

22.00.030 TRAFFIC STOPS (CALEA 61.1.7)

Officers will balance the need to protect themselves at all times with the need to treat traffic violators courteously. In addition to procedures listed elsewhere in this policy, the following are recommended procedures in handling traffic stops:

- ❖ Choose a safe location for the traffic stop
- ❖ Inform NORCOM of the location of the stop, the vehicles license number, and description
- ❖ Utilize emergency equipment to signal the violator to stop
- ❖ Position the police vehicle approximately 15 feet behind the stopped vehicle and offset to the left approximately three feet into the traffic lane
- ❖ Exit the police vehicle and remain alert to potential hazards created by passing traffic or persons within the stopped vehicle
- ❖ If at night, utilize emergency lights, spotlight and/or flashlight to illuminate the stopped vehicle's interior
- ❖ If assistance is needed, request backup through NORCOM
- ❖ While approaching, watch occupant(s), and remain alert for driver/passenger actions, weapons or contraband within the vehicle
- ❖ Contact should generally be made on the left side (driver side window) of the stopped vehicle, however, right side contacts are permitted when traffic and other circumstances dictate
- ❖ Complete the necessary enforcement action. Violators should not be allowed to sit inside the police vehicle while the officer issues the NOI/C
- ❖ When returning to the stopped vehicle, officers will use the same level of care as upon the initial stop
- ❖ When contact is complete, allow the stopped vehicle to reenter traffic first, then safely reenter traffic

Officers should strive to make each contact educational, leaving the violator with the impression that the officer has performed a necessary task in a fair, impartial and courteous manner using one of the following methods:

❖ **Verbal Warning** (CALEA 61.1.2)

A verbal warning may be appropriate when the violator commits an act which may be due to ignorance of a local unique ordinance, a violation of which the driver may not be aware, or, when in the judgment of the officer a verbal warning is sufficient to reasonably assure future compliance. Issuance of a verbal warning will be at the discretion of the officer unless countermanded by a supervisor.

❖ **Notice of Infraction/Citation (NOI/C)** (CALEA 61.1.2)

The Notice of Infraction/Citation (NOI/C), should be issued to violators who jeopardize the safe and efficient flow of vehicular traffic by committing hazardous violations, operating unsafe and/or improperly equipped vehicles or for committing other non-hazardous violations as outlined in this policy.

Information Provided To Violators (CALEA 61.1.4)

Upon the initial contact, the violator should be immediately advised of the violation that prompted the traffic stop.

At the time a violator is cited, the officer will complete all required sections of the NOI/C.

When the NOI/C is issued at the scene of the violation the officer will give the violator the appropriate copy and any other relevant information. The information provided on the NOI/C includes:

- ❖ Whether the court appearance is optional or mandatory
- ❖ How the violator may contact the court to obtain appearance schedule information
- ❖ Whether the violator may be allowed to pay the monetary penalty/fine in lieu of a court appearance
- ❖ The amount of time the violator has to respond to the NOI/C
- ❖ The location of the King County District Court, Bellevue Division.

Officers should make a reasonable effort to provide clear and understandable instructions to the violator and to answer all of their reasonable questions.

Physical Arrest (CALEA 61.1.2)

With the exception of the traffic crimes listed in 05.00.050, it is the Department's policy that physical arrest for criminal traffic violations are generally counterproductive and that criminal traffic violations are best concluded with the issuance of a summons.

High Risk Vehicle Stop (CALEA 61.1.7)

A High-Risk Vehicle Stop is defined as the tactical stop of a vehicle whose occupants the officer has reason to believe are armed and dangerous and/or involved in a crime of violence and/or pose a significant threat of death or serious bodily injury to police officers or others.

Officers should take appropriate precautions when stopping or contacting occupied vehicles that are considered High-Risk. When an unknown risk stop or contact with an occupied vehicle changes to a High-Risk situation, the officer(s) should immediately consider Transitional High-Risk tactics when appropriate-(see procedure below). All High-Risk stops will be different and may require modification of the stop and extrication procedures. The decision to perform a high risk stop should be based upon articulable facts or observations known to the officer prior to the stop that indicate an officer safety hazard. Firearms should be easily accessible and ready for immediate use.

Crimes warranting High Risk stop tactics include, but are not limited to, murder, burglary, arson, assault, robbery, rape, kidnapping, stolen vehicles, suicidal subjects, shootings, felony domestic violence, felony eluding, weapons violations, and felony traffic violations.

In addition to procedures listed elsewhere in this policy, the following are recommended procedures in handling High-Risk Stops:

- ❖ Notify NORCOM immediately of your location, description of vehicle, number of occupants, and type of criminal activity.
- ❖ Keep the suspect vehicle in view and request additional units as needed to safely effect the stop. Keep responding units and NORCOM updated to your direction of travel and location.
- ❖ The suspect vehicle should not be stopped, unless absolutely necessary, until adequate assisting units have arrived at your location.
- ❖ You should plan to stop the suspect vehicle in a location which presents minimal danger to yourself, other responding officers, and citizens in the area.

- ❖ Initiate the stop by activating your emergency equipment. The suspect vehicle should be stopped on the extreme right side of the road, when possible.
- ❖ Position your vehicle 30-40 feet behind the suspect vehicle. Assisting units should position their vehicles either off-set behind or alongside the primary unit separated by 10-12 feet. Position vehicles to provide maximum cover and protection.
- ❖ Utilize lighting equipment as necessary to provide optimal officer safety by placing the occupants at a tactical disadvantage.
- ❖ Exit your vehicle and utilize it as cover while attempting to keep the public address system accessible. When appropriate, utilize your patrol vehicle public address system for commands. The primary officer should be the only person giving commands to the occupants.
- ❖ Immediately establish control of the occupants by having them raise their hands and keep them visible.
- ❖ Immobilize the vehicle by having the driver turn it off, remove the keys and place the keys on the roof of the vehicle. Command each occupant of the vehicle to exit individually, giving specific directions to place them in the appropriate location and search position. It is advisable to have the driver exit first. Additional occupants should only be ordered out of the vehicle after the previous occupant has been searched and secured.
- ❖ When all known occupants have been controlled and searched, bluff the vehicle for additional occupants and wait for a response before tactically approaching and clearing the vehicle. Ensure all areas of the vehicle are cleared of occupants. This includes the trunk area.
- ❖ Complete the necessary enforcement action in accordance with our current investigative, search & seizure, detention, and other relevant procedures outlined elsewhere in the policy manual.

The procedures outlined above should be used in conjunction with the department's current training for High Risk Vehicle Stops.