

The Appropriate Role of a Police Officer

Historically, police officers performed a variety of tasks such as tax collection, street sanitation, public health, and law enforcement. Today, many believe that all police should be tasked with additional law enforcement policies—namely immigration responsibilities. Some argue that police officers should be able to stop and ask citizens about their citizenship status, request papers, and arrest those they believe are undocumented.

Think About It

1. What is the appropriate role of a police officer?
 2. Would this type of policy have an effect on the relationship between police and the public?
 3. How might this affect a citizen's likelihood to report crime or victimization to the police?
 4. Would a policy like this allow criminals to remain free and target Hispanics or others commonly thought to be undocumented?
- Now that you have thought about the issue of immigration policies and the use of police to enforce them, imagine you are the new chief of police who gets to establish new policy in Houston, Texas.
5. Would you allow immigration duties be carried out by the police?
 6. If so, how would you write policy to ensure that abuse of power does not occur and that all citizens report violence?
 7. If not, what would you include as the appropriate role of a police officer today?