



Procedures For Reporting Traffic Stops

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for conducting traffic stops. Conducting a traffic stop is one the most dangerous tasks as a Law Enforcement Professional. Observing safety measures, using good tactics, and being alert at all times is of upmost importance.

II. POLICY

Effective immediately all Officers will call out all traffic stops through the Emergency Communication Center. The following procedures will be utilized by all personnel when stopping a vehicle.

III. TYPES OF TRAFFIC STOPS

- A. **Traffic Violation Stop-** A stop made because an Officer has probable cause to believe that the driver committed a traffic infraction.
- B. **Investigative Stop-** A stop made because an Officer has reasonable suspicion to believe that one or more of the vehicle's occupants has engaged in, or is about to engage in, criminal activity.
- C. **High Risk Stop-** A stop in which an Officer has reasonable suspicion, probable cause, or a warrant; and reason to believe that one or more of the occupants of the vehicle may be a threat to the Officer.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Officers will, on all traffic stops, advise the Emergency Communications Center the following information (in the order listed), when making a traffic stop. If the Officer is able to, the following information should be relayed to the Emergency Communications Center prior to making the stop.

1. Location of stop
2. State of registration
3. Tag number
4. Vehicle Description

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B. If operating a radar assignment, Officers may open a card for the same in lieu of calling out on each traffic stop.

C. **Positioning/Approach** - Officers, when possible, will have the driver pull off of the roadway. The Officer will offset the patrol vehicle in a manner such that half of their vehicle is behind the violator's vehicle at a distance of 15' to 22'. Officers will approach the vehicle from either side, maintaining officer safety. While remaining outside of the vehicle, Officers should check the interior for criminal activity and officer safety issues. If the violator should leave their vehicle, officers should direct the violator to remain within the vehicle. Officers will then obtain the necessary documents.

E. **Return to Patrol Vehicle** - Officers will return to their vehicle to conduct any record checks and/or the preparation of a citation. Officers will maintain visual contact of the violator vehicle and its occupants. Depending on tactical considerations, Officers may complete the citation inside their vehicle or while standing outside of the vehicle away from traffic movement. Upon completion of the stop, Officers will ensure that the vehicle can resume travel in the normal traffic flow safely and complete the needed documentation in reference the stop.

V. HIGH RISK STOPS

High Risk Stops constitute a use of force upon a lawfully stopped vehicle based on information officers have about the occupant(s) of the vehicle. Officers will deploy a tactical plan for High Risk Stops based on the information known and the resources available. Officers will utilize the following foundation for conducting High Risk Stops.

A. Conducting a High Risk Stop relies on communication and control.

B. Officers will develop a tactical plan consistent with training before starting a High Risk Stop.

C. Factors to consider include the coordination of units responding, site selection, and equipment availability.

D. The first Officer coordinating the stop will assume Incident Command. Incident Command will park their vehicle within 15' to 22' to the rear of the violator vehicle; or at a safely determined distance based on the geographical location of the stop.

E. Incident Command will then direct other incoming assisting units as to where to position their vehicles, and to safely effect the arrest.

VI. TRAFFIC STOPS ON ARMORED VEHICLES

Should a stop of an armored security vehicle be necessary, the Officer involved shall immediately notify the dispatcher of the following information, in addition to the above information:

A. That an armored vehicle is being stopped and the name of the company involved.

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- B. The location and reason for the stop.
- C. If the traffic stop necessitates the physical arrest of an armored vehicle driver, the Deputy shall notify the dispatcher, who will notify the armored car company and request that a representative come to the scene to secure the vehicle.
- D. If a traffic stop results in written enforcement action, exchange of the driver license, vehicle documentation, and the citation/written warning/SERO will be conducted through the gun port.
- E. If an armored vehicle is not equipped with gun ports, the Officer shall obtain sufficient information from the driver to permit a summons or other action to be issued at a later date.
- F. Officers taking enforcement action shall observe standard officer safety procedures when stopping and approaching armored vehicles. In addition, Officers shall make every attempt to clearly establish their identity as police officers.

VII. ISSUING OF CITATIONS/WARNINGS/SERO'S

- A. **Citations-** All citations shall be carefully reviewed for accuracy prior to issuance. When presenting the citation to a violator, the Officer shall explain the action being taken.
- B. **Warnings-** All written warnings shall be carefully reviewed for accuracy prior to issuance. Proper enforcement does not always involve a citation.
- C. **SERO's-** All SERO's shall be carefully reviewed for accuracy prior to issuance. Officers may issue SERO's to drivers whose vehicles have defective equipment. The Officer shall explain to the violator the procedure they must follow to show verification of the repair.

VIII. WHEN AN INCIDENT REPORT IS REQUIRED

- A. A incident appear report will be written when a citation is issued to a violator that is a must appear violation. A District Court Notice to Appear will also be given to the violator.
- B. When a juvenile age 16-17 is being charged with a must appear violation, and that is the only offense, a traffic citation will not be issued. An incident report will be completed; along with a DJJ referral.
- C. When a juvenile under the age of 15 has been stopped for committing a traffic violation, and that is the only offense, a traffic citation will not be issued. An incident report will be completed, along with a DJJ referral charging the juvenile with any minor or serious traffic offense.