

Adventures in Fingerprinting

Adventures in fingerprinting? What do you mean? Did someone finally lose it? Are all his marbles gone?

Not really, but I thought I'd write so readers can know what they are in for when they get fingerprinted. So now your asking yourself why would I get fingerprinted? Aren't criminals fingerprinted? I'm not a criminal. Who does this guy think he is? Well, before you bust a bubble, let me explain why a Firearms Instructor is telling you about Fingerprinting.

Big Brother is Watching

When you apply for a Firearms ID Card or License to Carry in most states, you're fingerprinted whether you are a law-abiding citizen or not. As a matter of fact, many states require fire fighters to be fingerprinted to help eliminate them or identify them as potential arson investigations suspects.

So, you've seen finger printing done on all of the TV shows and movies. The perpetrator gets booked and fingerprinted. It doesn't look hard. It looks like it's a piece of cake and that anyone could do it, even you.



Believe it or not, it's not so easy to finger print people. When people are fingerprinted, law enforcement needs clean crisp prints that have no smudges. Usually, they'll take individual prints of each of your 10 fingers, the 4 fingers excluding the thumb separately in a different location on the fingerprint card, and then the thumbs again in a different location of the fingerprint card. People aren't usually fingerprinted, so they don't know what to expect.

Police Officers can have a real difficult time fingerprinting a person if they are not cooperative. In situations like that,

I've been told that the criminal is placed in a cell until he or she decides to cooperate.



Psychologically and emotionally, the process is totally different for the person who is applying for a License to Carry or a Firearms ID Card than for a criminal. In these situations, the person should be willing to be fingerprinted.

I can tell you from personal experience that I didn't mind being fingerprinted. It just that it's not so easy having someone take your fingers and make them do things that you normally wouldn't do and that's the point of this article. I'm hoping to make your fingerprinting process go much smoother than mine.



Try to go through the motions of rolling your fingers from one side to the other on a flat table top or surface while keeping your body stiff or straight. Notice how your arm is being contorted, or bent in uncomfortable directions that you normally wouldn't bend? It may be worse for some people than others. Now imagine that someone will be holding your fingers doing that for you. You may or may not like that. Many people won't like the feeling of having someone control their movements. We're so independent after living as long as we have that it's difficult to let someone make you do something that you normally wouldn't do. It kind of

reminds me of when I was little and my mother forced me to take medicine to make me feel better. Do you remember that? That's what you're going to go through when you're fingerprinted.

Make Fingerprinting Easier

I found that I made my fingerprinting a bit easier by moving my body from one side to the other as my fingers were being rolled. I know it sounds weird, but imaging you are doing a cyclical bob and weave as if you were in the boxing ring. You would start the bob on the side of the finger first being printed and then weave toward the other side as your finger is being rolled. So if you're left side of your finger is being rolled first, you would start on your left side and weave to the right.

Do the Fingerprint Shuffle

You might want to tell the Law Enforcement Officer printing you that you're going to try and make his or her life easier by doing the finger print shuffle. When they look at you like you have 3 heads, explain what you'll be doing. They and you will see how much easier the fingerprinting will go.

Make sure you practice first. Remember, first impressions are lasting impressions. If you don't get a good set of prints the first time, you'll and the Law Enforcement Officer will have to do it over and over and over until you get it right. So, get it right the first time. Of all the people you don't want to aggravate, you don't want to aggravate the Law Enforcement Officer who is printing you for your LTC or FID Card.

About the author: Mike Burchman is a Massachusetts State Certified Firearms Instructor, a Utah State Certified Concealed Firearms Instructor, and a NRA Certified Instructor and Range Safety Officer. If you're a Massachusetts Resident and would like more information on firearms safety courses or instructions on how to use a firearm, please contact Mike Burchman at 508-361-4554 or visit www.homegunsafety.com.