

# *Eastern Michigan University Police & You*

These suggestions serve as a guideline for procedures to follow if you are stopped by a police officer regardless of the reason.

## **What do I do if stopped by a police officer?**

The first thing to do while driving a motor vehicle is to pull over to the right side of the road cautiously and safely. The officer will approach the vehicle when he or she feels it's safe. The officer will request your driver's license, proof of insurance and the vehicle registration.

Although you (the driver) may not understand the reason you are being stopped by the officer, explanations are generally offered once identification is retrieved and in the possession of the officer.

For all traffic violation investigations, always stay in the motor vehicle, keep both hands visible at all times, limit excessive movements and do not exit the vehicle for any reason unless responding upon the request of the officer.

If you are stopped, questioned or detained by an officer, make a valid attempt to cooperate and comply with the request being made. Don't be confrontational. Avoid any actions or language that can be perceived as threatening and aggressive. This will only contribute to a breakdown in communication between the officer and you.

Communicate with the officer to determine the reason for the traffic stop, issuance of a violation or detention. When officers ask questions, please be honest, answer truthfully and to the best of your ability.

Police officers most often stop or detain motor vehicles for traffic violations, criminal investigations and/or complaints of suspicious activities or individuals.

Police officers do have the right to identify all occupants of a motor vehicle for investigative purposes and for their safety.

## **What do I do if I feel the officer's actions were inappropriate?**

EMU police officers are required to maintain professional and courteous conduct at all times.

If you feel as though the officer's actions were inappropriate, or you were issued a traffic violation in error, you can make a citizen's complaint at the police department with a supervisor.

## **What about video systems?**

Since 1996, all EMU police cars have been equipped with in-car video systems. Department procedures require officers to video tape traffic stops. This is to record the reason for the stop, and the interaction between the driver and the officer.



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. Why does the officer ask for identification first?**

**A.** The officer is trained to do so. Remember, you have the advantage of knowing with whom you are dealing. The officer doesn't.

**Q. When a car is stopped, it appears that the officer is "sneaking up" on the driver. At night, the officers shine their lights into the car. Why is that?**

**A.** Officers are trained to minimize their exposure to traffic and to potential danger from within the vehicle. At night, the bright light illuminates the interior of the vehicle, which is another safety consideration for the officer.

**Q. If I've only been pulled over for a traffic offense, why do other police cars show up?**

**A.** It is not uncommon for officers who are in close proximity to back one another up, even if they aren't requested. This is just routine for safety reasons.

**Q. Why does the officer sit in the car for so long? What are they doing?**

**A.** Technology now allows an officer to verify your driving status and check your registration directly from the patrol car. While it may seem as if the officer has stopped for a long time, in reality, it's only for a few minutes.

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