

WHY DO POLICE STOP PEOPLE?

There are many different reasons why you might be stopped by the police.

Whatever the reason, the officer needs your cooperation.

- You may have committed a traffic violation.
- You may fit the description of a suspect.
- The officer might think you are in trouble and need help.
- You may have witnessed a crime.

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 lessen the unpleasantness of the experience.

REMEMBER:

In all cases, a citizen is required to cooperate with police.



When Stopped by the police, remember:

1. A police officer may pull you over at any time for a traffic offense or police investigation.
2. 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.
3. Remain in your vehicle unless the officer advises otherwise.
4. Keep your hands on the steering wheel so the officer can see them.
5. Avoid any sudden movements, especially toward the floorboard, rear seat or passenger side of the vehicle.
6. Do not immediately reach for your license or other documents until the officer requests them. NYS Law requires drivers to show their license, registration and insurance card upon request.
7. If your documents are out of reach, tell the officer where they are before you reach for them.
8. If the stop occurs during darkness, put on your dome or interior lights so the officer can easily see that all is in order.
9. 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.
10. The officer may issue you a ticket. If you feel the reason is vague or unclear, ask the officer for details.
11. Avoid becoming argumentative. Arguing will not change the officer's mind. If you contest the violation, you will have an opportunity to address the matter in court.
12. 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.
13. Most departments use one officer patrol cars. It would be normal to see two or three marked units on a routine traffic stop.
14. Finally, if you receive a ticket, accept it calmly. Accepting it is not an admission of guilt.

NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law requires that all drivers shall yield the right of way to emergency vehicles. Drivers are to immediately pull over parallel to the right-hand edge, stop and remain in a stopped position until the emergency vehicle has passed.

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 force necessary to affect the arrest of a suspect and to maintain the custody of the prisoner.
- Will not search the body of a person of the opposite sex except to prevent the disposal or destruction of evidence, and
- Will only arrest a person for a crime committed in the officer's presence, or when the officer has probable cause to believe the person has already committed the crime.

QUESTIONS/COMPLIMENTS/COMPLAINTS

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

This pamphlet is provided to you by the University Police Department and the Oswego State Student Association Office.

We hope the information in this pamphlet will be helpful in answering questions about traffic stop procedures and in reducing the stress when stopped by the police.

Oswego State University Police

Pathfinder Hall

315-312-5555

www.oswego.edu/police

Oswego State Student Association Office

131 Campus Center

The Point

315-312-2950

www.oswego.edu/student/sa



Protecting New York's Future

The New York State University Police Department is the agency responsible for law enforcement and public safety on campus. In partnership with the SUNY Oswego community, we are committed to providing a safe and secure educational environment.

WHAT TO DO WHEN STOPPED BY THE POLICE



New York State University Police Oswego State