

GASTONIA POLICE DEPARTMENT TRAFFIC STOP GUIDELINES



GASTONIA POLICE DEPARTMENT
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What to expect during a traffic stop

Traffic law enforcement is a proven method of increasing pedestrian safety and use of seat belts, helmets, and child safety seats. It also reduces the incidence of impaired and aggressive driving and increases the number of dangerous criminals apprehended.

Understanding expectations during a traffic stop can improve communication between the driver and the officer and help reduce anxiety about the situation. Improving communication is also the first step in eliminating divisiveness within our community and building community-based partnerships. Empathy and cooperation can occur one traffic stop at a time through mutual understanding.

Key points to remember:

- ✓ If you follow all traffic laws, you greatly reduce the chances that the police will stop you, so:
 - Don't speed, drive aggressively, or drive while you are impaired.
 - Always wear your seat belt and correctly buckle up children who are riding with you.
 - Yield to pedestrians when they have the right-of-way.
- ✓ Exercise the "Golden Rule" and treat the officer the way you would like to be treated.
- ✓ Understand that you are required to cooperate with all reasonable requests that law enforcement personnel make.
- ✓ Look for ways to view the traffic stop as a positive lesson. Use the information you receive to become a better, safer motorist.



STAY CALM



CARRY IDENTIFICATION



BE RESPECTFUL

If you are stopped by a police officer

- ▶ Remain calm.
- ▶ Pull off to the right side of the roadway. Position your vehicle as far away from traffic as possible.
- ▶ Turn on your flashers.
- ▶ Turn off your engine, radio, and any other device that could hinder communication with the officer.
- ▶ Roll down your window so that you can communicate with the officer.
- ▶ Keep your safety belt fastened and ask your passengers to keep their belts fastened.
- ▶ Stay in your vehicle. Do not get out unless the officer asks you to.
- ▶ Keep your hands in plain view, preferably on the steering wheel. Ask your passengers to keep their hands in plain view also.
- ▶ Do not make any movement that will make the officer think you are hiding or reaching for something.
- ▶ Carry proper identification: a valid driver's license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance. If the officer asks for these documents, tell him where they are and reach for them slowly. Keep one hand on the steering wheel.
- ▶ If the officer is driving an unmarked car or is not in uniform, ask to see his or her identification.
- ▶ Answer the officer's questions fully and clearly. If you don't understand something, politely ask the officer questions to clarify.
- ▶ If the officer issues you a citation, you may ask questions or speak to the officer but do not argue with the officer about the citation. You will have your chance to make your case when you go to court.
- ▶ You may be asked to sign the citation to indicate you received it from the officer. This is not an admission of guilt.

