

PALM BEACH GARDENS POLICE DEPARTMENT

STOPPING & APPROACHING TRAFFIC VIOLATORS

POLICY AND PROCEDURE 4.2.3.8

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PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for officers stopping and approaching traffic law violators in a manner that promotes the safety of the officer and the motorist.

ASSIGNED TO: All Sworn Officers

REVIEW RESPONSIBILITY: Patrol Operations Bureau Commander

POLICY: This department shall enforce traffic laws as a routine function of all police officers. In stopping violators for any reason, officers will take all steps and precautions necessary to assure their safety and well being, while maintaining a professional and courteous demeanor.

1. STOPPING/APPROACHING VIOLATORS

- a. The following steps in stopping and approaching a traffic violator are intended to provide maximum safety for the officer, the violator and other users of the roadway.
- b. Whenever circumstances dictate, officers shall:
 - i. Advise communications (dispatch) when making a traffic stop.
 - ii. After communications (dispatch) has acknowledged, give the license plate number, location, description of the vehicle and occupants.
 - iii. Be familiar with the area and anticipate the safest most appropriate location for the stop.
 - iv. Signal the violator to stop by use of emergency (blue/red) lights, and when necessary, the use of the siren.
 - v. The violator should be directed to the right side of the roadway, close to the curb, or on the shoulder if engineering design permits.
 - vi. Once the violator is stopped; the officer should position the police vehicle a reasonable, safe distance behind and to the left of the violator's vehicle to create a safety lane.
 - vii. The officer shall exit the patrol car and be continuously alert for any suspicious movement or actions on the part of the violator's car, look into the rear seat area, and stop at a point to the rear of the left front door. From this position the officer can communicate with the violator, keeping them in a slightly awkward position, and at the same time, keeping all occupants in view.
 - viii. At night, the procedure is basically the same with the additional necessity of exercising caution in selecting an appropriate place for the violator to stop. Once the violator is stopped, the spotlight may be used to illuminate the interior of the violator's vehicle.
 - ix. The officer will receive a back-up unit to maintain safe control of the stop.

2. CONDUCT TOWARD TRAFFIC VIOLATORS

- a. Officers shall at all time project a professional image when dealing with traffic violators and shall maintain an appropriate appearance. Officers shall greet traffic violators in a courteous manner and request drivers license, vehicle registration, and any other needed documents. The officer shall give an explanation of the circumstances warranting the stop and shall explain the citation procedure to the violator. Officers should maintain a professional demeanor with violators who display signs of emotional distress as a result of the contact.

3. TRAFFIC STOP OF VIOLATORS

- a. Police officers making a traffic stop will inform communications (dispatcher), in a manner which enables the dispatcher to copy the following necessary information:
- Location of the traffic stop.
 - Vehicle description.
 - License plate number.
 - Information on occupants.
- b. Officers will make every effort to direct the violator to a suitable stopping point where normal traffic flow will not be impeded or officer's safety will not be jeopardized.
- c. Use of private driveways, gas stations (when open), or other areas providing access to business establishments will not normally be used for traffic stops.
- d. When private property is used, care will be taken to avoid inconvenience to property owners or patrons.
- e. No legal authority exists to use private property in these cases, and, if asked to move, the officer must comply.
- f. Prior to all traffic stops of violators, officers will activate the emergency (blue/red) lights to cause a stop.
- g. It may be necessary to cause a stop by utilizing both emergency (blue/red) lights and siren.
- h. The emergency light is used to signal violators to drive to the extreme right of the roadway stop.
- i. The officer and the violator must move away from moving traffic, keeping in mind that safety should be practiced along the roadway.
- j. Conversation, roadside tests, and other business will be conducted at a safe distance off the roadway.
- k. Emergency vehicle (blue/red) lights will remain in use until completion of the traffic stop, both for the safety of the officer and the violator.

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APPROVED:

Stephen J. Stepp
Chief of Police

08/25/09
Date