

POLICE DEPARTMENT HANOVER PARK, ILLINOIS



DIRECTIVE: 356-T

REFERENCE STANDARDS: 61.1.7

SUBJECT: Traffic Stops-Tactical Guidelines and Violator Contact

POLICY: Traffic violation enforcement is one of the many routine, as well as hazardous, tasks performed by Police Officers. For traffic violators, it frequently is an emotional experience. This department strives to make every traffic violator contact not only educational, but safe as well, leaving the person contacted with the impression that the officer has performed a necessary task in a professional and expedient manner.

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for traffic stops and violator contacts.

I. TRAFFIC STOPS (61.1.7a)

A. Pre-stop Guidelines (prior to signaling)

1. Communications should be advised of the following:
 - a. the intended location of the stop;
 - b. the license number of the vehicle;
 - c. the number and brief description of the occupants;
 - d. if there is no license plate, a description of the vehicle will be provided.
2. Receive acknowledgment from Communications.
3. Considerations for stop location:
 - a. off roadway;
 - b. ample space;
 - c. adequate lighting.

B. Stop Guidelines

1. Signaling
 - a. Signals alert the violator, as well as other road users, of the Officer's intentions and facilitate securing the right of way for the stopping maneuver.
 - b. Signaling can be accomplished with:
 - 1) emergency lights;
 - 2) hand signals;
 - 3) horn and if necessary the siren.

2. Stop locations
 - a. Activation of signals should occur as close to the desired stop location as is practical. Whenever possible, the stop should be made in an area where the violator is able to pull off the road.
 - b. Officers are reminded that on multi-lane roadways, the safety of the violator may require the Officer to employ gradual lane changes with the violator until he/she reaches the right location.
 - c. Should the violator stop abruptly on the road or in another undesirable location, he/she should be promptly directed to move to a safer location.
 - 1) Officers should use the public address system of the patrol vehicle for this purpose.
 - 2) If the patrol vehicle does not have a P.A., the Officer should quickly exit his vehicle and give verbal instructions to the violator.
3. Squad position following stop
 - a. Approximately one full car length behind the violator.
 - b. Left front offset approximately 3 feet.

C. Approaching the Violator's Vehicle

1. After exiting his vehicle and approaching the violator's vehicle, the Officer should:
 - a. Approach from the left or right rear.
 - b. Look into the rear seat area, and
 - c. Stop at a point to the rear of the trailing edge of the front door.
 - 1) This position should be maintained if there are only occupants in the front seat of the vehicle. From this position the Officer can:
 - a) speak with the violator and keep him/her in a slightly awkward position,
 - b) at the same time, keep all occupants of the vehicle in view.
 - 2) In those cases where the violator's car has occupants in both the front and rear seats, the Officer should:
 - a) approach to a point near the leading edge of the left front door;
 - b) be especially alert for any unusual actions on the part of the occupants.
 - c) choose a position wherein the left side doors cannot be used as weapon (s) against the Officer.
2. Officers may exercise the option of using either approach.
3. In traffic stops made by two Officer patrol vehicles, the passenger Officer is responsible for:
 - a. radio communications;
 - b. approach along the right side to observe and cover.

II. VIOLATOR CONTACT (61.1.7a)

- A. Once the officer has stopped the violator and approached to a point where communications begin:
1. be alert for the unexpected, but do not be obviously apprehensive;

2. be certain the observations of the traffic violation were accurate and without reservation;
 3. present a professional image in dress, grooming, language, emotional stability;
 4. decide on the appropriate enforcement action based upon the violator's driving behavior, not attitude. In most cases, it is advisable to have the form of enforcement action decided upon prior to the initial contact with the violator.
- B. When communications begin, every officer is expected to adhere to the following format when dealing with every traffic violation.
1. Greet the violator with an appropriate title and in a courteous manner.
 2. Inform the violator what traffic law he has violated and the intended enforcement action.
 3. Ask for the violator's drivers license.
 - a. Accept only a drivers license or a previously issued citation.
 - b. If a previously issued citation is produced, obtain another document of identification to supplement the citation.
 4. Allow the violator time to discuss the violation.
 5. Do not argue, berate, belittle, or otherwise verbally abuse the violator.
 6. Complete the forms required for the enforcement action or exercise a verbal warning.
 7. Explain to the violator exactly what they are required to do in response to the action taken and how it will affect them.
 - a. If the enforcement action requires a court appearance, make sure the violator knows where and when to appear.
 - b. Explain any alternatives to the violator, including prepayment if available, but do not predict the actions of the court.
 8. If a citation is written, issue it to the violator and return any identification not needed.
 9. Be alert to any emotional stress exhibited by the violator. If stress is observed, before letting the violator resume driving:
 - a. Repeat the instructions.
 - b. Allow the violator time to calm down.
 10. Assist the violator in safely re-entering the traffic flow.
 11. Do not follow the violator; but rather wait until the violator has pulled away, turning off their path as soon as possible.

III. TRAFFIC STOPS-UNMARKED VEHICLE (61.1.7a)

- A. Although not expressly prohibited by this order, unmarked squad cars may be used to make traffic stops provided that the vehicles have the emergency equipment, at a minimum, to include revolving emergency red lights and a audible siren. Officers assigned to unmarked squads will follow the procedures as outlined in Section II. Examples of acceptable traffic stops would be:
 - 1. Serious traffic violations (i.e. DUI)
 - 2. Criminal Offenses that occur in front of the officer
 - 3. When working gang suppression or narcotic investigations (i.e. buy/bust)
- B. If an officer using an unmarked squad needs to effect a traffic stop on a vehicle, the officer will first attempt to ascertain if there is a marked unit in the area that can stop the vehicle. If one is not readily available and it is absolutely necessary to stop the vehicle, the officer will request that a marked unit be sent to the location as soon as possible to assist with the traffic stop.
- C. Officers assigned to unmarked squads are reminded that pursuant to DIR 028-P (revised under 203-P), under the section entitled "Pursuit Tactics", unmarked vehicles will not become involved in pursuits. Officers are also reminded that they are not allowed to join in an active on going pursuit under any circumstances.

IV. HIGH RISK FELONY TRAFFIC STOPS (61.1.7b)

- A. High risk felony traffic stops require special considerations and applications to include:
 - 1. Positioning of the police car in a manner to drastically reduce the visibility of the violating driver's line of sight.
 - 2. Maintaining adequate coverage for the police officer to reduce the potential of injury to the officer.
 - 3. Issuing verbal communications to the violator.
 - 4. Maintaining a secure position until additional police officers have arrived to assist in the removal of the driver and occupants of the offending vehicle.