



The Broadview Hts. Police Department

Blue Envelope Program



The Blue Envelope Program (BEP) is an initiative aimed at improving interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals with special needs, especially those on the autism spectrum or with communication challenges. Developed through collaborations among advocacy groups, police associations, and state agencies, the program utilizes a blue envelope to hold essential documents and provide guidance to officers for effective communication.

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

Enhance Safety: Helps officers quickly identify that the individual may have communication differences, reducing misunderstandings that could escalate situations.

Reduce Anxiety: Provides structure for individuals with special needs during high stress interactions like traffic stops.

Promote Awareness: Educates officers on autism or similar conditions, encouraging clear, calm communication.

Build Trust: Fosters positive relationships between law enforcement and the special needs community.

The Broadview Heights Police Department has adopted the BEP to foster positive community interactions. This voluntary and free program allows individuals to disclose any conditions or disabilities that may affect communication, helping officers to understand and accommodate these needs during encounters. The program promotes proactive self-identification, increased assistance, and ongoing training for both officers and the community to enhance awareness and understanding.

The BEP is designed to promote inclusivity and enhance communication awareness between BHPD officers and community members diagnosed with disabilities / disorders including, but not limited to:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Dementia
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Deafness
- Blindness
- Anxiety Disorder
- Other Communication Conditions

The overall purpose of participating in the BEP is to promote assistance and encourage communication with BHPD officers through proactive self-identification. The program also promotes awareness training to officers and the community through an ongoing collaboration. The following are examples of interactions where officers may encounter a person participating in the BEP.

- A driver presents the Blue Envelope during a traffic stop noting their sensitivity to flashing lights or loud noises.
- A person with diabetes at risk of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) may display symptoms similar to those of drug or alcohol intoxication, has a Blue Envelope wallet card that explains their condition.
- A driver of a vehicle with an autistic child as a passenger, displays a Blue Envelope decal on the back of their vehicle.

The Blue Envelope Program (BEP) is designed for individuals with communication-impairing conditions or disabilities, allowing them to receive accommodations during law enforcement encounters without needing to disclose their condition. The Blue Envelope logo does not exempt participants from law enforcement actions or safety protocols.

WHAT IS PROVIDED

BLUE ENVELOPE

A blue envelope is provided for you to store a copy of your driver's license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance. Also, you will find instructions and tips designed to help ensure a positive interaction with law enforcement officers. Additionally, there is a section that allows you to add handwritten notes with tips for communication or to identify specific needs you may have.

BROADVIEW HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT

WHAT TO PUT INSIDE THIS ENVELOPE
 Copy of your Driver's License
 Vehicle Registration
 Current Insurance Card

NOTES TO OFFICER
 Driver may show signs of anxiety due to bright lights or loud noises
 Driver may need additional time to respond
 Use simple commands & explanations
 Inform driver when they are free to leave

DRIVER PASSENGER

Name: _____
 In case of an emergency please contact:
 Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Name: _____ Phone: _____
 List disability or condition: _____
 Notes about me: _____

TIPS FOR WHEN YOU ARE PULLED OVER

- Pull over to the right. STOP at a safe location
- Stay inside your vehicle. Do not drive away until you are told it is okay to leave
- Keep your hands on the steering wheel
- Tell the officer you have a BLUE ENVELOPE
- Follow instructions and ask questions

WALLET CARD

Wallet cards are provided to display your name, emergency contact information, and tips for interacting with them. These cards are available at BHPD and can be completed and laminated by our staff.

If I exhibit any behaviors that impact my communication, please contact the person below

My Name: _____
 Emergency Contact Name: _____
 Emergency Contact Number: _____

I have a condition that may affect my communication skills, making it difficult for me to understand directions or respond to questions. Please consider this when we interact.

WINDOW DECAL

Window stickers are available and can be used to display on a vehicle's window so that officers can observe the Blue Envelope emblem when approaching a vehicle. We recommend placing the decal on the top left corner of the rear window.



COMMUNICATION CARD

Cards with law enforcement-related graphics are available to assist communication with the deaf or hard of hearing community. The cards will be available to both the public and law enforcement officers.

This program is intended for people with a condition or disability that may impact communication or require additional accommodations or awareness during a law enforcement encounter. The individual does not need to identify or show proof of their condition or disability to participate. The presence of the Blue Envelope logo does not make the participant immune to law enforcement action or override safety protocols.

I AM DEAF
I AM HARD OF HEARING
 Please point to the pictures to help me understand what you want

I need to see your:

- Drivers License
- Vehicle Registration
- Car Insurance
- Concealed Carry Permit

I stopped you for:

- No Seat Belt
- Speeding
- Running a Red Light
- Cellphone Usage
- Intoxication
- Reckless Driving
- Pedestrian Crossing
- Broken Down
- Stop

Communication Mode:

- Writing
- Lip Reading
- Texting
- Assistive Technology
- Sign Language

I Need Help:

- Gas
- Lost
- Hospital
- Flat Tire
- Tow Truck
- Other

Communication Tips:

- I may need a sign language interpreter.
- I cannot lip-read everything you say.
- Maintain eye contact while speaking.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Background noise may make it difficult for me to understand you.
- Shining a flashlight in my face may make it harder to see your face and understand you.
- Hearing devices do not allow me to understand everything you say.
- I may need to connect an assistive device to help me hear you better.

If you or a family member are considering joining the program, we understand how important this decision can be. We invite you to visit us at the Broadview Heights Police Station at 9543 Broadview Road, where Lieutenant Marco Ambrose would be happy to assist you. You can also reach him directly at (440) 717-4086 or by email at mambrose@broadviewheightspd.org. We are here to support you and answer any questions you may have.



Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles

The State of Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles affords any individual with a medically diagnosed communication disability who drives or regularly has someone with a communication disability in their vehicle can voluntarily enroll in a database that connects to the Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS).

During interactions with law enforcement, such as during traffic stops, LEADS will notify the officer that someone in the vehicle may have difficulty communicating. This type of awareness allows the officer to approach the vehicle in a way that can reduce potential misunderstandings or problems. Registration is voluntary.

Those interested in self-identifying can complete the Communication Disability Verification Form and take the completed form to their licensed medical practitioner to validate the communication disability. To access the form, visit www.bmv.ohio.gov and select “More Services” on the main page. Then, click “Communication Disability Law.” The page will explain how to register, and it provides the verification form. Return the completed form via traditional mail or email. This service is provided by the State of Ohio free of charge. Please note, that this service is not affiliated with the Blue Envelope Program.

For additional information regarding services provided by the State of Ohio, please call Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities at 614-438-1200 or go to www.ood.ohio.gov/communicationdisabilitylaw.