

WHAT'S HAPPENING

ENCOUNTERING THE POLICE

CONTACT WITH THE POLICE CAN OCCUR IN MANY WAYS.

These include:

- Providing information as a victim or witness
- During community functions or events
- Emergency situations
- Questioning for an investigation
- As a result of a complaint
- Execution of a search warrant
- Traffic stops

Why did you stop me?

- **Traffic violations** are the most common reasons a vehicle is stopped. Examples are speeding, running a red light, failure to use a turn signal, or not having a child properly restrained.
- **Criminal investigations** often involve searching for a “get-a-way” car. Your car may match the description of a suspect’s vehicle.
- **Safety concerns** such as your trunk may be open, you may have left items on your roof, or you may have a tire going flat.

Why did the officer sneak up along the side of my car?

Officers are trained to minimize their exposure to traffic and reduce possible injury.

Why did two or three officers show up?

Officers in the vicinity frequently back each other up without being requested.

Why is it taking so long?

The officer is verifying your driving privileges and registration status using a mobile data computer.

COMMENT

OFFICER CONDUCT YOUR RESPONSE

You have the right to ask officers to explain their actions and also to ask them for their name and ID number.

To make a complaint or convey a compliment, contact the Public Integrity Unit at:

(859) 258-3625

Please speak clearly if you get the voice mail prompt so your call can be returned.

Provide the following:

- Your name, phone number & address
- Date and time of incident
- Location of incident
- Case report or citation number (if any)
- Name of officer, badge number or vehicle number
- Brief narrative of your complaint or compliment

Innocent individuals are often offended, angered, or both as a result of being detained by an officer. Although the delay may be inconvenient for you, the officer believes that there is a reason to stop you and ask questions. Examples might include questioning about a crime which occurred recently in your area or locating a witness to an incident.

The officer does not want to detain you any longer than necessary. A few minutes of cooperation will speed up the process and get you on your way.

THE FIRST WORDS SPOKEN BY THE OFFICER(S) OR CITIZEN(S) INVOLVED MAY DETERMINE THE TONE OF THE ENCOUNTER AND EVEN THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME.

(Rev. 7/20)

LEXINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE STOPPED BY POLICE

in your
car
at your
door
on the
street

This guide offers suggested procedures to follow if you encounter a police officer or law enforcement official, regardless of the reason. The Lexington Police Department is committed to promoting the best possible result in every contact with the public.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

IF YOU ARE STOPPED IN YOUR CAR

- Slow down and pull over safely – get out of the lane of traffic.
- Place your car in park and roll down your window; turn off radio, cell phone etc.
- If it is nighttime, turn on the interior lights.
- Stay in your car. Do not open any doors unless the officer asks you to exit the car. Getting out of your car can be perceived as a threat to officer safety.
- Make sure both of your hands are visible—a good place is on top of the steering wheel.
- Please refrain from making movements inside the vehicle as the officer is approaching your car and asks to see your valid driver's license, registration and proof of insurance. Tell the officer where they are located; unnecessary movement may cause concern for officer safety.
- If you are carrying a firearm, inform the officer immediately.
- If you must reach into a compartment or baggage to retrieve ID, inform the officer about the location of the object before reaching for it.
- The police will check the validation of your license and registration.
- It is possible that circumstances may arise that leads an officer to ask for consent to search your car. You do not have to consent to a search of your vehicle. The officer may search a car without consent if there is a legal basis to do so.
- If you are suspected of drunk driving, you may be asked to submit to breath, blood or urine tests. Cooperate with the officer. If you refuse, it may result in the loss of driving privileges, fines and if convicted, mandatory jail time.

- Be respectful, patient and relax.
- Do not argue your case with the officer—**REMEMBER** that if you receive a citation, you have a court date to question the validity of the stop or charges, and you can make appeals at a later time.

IF YOU ARE STOPPED ON THE STREET

- Do not ignore, walk away from, or make sudden moves around law enforcement officers even in instances where you feel they may be mistaken.
- Do not touch an officer.
- You may be asked to take your hands out of your pockets. This is for safety reasons.
- Follow instructions the officer gives you and provide identification when requested.
- If you are carrying a firearm, inform the officer immediately and follow instructions.
- Provide correct basic information about your identity, address, age, where you are coming from and/or going to, if asked.
- Answer the officer's questions to the best of your ability.
- Do not argue with the officer about the stated reason for approaching you.
- If an officer has a "reasonable suspicion" that you may be carrying a weapon, you may be subjected to a "pat down" search. Inform him/her of any weapons or sharp objects they may encounter, but don't reach for them.
- Remember, you are not required to give testimony against yourself. You have Fifth Amendment rights.

IF POLICE COME TO YOUR DOOR

- Make sure each individual is really a law enforcement representative by requesting to see a badge and/or identification card. Be pleasant but serious.
- Make sure that the officers are at the correct house by asking, "How can I help you?" or "What brings you to my home?"

Reasons may include:

- They may have an arrest warrant (person) or search warrant (location);
- Be actively investigating a crime;
- Be in "hot pursuit" of an individual suspected of committing a crime and running into your house or;
- An emergency situation such as a "911" disconnect or someone yelling for help.

If officers insist on entering your home, you may verbally express any objections you have. However, do not resist or argue with them to try to prevent them from entering.

GENERAL GUIDE

- Stay calm and in control of your words, body language and emotions.
- Remember, anything you say or do can be used against you.
- Do not resist arrest or interfere in the arrest of another even if you think the arrest is unfair. The officer's actions can be challenged at a later time in court.
- If concerned over an interaction, you can ask for the officer's name/badge number and/or request to speak with an on-duty supervisor.