

Robert Peel, the creator of the first modern police force in 1829 London, and the first commissioners, Charles Rowan and Richard Mayne, wrote the original Patrol Guide: “Instructions to Police Officers.”¹ It emphasized the prevention of crime, regular foot patrol, police discretion, and a professional demeanor.

The following general instructions [do not apply] to every circumstance... something must necessarily be left to the intelligence and discretion of individuals.

The principal object to be attained is “*the prevention of crime.*” To this great end every effort of the police is to be directed rather than by the detection and punishment of the offender after he has succeeded in committing the crime.

When in any area offenses are frequently committed, there must be reason to suspect that the police are not in the area properly conducted. The absence of crime is the best proof of the efficiency of the police.

He should be able to see every part of his beat, at least once in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. It is indispensably necessary, that he should make himself perfectly acquainted with all the parts of his beat or section, with the streets, thoroughfares, courts, and houses. He will be expected to possess such a knowledge of the inhabitants of each house, as will enable him to recognize their persons. ... He will keep in mind that *prevention of crime* will be best attained by making it evident, that they are known and strictly watched, and that certain detection will follow any attempt to commit a crime.

He will be civil and attentive to all persons, of every rank and class, ...[with] a perfect command of temper, never ... moved in the slightest degree by any language or threats that may be used. He must be particularly cautious, not to interfere ... unnecessarily; but when required to act, he will do so with decision and boldness... [and] may expect to receive the fullest support in the proper exercise of his authority.

“Nine Principles of Law Enforcement,” often and wrongly attributed to Robert Peel,² derive in part from Peel's principles, but first appear in a 1948 book on the principles of British policing.³

- 1) The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder.
- 2) The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions.
- 3) Police must secure the willing co-operation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public.
- 4) The degree of co-operation of the public that can be secured diminishes proportionately to the necessity of the use of physical force.
- 5) Police seek and preserve public favor not by catering to the public opinion but by constantly demonstrating absolute impartial service to the law.
- 6) Police use physical force to the extent necessary to secure observance of the law or to restore order only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient.
- 7) Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.
- 8) Police should always direct their action strictly towards their functions and never appear to usurp the powers of the judiciary.
- 9) The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it.

¹ Adapted from *Sanction of Establishment of Police. No 8 Augmentation*. 1829. London: Home Office.

² Lentz, Susan A. and Robert H. Chaires. 2007. "The Invention of Peel's Principles: A study of policing 'textbook' history." *Journal of Criminal Justice*.

³ Reith, Charles. 1948. “Principles of British Policing.” *A Short History of the British Police*. Oxford University Press.