

*Each situation is unique and the Officer must alter his/her response to fit the circumstance.*

**GENERALLY, a Police Officer:**

- Will provide his or her name 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 law enforcement. If appropriate for the situation, you may call dispatch to confirm their identity.
- Upon receiving your identification along with any other pertinent information, will inform a person of the reason for being stopped.
- Will only use the amount of force necessary to effect an arrest of a suspect and to maintain the custody of the prisoner.
- Will only arrest a person for a crime committed in the Officer's presence, when accepting citizen's arrest, or when the officer has probable cause to believe a person has already committed a serious offense.

**Questions/Compliments/Complaints**

*If you have a question about procedures or a complaint about your contact or treatment, contact the Vacaville Police Department and ask to speak with a supervisor. You may also send a letter of appreciation if you feel the Officer was particularly helpful in your situation.*

**VACAVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**660 MERCHANT STREET  
VACAVILLE, CA 95688  
(707) 449-5200**

**[www.cityofvacaville.com](http://www.cityofvacaville.com)**

**Important Phone Numbers**

Emergency.....911  
Non-Emergency .....(707) 449.5200  
Records..... (707) 449.5229  
Traffic Section.....(707) 449.5282  
F.I.R.S.T.....(707) 469.6600  
Traffic Court..... (707) 207.7360

**VACAVILLE POLICE  
DEPARTMENT**



***What To Do If  
You Are Stopped  
By A Police  
Officer***

***“Dedicated to Excellence”***

**RICHARD L. WORD  
CHIEF OF POLICE**

## Why Do Police Officers Stop People?

There are a variety of different reasons why you might be stopped by a Police Officer in the City of Vacaville. Reasons might include:

- The Officer may think you are in trouble and need help.
- You may have violated a rule of the road.
- Your vehicle might have a safety violation.
- You might fit the description of a wanted person.
- You may have been a witness to a crime.

### California Vehicle Code Section 21806.

**“...Upon the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle, the driver of every other vehicle shall yield to the right-of-way and shall immediately drive to the right-hand edge or curb of the highway. Clear of any intersection, and thereupon stop and remain stopped until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed.”**

**With this in mind, there are things that you, as a law abiding citizen can do to help make the experience a more efficient, positive, and safe experience for both you and the Police Officer.**

### If you are stopped

If you are stopped by a Police Officer 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 large number of Police Officers are killed or seriously injured while making “routine” traffic stops. We believe and train, there is no such thing as a “routine” traffic stop.

### If stopped by a Police Officer, please remember:

1. When you see the red overhead lights and /or hear the siren, remain calm and pull safely over parallel to the right side of the road.
2. Remain in your vehicle unless the Officer advises otherwise. Be sure the officer is wearing a police uniform. If not, keep your door locked and ask for credentials. All Police Officers will have a star shaped badge with “Police Officer” “Vacaville” writing and their identification number. They will also have an identification card with their photograph available on their person.
3. Keep your hands where the Officer can see them. It’s a good idea to rest both hands on the steering wheel.
4. Avoid any sudden movements, especially toward the floorboard, rear seat, or passenger side of the vehicle. The Officer might think you are reaching for a weapon or concealing contraband.
5. Do not immediately reach for your license or other documents until the Officer requests them. California Law requires drivers to show their license, registration and insurance card to peace officers upon request.
6. If your documents are out of reach, tell the Officer where they are before you reach for them.
7. If the stop occurs during darkness, the Officer will likely use a bright spotlight to illuminate your vehicle. You can help by turning on your interior lights so the Officers can see that everything is in order.
8. If there are passengers in your vehicle, encourage them to remain quiet and cooperate with instructions. As the operator, you are solely responsible for your vehicle and its occupants.
9. The Officer may issue you a ticket. If you feel the reason is vague or unclear, ask the Officer for details.
10. If you contest the violation, you will have a court date on the citation. This will be the time to address the matter in court. Do not argue with the Officer.
11. Many law enforcement agencies use single-officer patrol cars, especially in suburbs. It is normal to see two or three patrol cars on a routine traffic stop, especially at night. This is to ensure the Officer’s safety.
12. Finally, if you receive a ticket, please accept it calmly. Signing the ticket is not an admission of guilt; it is only a promise to appear in court at a later time. State law mandates that if you refuse to sign the citation, you will be arrested.