train your voice to be pleasant. A pleasing voice can do much to place a complainant at his or her ease. Incidentally, if at any time you get an opportunity to have a recording made of your voice, take it—and be prepared for a shock. It is a revealing, often humbling, experience.

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REMEMBER that most calls to the police come from people who want information or help. In many cases it is the caller's first contact with the police, and he may want assistance in a situation that has got beyond his control. He may be excited and inclined to exaggerate. He may be vexingly incoherent. On the other hand he may be in danger and panicky, unable to marshal the facts intelligibly.

Courteous and efficient handling of the matter is necessary if you are to glean the requisite information without offending the complainant. A sympathetic attitude can do much to allay his agitation. Don't lose sight of the fact that few

civilians have had police experience. Violence, death and disaster are probably extremely rare in your caller's round of activities, and he shouldn't be expected to appraise the event with the objectivity of a policeman whose daily business it is to deal with such matters.

A caller's opinion of the police will be moulded to a large extent by the impression he forms when he first does business with them, which often is over the telephone. That impression can easily be good; but it can as easily be bad. Make it good; be helpful, polite, quiet and sincere.

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FIRST get the caller's name, his address and the number of the telephone from which he is calling—this in case a call back is necessary, or so that in the event of a cut off you will be in a position to dispatch assistance to the premises where the phone is located. If the caller is excited try to calm him by remaining calm yourself, and by your manners inspire confidence in him.

Don't give way to temper, even under provocation. To do so only lowers your dignity and your power of discretion. A quiet firm tone will engender respect and do more to bring an excited person back to normal than any amount of recrimination or "telling off". Giving way to anger because the other person has done so is, to put it plainly, allowing him to control your emotions. Why not reverse the process and bring his emotions under your control? However, if you are at fault be big enough to apologize.

Good telephone manners forbid committing a caller to unnecessary waiting. If the call is for someone other than yourself try to notify that person promptly, and should that not be possible, ask the caller to leave his name and number; but don't insist on it—after all it's the caller's business, not yours. If time is needed to look up information or to get in touch with a certain person,