



CONCLUSION

Traffic laws are enacted to ensure the safety of the motoring public and reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes. Help make Missouri's highways safer – please obey our traffic laws. Feel free to ask the trooper questions if you receive a traffic citation. You may also call the county prosecuting attorney of the county where you are to appear in court. Employees at the nearest Highway Patrol troop headquarters are also willing to assist.



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What To Do If You Are STOPPED



INTRODUCTION

Seeing flashing lights in your rearview mirror and knowing you are being stopped by a trooper could be stressful. However, knowing what to do and what not to do will help alleviate stress and ensure your safety, the safety of other motorists, and the safety of the trooper. This brochure is designed to inform you of what to do when you are stopped by a trooper.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

If you are issued a traffic citation by a trooper, they will explain it to you. They will tell you if you must appear in court, or if you can plead guilty and pay the fine prior to the court date.

If the citation does not require a court appearance, a trooper will provide you with an information sheet that explains how you can plead guilty and pay your fine and applicable court costs online. Payment may be made via Missouri Case Net, by mailing your payment to the respective court, or by paying your fine at the appropriate court on or before the assigned court date. Court costs are used to fund the court system. Fine moneys help fund Missouri's public schools. Fine moneys do not fund the Highway Patrol. Failure to pay your fine before the scheduled court date or failure to appear in court may result in a warrant being issued for your arrest, additional charges, and your driver license being suspended.

If you lose your copy of the citation, or your copy of the instructions on how to plead guilty and pay your fine, contact the associate circuit court of the county where the traffic citation was issued. It is the responsibility of the person who was issued a traffic citation to handle all traffic tickets in a timely manner.

THE MOTORIST

Missouri law Section 304.022 RSMo requires a motorist to pull as far as possible to the right of the traveled portion of the highway and stop when an emergency vehicle approaches displaying emergency equipment. The motorist must remain stopped until the patrol car has passed, or a police officer directs them otherwise. When you see flashing red and blue lights on a patrol car, don't panic. Simply slow down, signal your intention to turn onto the right shoulder, and drive off the roadway to the right as far as is safe. If you are traveling on a rural road or a road with no shoulder, and it is unsafe to stop, slow down, turn on your hazard lights, and proceed to a location where it is safe to stop, such as a driveway or crossroad. For your safety, do not stop your vehicle in a curve or just over a hillcrest.

THE TROOPER

A trooper, and most law enforcement officers, will walk to your vehicle and identify themselves, the agency they work for, and why they stopped you. It is important that you, and any passengers, avoid making any sudden or unexpected movements during the traffic stop. It is best to stay in your vehicle and keep your hands on the wheel. (Passengers' hands should remain visible, also.) A trooper will ask to see your driver license, proof of insurance, and possibly your vehicle registration. Before you reach for anything in the vehicle, communicate what you are doing to the trooper. For safety reasons, please inform them if you have a weapon in your vehicle.

The trooper may ask you to exit your vehicle and sit in their patrol car. The law allows law enforcement officers to make this request. While exiting your vehicle, keep your hands in view.

If you are issued a traffic citation (ticket), please maintain a polite and cooperative attitude. Calm, clear communication is imperative during a traffic stop. Do not attempt to debate the merits of the traffic citation on the side of the road. The courtroom is the proper place to contest the citation.

IMPORTANT NOTE

It is unlikely that you will be stopped by a person who is impersonating a law enforcement officer. The following questions may help you identify if a person may be impersonating an officer:

Does the officer's uniform match those of any departments with jurisdiction in the area?

Does anything seem strange about the officer's uniform, such as missing the officer's name or perhaps including a badge that does not appear realistic? A lack of standard equipment on their uniform – portable radio, agency identifying insignia, etc. – or a dirty uniform or one that does not look professional should raise questions.

Do the markings on the officer's vehicle, the emergency lighting, and license plates match those of the departments with jurisdiction in the area or appear legitimate?

If you feel like you are being stopped by someone who is impersonating an officer slow down, activate your hazard lights, and be able to identify the area where you are driving. Call 911 or *55 on your cell phone and explain the circumstances to the communications officer. They will be able to quickly identify if you are being stopped by an authorized law enforcement officer.

If you have already stopped in a safe location, keep your doors locked and roll your window down just far enough to talk. Pay attention to how the officer interacts with you and ask to see their commission card. If you do not feel comfortable after being contacted by the officer, tell them you are going to call 911 to verify their identity. Most officers will willingly allow you to do so.

