

Why do the police stop people?

There are many different reasons why you might be stopped by the police. Whatever the reason, the officer needs your cooperation.

- You may have committed a traffic violation.
- You may fit the description of a suspect from a recent incident.
- The officer may think you are in trouble, need help or are otherwise at risk.
- You may have witnessed a crime.

If you are stopped by an officer while driving, you may feel confused, anxious or even angry. These are natural feelings, but remember, traffic stops are also stressful and dangerous for the officer.



Each year, numerous officers are killed or seriously injured while making the routine traffic stop. Traffic stops are especially dangerous during the hours of darkness.

Please cooperate for your safety and the officer's safety.

More information
rentonwa.gov/stoppedbypd

Questions

If you have a question about procedures or a complaint about your treatment, contact the Renton Police Department at 425-430-7500.

Renton Police Department

1055 South Grady Way
Renton, WA 98057



WHAT TO DO

WHEN STOPPED BY THE POLICE



City of Renton
**POLICE
DEPARTMENT**





What to expect when stopped

Generally officers will:

- Provide their name upon request.
- Present proper identification if not in a uniform. You may request to examine their credentials to verify they are an officer.
- Display emergency lights in unmarked vehicles. They will understand if you slowly drive to a well-lit or populated area before stopping your vehicle.
- Inform the person of the reason for being stopped.
- Only arrest a person when they have probable cause to believe the person has committed a crime.

Washington Traffic Law requires that all drivers yield the right-of-way to emergency vehicles.

Drivers are to immediately pull over parallel to the right side of the road, stop, and remain in position until the emergency vehicle has passed.

Keep in mind when stopped

When stopped by an officer, remember:

- They may pull you over for a traffic offense or police investigation.
- When you see the emergency lights and/or hear the siren, remain calm and safely pull over parallel to the right side of road.
- Stay in your vehicle unless the officer asks you to get out.
- Keep your hands on the steering wheel so the officer can see them.
- Avoid any sudden movements, especially toward the floorboard, rear seat or passenger side of the vehicle.
- Wait for the officer to ask you for your license or other documents before you reach for them. Washington law requires drivers to show their drivers license, registration and proof of insurance upon request.
- If documents are out of reach, tell officer where they are before you retrieve them.
- If the stop occurs during darkness, put on your dome or interior lights so the officer can easily see that all is in order.



- You, as the operator, are solely responsible for your vehicle and its occupants. If there are passengers in your vehicle, encourage them to remain quiet and cooperate with the officer's instructions.
- Be honest with the officer. If you really didn't see the stop sign or were unaware of the speed limit, let the officer know.
- Additional officers routinely respond to traffic stops to ensure that all is well. It would be normal to see two or three police vehicles on a routine traffic stop.
- If you are issued a citation, accepting it or signing it is not an admission of guilt. If you feel the instructions or the reasons for the stop are vague or unclear, ask the officer for details.
- Avoid becoming argumentative. Arguing will not change the officer's mind. You will have the opportunity to contest the citation in court.
- For individuals who possess a Concealed Pistol License, and have a firearm in their possession at the time of a traffic stop, you are not obligated to disclose to a officer that you are carrying a firearm. However, it is advised to do so for safety reasons and as a courtesy.

The enforcement of traffic laws helps keep everyone safe.

Each situation is unique and police officers must alter their response to fit the circumstance.