

Why do Police Stop People?

There are many different reasons why the police might stop you. Whatever the reason, the officer needs your cooperation.

- You may be a potential witness to a crime.
- The officer might think you are in trouble and need help.
- You may have committed a traffic or other violation.
- You may fit the description of a person that the police are looking for.

If you are stopped by the police while driving, you may feel confused, anxious, or even angry. These are natural feelings, but remember, traffic stops can also be stressful and dangerous for the police officer. Each year, a number of law enforcement officers are killed or seriously injured while making the “routine traffic stop.” Police officers are especially vulnerable during the hours of darkness.

With this in mind, there are things that you, as a law abiding citizen, can do to help make the contact a more efficient and positive experience for both you and the Police Officer.

When stopped by police, please remember:

1. When you see the red overhead lights and/or hear the siren, remain calm and safely pull over parallel to the right side of the road.
2. Remain in your vehicle unless the officer advises otherwise. Be sure the officer is wearing a police uniform. If not, keep your door locked and ask for identification.
3. Try to keep your hands where the officer can see them. It is a good idea to rest both hands on the steering wheel.
4. Avoid any sudden movements, especially toward the floorboard, rear seat or passenger side of the vehicle.
5. Do not immediately reach for your license or other documents until the officer requests them. California law requires drivers to show their license, registration and insurance card to the Police Officer upon request.
6. If your documents are out of reach, tell the officer where they are before you reach for them.
7. If the stop occurs during darkness, the officer will likely use a bright spotlight to illuminate your vehicle. You can help

by turning on your interior lights so the officer can see that everything is in order.

8. If there are passengers in your vehicle, encourage them to remain quiet and cooperate with instructions. You, as the operator, are solely responsible for your vehicle and its occupants.
9. The officer may issue you a ticket. If you feel the reason is vague or unclear, ask the officer for details.
10. If you contest the violation, you will have an opportunity to address the matter in court.
11. Be honest with the officer. If you really didn't see the stop sign, or were unaware of the speed limit, let the officer know. Being honest about any situation never hurts.
12. Many departments use single-officer patrol cars, especially in the suburbs. It would be normal to see two or three marked units on a routine traffic stop, especially at night.
13. Finally, if you receive a ticket, please accept it calmly. Signing it is not an admission of guilt; it is only a promise to appear in court at a later time.

Each situation is unique and the police officer must alter his/her response to fit the circumstance.

Generally, a Police Officer:

- Will provide his or her name upon request.
- A police officer who is not in uniform will present proper identification; you may request to examine their credentials so that you are satisfied they are a law enforcement officer.
- Will inform a person of the reason for being stopped.
- Will only use the amount of force necessary to affect the arrest of a suspect and to maintain the custody of the prisoner.
- Will only arrest a person for a crime committed in the officer's presence, to accept a citizen's arrest, or when the officer has probable cause to believe a person has already committed a serious crime.

Questions / Compliments / Complaints

If you have a question about procedures or a complaint about your treatment, contact the UC Davis Police Department and ask to speak with the Watch Commander. You may also send a letter of compliment if you feel the officer was particularly helpful in your situation.

Telephone Numbers

Campus

Emergency	9-1-1
Business / TDD	530-752-1727
Watch Commander	530-752-1172

UCDMC

Emergency	9-1-1
Business / TDD	916-734-2555
Watch Commander	916-734-8116

Website: <http://police.ucdavis.edu>
crimeprevention@ucdavis.edu



TRAFFIC STOPS WHAT TO DO WHEN STOPPED BY THE POLICE



University of California
Davis

Police Department

Crime Prevention Unit