

Date of Record: May 7, 2013



Introduction

Police are tasked with enforcing the numerous traffic laws and regulations enacted by the different legislative bodies of our government. Our main goals for traffic enforcement are to ensure that drivers operate their vehicles in a safe manner in an effort to;

1. Reduce the number of motor vehicle crashes we investigate.
2. Reduce the severity of those motor vehicle crashes and to limit personal injury from those events.
3. To make sure the vehicles on the road are safe, and subsequently not a danger to others.
4. To make sure vehicles are not being driven by impaired drivers, or those people committing a crime.

Traffic stops are inherently dangerous for police officers. Many officers are injured every year from other motorists, while officers are conducting a "routine" traffic stop. We therefore train our officers to NOT treat a traffic stop as a "routine" procedure. By sharing a few suggestions or observations, we can help make sure this process is not overly stressful or dangerous for either one of us.

When a Police Officer pulls you over

- We ask that you carefully pull over to the right side of the road, place the vehicle in park, and turn off the engine.
- Roll down the vehicle's windows and turn on the interior lights if possible.
- Please stay in the vehicle, and keep your hands on the steering wheel where the officer can see them. This helps officers quickly assess safety factors during the traffic stop.
- Please do not make any sudden, furtive movements. Please communicate if you need to enter your glove box for a registration card for example.
- Please provide the documents or information you are asked for during the encounter. You are required by law to identify yourself and to possess certain documents. (license and registration)

Although it does not happen often, a police officer DOES have the legal authority to ask you to step from your vehicle. The officer will direct you where to stand, in a location meant to keep both you and the officer safe.

The police officer will advise you of the reason for the traffic stop. If a citation or warning is issued, the officer should explain the process to you. Certain, more serious traffic violations where a hand written citation is issued, may require the driver to sign the summons at the bottom of the form. By doing so, the driver is NOT admitting guilt. Your signature only means that you promise to appear in court at the specified date and time written on the citation. If you refuse to sign the citation, the law does allow a police officer to take you into custody, and to jail, where you would have to post a bond. If you fail to show up for your court appearance, your license could be suspended, or a warrant could be issued for your arrest.

We do not want to make an already stressful situation worse because someone is argumentative. If you disagree with the citation, you will have your opportunity in court to contest the actions taken by the officer. We would ask that you again remember that our initial goal is to make sure the roads that all of us share are being occupied by courteous and safe drivers.



Your Rights during a Traffic Stop

- There are instances where a police officer can legally search your vehicle without your permission. In other situations, you may be asked for permission by an officer to search your vehicle. Under those circumstances, you have the right to refuse, and the officer will not be allowed search your vehicle.
- Although you are required to provide your identity and other licensing documents, you do not have to admit guilt of any crime.

· You have the right to be treated fairly and impartially, and that we will not stop you based on "profiling" due to race, nationality, or any other such grouping.

If you have any questions about an encounter with an officer because of a traffic stop, we encourage you to contact the Lafayette Police Department at 765-807-1200. Ask to speak with the shift supervisor.