

Traffic Stop Etiquette

Michigan State Police

Prevention Services and Secure Cities Section

Grants and Community Services Division



Traffic Stop Etiquette

- The Michigan State Police would like to offer some important tips when interacting with the police.
- This information will make the experience less stressful and will help to ensure your safety, the safety of others, and the safety of the officer.
- Please remember that the first words spoken by either the officer(s) or the citizen(s) may very well determine the tone of the encounter and even the eventual outcome.
- Typically, an officer will greet you at your vehicle. However, in some instances, he or she will use a loud-speaker to give instructions. In this case, remain calm and carefully follow the officer's directions.

Traffic Stop Etiquette



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- Safely pull over to the right side of the road as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Pull as far to the right as possible.
- If the officer isn't comfortable with where you pulled over, he or she will suggest a better spot.
- Stay calm, maintain your composure, and do not make any movements or take any actions that could escalate the situation.

Traffic Stop Etiquette



After you pull over...

Traffic Stop Etiquette

- Stay in the car with your seat belt on.
- Turn on the interior lights if it is dusk or dark outside.
- Open your window.
- Keep both hands empty and in plain sight on the steering wheel.
- Ask any passengers in the car to keep silent and keep their hands clearly visible and empty.

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**Interacting with
the officer....**

Traffic Stop Etiquette

- Speak with the officer with the same level of respect that you expect from him or her.
- Don't appear angry, confrontational, or accusatory.
- Take your license, registration, and insurance card out only after the officer asks for them. Before you do so, tell the officer where the items are and ask if it is okay to retrieve them.
- Most times, an officer will not require you to exit your car, however court cases do allow for this.

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- The officer should inform you of the reason for the stop. If needed, you can respectfully ask after providing identification, registration, and insurance.
- Maintain eye contact and remain calm.
- Do not argue the reason for the stop or if you are issued a ticket while the officer is standing at your window. One of the officer's main goals is to remain safe while standing on an active roadway. You may choose to argue or discuss your ticket at a court hearing at a later date.

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- If you feel the officer is being rude or taking actions that are not appropriate, cooperate with his or her lawful orders and follow up with a call to the supervisor.

Comply Now, Complain Later

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After the stop...



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- Make sure your seat belt is buckled.
- Before moving, make sure it is safe to enter the roadway.
- Follow all traffic laws, including using your turn signal, as you pull back into the roadway.
- The officer will likely remain with lights activated until you have safely re-entered traffic.

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