



RIVER VALE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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INTERACTING WITH THE POLICE

THE CARDINAL RULES:

The easiest way to avoid problems with the Police is also the most obvious: stay out of trouble. Next, choose your friends wisely. Mixing with trouble-makers only increases your chances of being approached by the Police.

If you do interact with the Police, follow these three basic rules:

- **Be respectful:** Show respect and you will likely be shown respect in return.
- **Be cooperative:** When you are uncooperative, the Police will react accordingly.
- **Be honest:** Lying or being deceptive will ruin your credibility – with the Police and in general.

IF YOU ARE STOPPED IN A MOTOR VEHICLE BY THE POLICE:

- **Slow down** and pull over as soon as you can safely do so.
- **Stay in the driver's seat** with both hands in sight on the steering wheel. Do not get out of your car unless asked to do so. Getting out of your car may look aggressive or appear to threaten the Officer's safety. Turn on your interior light if stopped at night.
- **Comply with the Officer's requests** to see your driver's license, registration, and other required documents. If these are in the glove box or under the seat, advise the Officer and ask his/her permission to retrieve them. With his/her permission, retrieve them slowly, following the Officer's direction.
- **If the Officer has "Probable Cause"** your car can be searched without a court-issued warrant.
- **If you are suspected of Driving While Intoxicated**, cooperate with the Officer(s) on scene. If you refuse to submit to breath, blood, or performance tests, your license could be suspended. A guilty finding will result in loss of driving privileges and/or fines.
- **Only get out of the vehicle if you are asked to do so** and move slowly and safely with your hands in sight.
- **Most Officers will not provide a specific reason** for the stop *until* they have your license and registration in hand. This is standard procedure in many areas.
- **If you wish to offer an explanation** of your circumstances, do so before the Officer returns to his vehicle with your license and other paperwork. The Officer can NOT void a ticket once it has been issued.
- **If you are issued a ticket**, accept it and remain polite. This is not the venue to argue a summons – you can do so in Court.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- When a car is stopped, it appears that the Officer "sneaks up" on the driver. At night, the Officer shines his/her lights into the car. Why is that?
Officers are trained to minimize their exposure to traffic and potential danger from within the vehicle. At night, the bright lights illuminate the interior of the vehicle, which is another safety concern for the Officer.
- If I've only been pulled over for a traffic offense, why do other Police Officers show up?
It is not uncommon for Officers who are in close proximity to back each other up, even if they aren't requested. This is routine for safety reasons.
- Why does the Officer sit in his/her car for so long? What are they doing?
Technology allows an Officer to verify your driving status and check your vehicle's registration directly from the patrol car. Because this information is accessed via computer and therefore dependent upon its reliability, unanticipated delays may occasionally occur. While it may seem to you as if the Officer has kept you waiting for a long time, in reality it is likely only for a few minutes.