

Motor Vehicle Stop

Did You Know?

- When driving a motor vehicle, you must have a valid driver's license, current insurance and registration in possession. Without these, you could be issued a citation.
- It is the driver's (not the owner's) responsibility to make sure all of the lights and safety equipment are functioning.
- Children 11 and under are required by law to wear seatbelts or be placed in a child safety seat. As the driver, it is your legal responsibility to ensure this. Failure to "Buckle Up" contributes to more fatalities than any other traffic related behavior.
- You must signal your intent to pass or turn before performing the action.
- Following too close to the vehicle in front of your vehicle is a moving violation. You should be at least three car lengths away.
- Every 30 minutes someone in this country dies in an alcohol related crash.
- A yellow light means slow down and prepare to stop, not speed up!

Why Police Stop Motor Vehicles?

- Moving violations are the most common reasons a vehicle is stopped.
- Some examples include: speeding, failure to stop at a stoplight or sign, or failure to drive within the marked lanes.
- Registration, Inspection sticker, or equipment violations are other reasons an officer may stop a vehicle. It is not uncommon for a driver to be in violation of the law without knowing it. Depending upon the circumstances, officers may issue a citation or a warning for the violation.
- Criminal investigations often involve searching for a motor vehicle in association with a crime. In today's mobile society, criminals use cars to facilitate crimes. Your vehicle may match the description of a suspect's vehicle.
- An officer may stop you for safety concerns. For instance, your trunk may be open, something may be hanging under the vehicle, or you may have left something on your roof.

What To Do If You're Stopped?

- Stop your vehicle as far out of the lane of traffic as possible. Stay in your vehicle for safety. If you leave the vehicle, you subject yourself and the officer to the dangers of traffic.

- Turn on the interior light. Keep your hands in view, preferably on the steering wheel. Wait for the officer to request your license and registration.
- Police officers are trained to ask for identification first, and provide an explanation second. First, provide the paperwork requested. Then, give the officer a chance to explain why you were stopped. Providing your documentation will speed the process. Remember, in most cases, the officer is in Uniform, displaying a badge and nametag. You have the advantage of knowing with whom You are dealing. You have the right to ask the officer's name and the reason for the stop.

During The Stop:

Why did the officer approach my motor vehicle from the side?

Police officers are trained to minimize their exposure to traffic and, therefore, reduce the likelihood that they will be injured. The second reason is that they are trained to protect themselves tactically. Many police officers have been killed or assaulted by motorists who are wanted for various crimes.

Why did two or three officers show up if it's only a minor offense?

Officers in the vicinity frequently back each other up without being summoned. This is a protocol that maximizes safety for the officers.

Why do officers stay back at their car for so long?

The officer is verifying that your driver's license and registration status is valid. The officer may be filling out a citation. This process could take several minutes.

After The Stop:

What if I don't agree with the ticket?

All citizens have the right to appeal a citation before a judge in court. Follow the directions on the citation.