

How To Talk To The Police When Stopped For A Traffic Violation

Article by: David Quinn

When I first started police work about 10 years ago, I would never of guessed in a million years I would see what I see daily. I'm not talking about the stuff that everyone associates with police work, like murder scenes, accidents, gangs, etc., those are a given. I'm talking about traffic stops specifically, and how you're talked to as an officer on these stops at times.

Let me explain. Here's a situation I was in one time where I was working a school zone area. We had received numerous complaints from the school that people were constantly speeding up and down the road. Of course, there were children in the area so it was somewhat serious. Let me also add, my general rule as an individual officer is (and every officer is different), is stopping for 15 MPH over, and issuing the ticket for 5 MPH over. I think that's more then fair, and most people are happy to hear that. But there's always that one guy or girl that wants to give you a hard time as a police officer.

I can remember stopping a guy that was going 19 over (54 MPH in a 35 MPH zone). The guy was very polite until I came back with the ticket for 5 over. That's when all hell broke lose. He started yelling at me, and even tried getting out of his car (I pushed it back shut and told him to deal with it in court, not here). Literally, for about 4 minutes, I listened to him yelling at me telling me he was having a bad day and that he didn't deserve a ticket because of that. He was yelling so loud that he was spitting as he was talking. If you were driving by, you might think he was having a seizure or something (this example is a little more extreme then most).

The whole time, I'm trying to be nice explaining that its only for 5 over; that other people were cited for the same amount; etc. But he didn't care (one thing you learn after working the streets for awhile is no matter how much you talk, how convincing, how much proof, etc. you have, some people DO NOT want to hear what you're saying).

Long story short, I finally got mad and told him to wait in his car. I went back to my cruiser for a moment and put the ticket back to the original amount of 19 MPH over (as the ticket was never actually issued since he refused to take it originally). When I returned, I listened for about 10 seconds, and tossed the ticket in his car since he wouldn't take it, and walked away. There was no point in standing there as he had his mind made up.

The whole point to this is all I wanted to do was issue the ticket while at the same time giving him a break. But some people don't want breaks. I can't tell you how many people I've dealt with that are rude and disrespectful during a stop. I don't mind people asking me why I stopped them, or even explaining why they did what they did; that's all fine, but yelling at me isn't going to help.

So I've put together some examples of things NOT to do to help yourself on a traffic stop:

1. Be respectful just as you would when talking to a friend or family member. You don't have to kiss up, but you should try to be professional and polite when talking to the officer. Its important to remember that officers take in a lot everyday, and their patience starts to wear thin.
2. Don't yell out immediately "Why did you stop me!" I can't tell you many times this actually happens. I even get a lot of "Why the f**k did you stop me?" It still amazes me. Obviously this will not help you at all.
3. Showing off in front of your friends in the car is not good. For instance, ignoring the officer while he's standing there, keeping your radio turned up loud, looking away, etc.
4. Blatant lying. Probably 7 out of every 10 people I stop tell me they didn't do what I just saw them do. If you're going to do this, at least be a little bit convincing. For example, I've had people tell me far fetched versions of coming to a complete stop at a stop sign for instance, when they went through it so fast I've had to look up to make sure the sign was still posted. I can tell you from personal experience, the people that are honest with me, apologize, and tell me the reason (i.e. I'm running late for work, I apologize) will usually get the breaks. My personal attitude is since its been my experience that since I feel that most are being dishonest with me, why not reward the ones that are honest.
5. Fake tears. If an experienced officer suspects that you are crying purposely to get out of a ticket, you will almost always get the ticket and no break.
6. Telling the officer things like "You don't have anything better to do with your time?" and "You mean to tell me this is more important then catching a bank robber?" These statements are all too often used, and will not help you at all.

These are just a few things you can do to help yourself when getting pulled over. Just remember, these officers are just doing their jobs. The more resistance you give them in doing their jobs, the more resistance you're likely to get yourself. If you're convinced you did nothing wrong, don't argue with the officer; handle it in court. Explaining your case to a judge or magistrate in a calm, professional and logical manner will go much farther then arguing or giving the

officer a hard time in the street. You can find more information at <http://realpolice.net> on legal questions, research, police reviews, police videos, news, and much more.

(This article may be placed on your website as long as the above paragraph and active link is not removed or altered in any way).