

PATROL

TRAFFIC STOPS

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide North Little Rock police officers with guidelines for conducting traffic stops in such a manner as to ensure both officer safety and public safety.

Policy Statement: Traffic Stops are a vital police duty. In addition to preventing motor vehicle accidents, this activity provides police visibility and deters criminal activity. It is the policy of this Department to patrol in a proactive manner, balancing accountability to the public with the need to be responsive to community concerns, to aggressively investigate suspicious persons and circumstances and to actively enforce the motor vehicle laws to insure the highest quality of life possible for members of our community.

Summary of Changes: New format.

Procedure:

1 Vehicle Stops [CALEA 61.1.7a]

- 1.1 Once an officer has made a decision to stop a vehicle, the Communications Center should be notified. When acknowledgment has been received from communications, the officer will advise the following:
 - 1.1.1 The intended location of the stop,
 - 1.1.2 License number;
 - 1.1.3 State of vehicle license;
 - 1.1.4 Description of vehicle;
 - 1.1.5 Direction of travel; and
 - 1.1.6 Number of occupants.
- 1.2 Every consideration should be given in selecting a location with ample space for the stop and with appropriate lighting when possible. Officers should make every effort to avoid making stops at the following locations if possible:
 - 1.2.1 on hills;
 - 1.2.2 in curves;
 - 1.2.3 at intersections;
 - 1.2.4 In private drives; or
 - 1.2.5 in business locations with limited parking.
- 1.3 Positioning of the police vehicle is of great importance. The officer should position the police vehicle approximately one car length behind the violator's vehicle with the front approximately two (2) feet to the traffic side of the violator's vehicle. The proper technique will provide you with the maximum cover if needed. **THINK SAFETY.** Do it right the first time, you may not have a chance to correct it. There is no such thing as a "routine traffic stop." On regular vehicle stops, occupants, as a general rule, should be instructed to remain in their vehicle prior to the officer's approach and contact with the violator. In some cases, based on observations and officer safety concerns, the officer may instruct the violator to exit the vehicle and step to the curbside of the vehicle. If the violator or occupant of the vehicle exits and refuses to comply with the officer's instructions, the officer should take the necessary steps as warranted by the situation to ensure officer safety and the safety of others. [CALEA 61.1.7b]
- 1.4 If a traffic violator stops at a location that interferes with the ingress or egress of any business, have violator move to a more suitable location as soon as can be safely done.
- 1.5 At any time during a traffic stop an officer believes that assistance may become necessary, he/she should notify the Communications Center to dispatch another officer to the scene.
- 1.6 Only those officers that are reasonably necessary to perform the required function and assure officer safety should remain at the scene of a traffic stop.

2 Approach

- 2.1 The officer should be particularly alert to suspicious movements or actions of the violator and passengers.
- 2.2 Approaching from the driver's side, the officer should be observant of the interior of the vehicle and stop at a point to the rear of the driver's door in order to communicate with the driver.
- 2.3 When circumstances dictate, particularly where traffic is close enough to create a potential hazard, the officer may choose to approach the violator's vehicle from the right side and stop at a point to the rear of the front passenger door.
- 2.4 When the violator's vehicle has rear passengers and has some indication of potential risk, the officer may choose to have the driver exit the vehicle and join him on the curbside of the police vehicle.

3 Felony - High Risk Traffic Stops

- 3.1 When an officer is confronted with stopping a suspected armed subject, violent criminal, fleeing suspect, or other situation where the officer reasonably believes a higher level of protection is needed, the following steps should be taken: [CALEA 61.1.7c]
- 3.1.1 Immediately notify the communications center of the location, direction of travel, description of vehicle, license plate number, and description of the occupants.
- 3.1.2 The officer should continue to keep the suspect vehicle in view and request additional units to assist in the vehicle stop. If the urgency of the situation does not demand an immediate stop, an officer should not initiate a high-risk vehicle stop alone unless back-up units can respond in a reasonable amount of time.
- 3.1.3 With adequate back-up units in position and a location selected, the officer should initiate the stop. The primary officer should be the officer in charge of the stop and should give all commands to the occupants of the suspect vehicle.
- 3.1.4 Officers should position their vehicles approximately thirty (30) feet behind the suspect vehicle in positions that will maximize opportunities for cover and in a manner that will illuminate (at night) the interior of the vehicle.
- 3.1.5 The operator of the suspect vehicle should be ordered in separate commands to do the following:
- 3.1.5.1 Lower the window,
- 3.1.5.2 Remove the ignition keys with the left hand and drop them out the window,
- 3.1.5.3 Open the door from the outside and step out of the vehicle,
- 3.1.5.4 Turn completely around and face away from officers,
- 3.1.5.5 Walk backwards until commanded to stop, and
- 3.1.5.6 Lie face down on the ground with both arms stretched outward to the side.
- 3.1.6 A designated back-up officer will approach the suspect, handcuff, search, and remove the prisoner to an area of cover. This entire procedure should be used to remove and secure each suspect in turn.
- 3.17 With appropriate cover, officers should then approach the suspect vehicle to inspect the passenger compartment and trunk.

Mike Davis
Chief of Police