Responsible Rights and Responsibilities Know Your Rights

The Foundation for The Gator Nation

UF UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

P.O. Box 112150 Gainseville, FL 32611

Address:

Questions/Complaints/Compliments

Officer

Law Enforcement

Stopped By A

What To Do When

Driving

Before

on the roadway, be

inconsiderate common
drivers are becoming
gerocious and distracted

to increase:

crash your insurance rates

when are exhausted and may

Observe and obey posted

driving

designated driver.

Required. If you drink, use a

taxis are allowed.

Nearby bar on all local.

Don't drink and drive.

Always ensure you and all

children in a child seat.

Buckled up! Children under

occupants are properly

We Care About Your Safety

use the following guidelines...
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:

- The police may want to warn you about a potentially dangerous situation.
- You may have committed a traffic violation.
- Your vehicle may match the description of one used in a criminal act.
- The officer might think you are in trouble and need help.
- You may have witnessed a crime.
- The officer may have reason to believe that you have committed, are currently committing, or are about to commit 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 uneasiness of the experience.

**REMEMBER:** Be courteous and cooperative in any stop by the police. If you are courteous and cooperative, officers will respond in kind.

What to do when an officer stops you:

- When you see the blue overhead lights and/or hear the siren, remain calm, slow down, and pull over in a safe location off the roadway.
- Do not exit your vehicle unless asked to do so. This is for safety reasons.
- Keep your hands on the steering wheel so the officer can see them.
- Inform the officer of any weapons in your vehicle and their location. Do not reach or point to the location.
- Avoid any sudden movements, especially toward the floorboard, rear seat, or passenger side of the vehicle.
- Comply with the officer’s request to see your driver license, proof of insurance, and vehicle registration. Florida law requires you to carry these with you.
- If your documents are out of reach, tell the officer where they are and request permission to reach for them.
- 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.
- 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.
- Answer all questions truthfully.
- The officer may issue you a ticket. If you feel the reason is vague or unclear, politely ask the officer for details.
- If asked to sign a citation, do so. It is not an admission of guilt.
- You have the right to politely deny a request by a police officer to search your car; however, if probable cause is present, the officer has the right to search your vehicle without your consent.

Understand that each situation is unique, and the police officer must alter his or her response to fit the circumstance. Generally, however, a police officer will:

- Provide his/her name.
- Inform a person of the reason for being stopped.
- 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.

Florida Statute 316.126 states that all drivers shall yield the right of way to emergency vehicles. When an emergency vehicle approaches, drivers are to immediately pull over parallel to the nearest edge, stop, and remain in a stopped position until the vehicle has passed. When an emergency vehicle is stopped on the roadside, drivers are to vacate the lane closest to the emergency vehicle. If that is not possible, drivers shall slow to a speed that is 20 MPH less than the posted limit when the speed limit is 25 MPH or greater; or travel at 5 MPH when the posted limit is 20 MPH.