WHY DO 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.
- The officer might think you are in trouble and need help.
- You may have witnessed a crime.

If you are stopped by the police while driving, you may feel confused, anxious, or even angry. These are natural feelings, but remember, traffic stops can also be stressful and dangerous for the police officer. Each year, a number of law enforcement officers are killed or seriously injured while making a “routine” traffic stop. Police officers are especially vulnerable during the hours of darkness.

With this in mind, there are things that you, as a law-abiding person, can do to help lessen the unpleasantness of the experience.

REMEMBER:

IN ALL CASES WHEN STOPPED, A PERSON IS REQUIRED TO COOPERATE WITH POLICE INSTRUCTIONS.

WHEN STOPPED BY THE POLICE, REMEMBER:

1. A police officer may pull you over at anytime for a traffic offense or police investigation.
2. When you see the red overhead lights and/or hear the siren, remain calm and safely pull over parallel to the right side of the road.
3. Remain in your vehicle unless the officer advises otherwise.
4. Keep your hands on the steering wheel so the officer can see them. Hands that are hidden can indicate danger to an officer.
5. Avoid any sudden movements, especially toward the floorboard, rear seat or passenger side of the vehicle. Those actions can be interpreted as reaching for weapons.
6. Do not immediately reach for your license or other documents until the officer requests them. NYS Law requires drivers to show their license, registration and insurance card upon request.
7. If your documents are out of reach, tell the officer where they are before you reach for them.
8. If the stop occurs during darkness, put on your dome or interior lights so the officer can easily see that all is in order with no hidden threats.
9. If there are passengers in your vehicle, encourage them to remain quiet and cooperate with instructions. You, as the operator, are solely responsible for your vehicle and its occupants.
10. The officer may issue you a ticket. If you feel the reason is vague or unclear, ask the officer for details.
11. Avoid becoming argumentative. Arguing will not change the officer’s mind. If you contest the violation, you will have an opportunity to address the matter in court.
12. Many departments use one-officer patrol cars, especially in the suburbs. Do not be alarmed if you see more than one marked unit for a traffic stop.
13. Finally, if you receive a ticket, take receipt of it calmly. Accepting it is not an admission of guilt.

NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law requires that all drivers shall yield the right of way to emergency vehicles. Drivers are to immediately pull over parallel to the right-hand edge, stop and remain in a stopped position until the emergency vehicle has passed.
Each situation is unique and the police officer must suit his/her response to fit the circumstances.

**GENERALLY, A POLICE OFFICER:**

- Will provide his or her name and badge number upon request.
- A police officer who is not in uniform will present proper identification; you may request to examine their credentials so that you are satisfied they are a law enforcement officer.
- Will inform a person of the reason for being stopped.
- Will only use the force necessary to effect an arrest of a suspect and to maintain the custody of the prisoner.
- Will not search the body of a person of the opposite sex except to prevent injury to the officer or another person, or to prevent the disposal or destruction of evidence, and
- Will only arrest a person for an offense committed in the officer’s presence, or when the officer has probable cause to believe the person has already committed the crime.
- The Suffolk County Police Department does not inquire as to the immigration status of victims, witnesses, or persons who are requesting or receiving police assistance.

**Police Headquarters**
30 Yaphank Avenue, Yaphank 852-6000

**Internal Affairs Bureau**, Yaphank 852-6265
Toll free 1-888-382-1798

**Hate Crimes Unit**, Yaphank 852-6323

1st Precinct
555 Rt. 109, Lindenhurst 854-8100

2nd Precinct
1071 Park Avenue, Huntington 854-8200

3rd Precinct
1630 5th Avenue, Bay Shore 854-8300

4th Precinct
727 Veterans Memorial Hwy, Smithtown 854-8400

5th Precinct
125 Waverly Avenue, Patchogue 854-8500

6th Precinct
400 Rt. 25, Selden 854-8600

7th Precinct
1491 William Floyd Parkway, Shirley 852-8700

**QUESTIONS / COMPLAINTS / COMPLIMENTS**

The Suffolk County Police Department welcomes your feedback. Compliments or complaints regarding the Suffolk County Police Department or its personnel can be reported to any supervisor in the SCPD or by telephoning the Internal Affairs Bureau at (631) 852-6265; or, by contacting the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission directly at (631) 853-5480.