

RAMSEY POLICE DEPARTMENT - POLICIES & PROCEDURES			
GENERAL ORDER			
Subject: Motor Vehicle Stops	Section Number V9 C11	Effective Date: January 13, 2000	
Volume Title: Traffic	Number of pages: 7		
Accreditation Standard 61.1.7	Distribution: general		
Source/References:	Revised:	Page:	Approved:
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PURPOSE

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

DISCUSSION

Although enforcing traffic laws is often a routine function that officers perform, all too frequently they are injured and in some cases killed in situations that initially appeared to be, even to a trained observer, a "routine" traffic stop.

Realizing that a courteous demeanor, when exhibited by a police officer during the course of a traffic stop, is of utmost importance to establishing the proper rapport that is necessary, it is nonetheless realized that the safety of the officer is of paramount importance.

POLICY

Traffic stops are generally classified as being in one of two threat levels unknown risk, and high risk. In stopping violators for any reason, officer safety is paramount. Officers will, therefore, take

all steps and precautions necessary during traffic stops to assure their safety and well being as well as that of other motorists.

I. PROCEDURE

- A. The majority of traffic stops made by officers are in the unknown risk category. For the most part, traffic stops in this category are made for moving violations, equipment violations, and other reasons that appear to present minimal threats to the officer.

When stopping and approaching a traffic violator, the following steps are intended to provide maximum safety for the officer, the violator, and other users of the roadway. Varying conditions regarding the engineering of the particular traffic artery, the urgency to stop the violator (39:4-50), and the existing volume of traffic may dictate adjusting or altering the recommended procedure.

1. When the officer has positioned himself behind the violator to begin the stopping procedure, he shall notify the communications center of the intended location of the traffic stop and the license number, on every motor vehicle stop. Officers should provide brief description of the vehicle, and the number of occupants of the vehicle if possible.
2. The officer should note the license number of the vehicle on a note pad, to be left inside the patrol vehicle.
3. The officer should be thoroughly familiar with the area, and anticipate the appropriate location to stop the violator. Consideration should be given to a location with ample space, appropriate lighting, and every effort should be made to avoid stops on hills, curves, intersections, private drives, and business locations which have limited parking.
4. The officer should signal the violator to stop. This signal should be with the red emergency overhead light, hand signals, sounding the horn, and if necessary, the siren. These signals also alert other drivers of the intent of the officer, and will usually facilitate securing the right of way for the stopping maneuver.
5. The violator should be signaled and directed to the right side of the roadway close to the curb, or on to the shoulder if engineering design permits.
6. On multi-lane roadways, the officer should insure the safety of the violator during lane changes by gradually

changing from lane to lane with the violator until the right side of the roadway is reached.

7. Should the violator stop abruptly in the wrong lane or in another undesirable location, he should be promptly directed to move to a safer location, except when DWI is suspected. Officers should use the public address system to instruct violators to move to a safer location if this equipment is available. If the patrol vehicle is not so equipped and gestures are insufficient to bring understanding, the officer should quickly exit from the patrol vehicle and give verbal instructions to the violator.
8. The violator should not be permitted to move his vehicle once it has stopped if it is suspected the driver is under the influence to the extent that his driving ability is impaired.
9. Once the violator has stopped in an appropriate location, the officer should position the police vehicle approximately one-half to one car length behind the violator's vehicle. The police vehicle should be positioned at a slight angle so the left front is offset approximately two feet to the left of the violator's vehicle and the right rear is near the curb. This position provides maximum safety to the violator, the officer, and all other traffic.
10. The officer shall exit from the patrol vehicle and be continuously alert for any suspicious movement or actions on the part of the violator or other occupants in the violator's vehicle, and remain alert to passing traffic.
11. The officer will approach from the rear of the violator's car, looking into the rear seat area, and stop at a point to the rear of the trailing edge of the left front door. This position should be maintained if there are only occupants in the front seat of the vehicle. From this position, the officer can communicate with the violator, keeping him in a slightly awkward position, and at the same time keep all occupants of the vehicle in view. A right-hand side approach is an acceptable option in those cases where passing traffic is so close to constitute a danger to the officer.
12. In those cases where the violator's car has occupants in both the front and rear seats, the officer shall approach to a point near the leading edge of the left front door, being especially alert for any unusual actions on the part of the occupants and choosing a path so the door cannot be used as a weapon against the officer. From this position,

the officer can communicate with the violator and keep all occupants in view.

13. In those traffic stops made by two-man patrol vehicles, the passenger officer will be responsible for all radio communications, writing all notes and messages relayed from the communications center, and during the traffic stop should exit from the vehicle and act as an observer and cover for his fellow officer. At no time should the two officers approach the violator together.
14. At night, the procedure is basically the same with the additional necessity of exercising caution in selecting an appropriate place for the traffic stop, signaling the violator (the spotlight should not be used), and positioning the police vehicle. The spotlight may be used to illuminate the interior of the violator's vehicle, if warranted.

B. Stopping an Approaching Violator

In the event an officer observes a traffic violation occur in oncoming traffic, the officer will take the following actions:

1. Drive the police vehicle safely to the extreme right portion of the roadway.
2. As the violator approaches, signal for the violator to stop, by use of overhead lights and or hand signals.
3. Do not leave the police vehicle in an attempt to stop the violator by hand signals, as this places the officer in an extremely hazardous position.
4. If the violator observes the signal and stops, the officer will turn the police vehicle around and position it appropriately to the rear of the violator's vehicle.
5. Should the violator fail to recognize the officer's signals, the officer will turn around when this maneuver can be made safely, stopping and approaching as usual.

C. Stopping a Following Violator

In the event an officer observes a traffic violation to the rear of the police vehicle, the following procedures will be utilized:

1. The officer will drive on the right shoulder of the road.

2. As the violator approaches, the officer will remain in the patrol vehicle while he signals the violator to stop.
3. If the violator fails to stop, the officer will follow the violator and stop the violator in the usual manner.

D. Stopping a Known or Suspected Felon (High Risk Stops)

When a vehicle driven by a known or suspected felon is located by a patrol officer, he will notify the communications center immediately. The officer will inform the communications center of the location, thorough description of the vehicle, and a description of the occupants.

The officer will keep the suspect vehicle in view and request sufficient assistance in making the stop. The officer will keep support units informed of the location and direction of travel to facilitate their approach with minimal use of emergency equipment.

The suspect vehicle will not be stopped unless absolutely necessary until adequate support is available and in position. The following procedures will be used in effecting the stop:

1. The officer will plan to stop the suspect vehicle in a location, which presents minimal danger to other citizens.
2. When conditions are appropriate and support units available, the officer will move into position to the rear of the suspect vehicle.
3. The officer will signal the violator to stop, utilizing all emergency lights and equipment to warn other traffic.
4. The violator should be stopped on the extreme right side of the road.
5. If the violator is known to be armed and dangerous, the officer will be prepared to take cover and draw his weapon if necessary.
6. When the suspect vehicle begins to stop, the officer will turn off the siren and actuate the public address system.
7. The officer will park the police vehicle so that it provides maximum protection and cover for him.
8. At night, all light, including spotlights, will be focused on the interior of the suspect vehicle to the disadvantage of the violator.

9. The officer will exit the police vehicle quickly, but remain behind the door and accessible to the public address system microphone.
10. The officer in command will direct each occupant, utilizing the public address system, to remove himself from the vehicle individually, according to specific directions, and into the appropriate search position, after which the approach may be made.
11. If a public address system is not available, the officer in command will give voice commands. If they are not heard, or ignored by the suspect, the officer will wait for a backup unit prior to approaching the vehicle, the officer should keep in mind that the suspect might not speak English. The officer should not leave a position of cover to approach a felon's vehicle until assistance has arrived at the scene.
12. The officer in command will give instructions to the support officer.
13. The support officer will cover the arresting officer and remain on the curbside of the vehicle until all occupants have dismounted and are in the search position.
14. The support officer will not give additional commands as this would tend to confuse the suspects, but will make his presence known by commands given by the arresting officer.
15. Officers should not to get within each other's line of fire and will exercise extreme caution.
16. When all occupants have been removed from the vehicle, the support officer should move to a position to cover the arresting officer while the persons are searched.
17. The occupants should be ordered into a kneeling position with their legs crossed and their hands behind their heads, fingers interlaced.
18. If the subjects are in the kneeling position, a cursory search should be performed after handcuffing.

E. Stopping Oversize/Overweight Vehicles

In the event officers observe a traffic violation committed by an unusually large or heavy vehicle, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Follow the vehicle from the rear in the usual manner.

2. Position the police vehicle so that the violator's attention can be gained, and signal that he is to stop.
3. Pull the police vehicle behind the vehicle like aforementioned traffic stops.
4. In some situations, the officer may wish to have the driver step back to the police vehicle.