

Seven Things an LHO Should Never Say [\[Link\]](#)

7 Things Never to Say

Better Ideas

- 1. It's really complicated.**
(can be insulting)
- Situations come up where people struggle to understand something, perhaps a statute...

Let me explain this...
(acknowledging complicated information)
- 2. Unfortunately, those are the rules.**
(can be insensitive)
- Someone may ask, "Why are you doing this to me?" or say, "This isn't fair!"

It's my responsibility to give information about x. The reasoning goes like this: xyz...
(at least there is some reasoning)
- 3. You don't need to know.**
(cuts off, isolates)
- Perhaps you have a complainant who wants to remain anonymous or someone wants to know "why" the town created an ordinance.

I can't speak about that because I don't know the exact reasoning behind it or I can't talk about that because of confidentiality issues.
(less confrontational)
- 4. I can't do anything about it.**
(emphasizes your lack of power)
- Someone may ask about things beyond your duties, or someone may ask you to research another angle on a complaint.

I'm sorry. I really don't know what else I could recommend. Or I'll find out and get back to you.
(builds credibility)
- 5. Calm Down!**
(generally creates more upset)
- Know that emotions are neither right nor wrong. Try to ask for specific solutions.

You seem really angry. [Wait for response]. I can understand why you might feel that way. [Pause] What we're trying to do is come up with a solution.
(opens the door to possible solutions)
- 6. "I'm Not Going to Say This Again"**
(vaguely threatening)
- Actually, you may say the sentence again.

It's important that you understand this, so please listen carefully.
(gets across sincere need)
- 7. "I'm Telling You This For Your Own Good"**
(condescending)
- By stating best-case alternatives, you give the chance for the person to reflect. If A happens, then B will be the result. If C happens, then D will be the result.

Instead – Point out the specific benefits
(allows them to see what's in it for them)