

WHAT TO DO WHEN STOPPED BY A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

WHY DO POLICE STOP PEOPLE?

There are many different reasons why you might be stopped by a law enforcement officer. Whatever the reason is, the officer needs your cooperation:

- The police may want to warn you about a potentially dangerous situation.
- You may have committed a traffic violation.
- Your vehicle may match the description of one used in a criminal act.
- The officer may think that you are in trouble and in need of help.
- You may have witnessed a crime.

If you are stopped by the police while driving, you may feel confused, anxious, and may even feel angry. These are natural feelings, but remember, traffic stops can also be stressful and dangerous for the law enforcement officer. Each year, a number of law enforcement officers are killed or seriously injured while making the “routine” traffic stop. Law enforcement officers are especially vulnerable during hours of darkness and/or inclement weather such as snow, ice, fog, and, rain.

Remember; be courteous and cooperative with the law enforcement officer.

WHY TO DO WHEN A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER STOPS YOU?

When you see the emergency red/blue lights and/or hear the siren, remain calm, slow down and pull over in a safe location off the roadway.

- **Do not** exit your vehicle unless you are directed by the officer. This is for safety reasons.
- Keep your hands on the steering wheel so the officer can see them.

- Inform the officer of any weapons that may be in your vehicle and their location. **Do not** reach for them or point in the direction. Some motorists forget to properly remove their weapons after hunting and/or target practicing.
- Avoid any sudden movements, especially in the direction of the vehicle's floorboard, rear seat, or passenger side compartment of the vehicle.
- Comply with the officer's request to see your driver's license and proof of insurance card. Illinois law requires that you carry these with you and to produce them when requested by a law enforcement officer.
- If your documents are out of reach, tell the officer where they may be before you reach for them
- If there are passengers in your vehicle, encourage them to remain quiet and cooperate with the officers instructions. You, as the operator of the vehicle, are solely responsible for the vehicle and its occupants.
- Avoid becoming argumentative. Arguing will not change the officer's mind. If you contest the violation, you will have an opportunity to address the matter in court.
- Answer all questions truthfully.
- The officer may issue you a ticket/citation. If you feel that the reason is vague or unclear, politely ask the officer for details.
- If asked to sign a ticket/citation, do so. It is not an admission of guilt. Refusal to do so could result in another form of bonding procedure
- You have the right to politely deny a request by a police officer to search your car; however, if probable cause exists, the officer has the right to search your vehicle without your consent.
- Understand that each situation is unique and the police officer must alter his or her response to fit the circumstance. Generally, however, a police officer:
 - Will provide his/her name upon request
 - Will inform a person of the reason for being stopped
 - Will only arrest a person for a crime committed in the officer's presence, or

when the officer has probable cause to believe that the person has committed a crime.

QUESTIONS, COMPLIMENTS, OR COMPLAINTS

If you have a question about procedures or a complaint about your treatment, contact the Milan Police Department and ask to speak with the Watch Commander. You may also send a letter of compliment if you feel that the officer was particularly helpful in your situation. Compliments or complaints about a Milan officer's conduct should be made within a reasonable time.

WE CARE ABOUT YOUR SAFETY, USE THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES WHEN YOU DRIVE

Always insure that you and
All occupants are properly
buckled-up. Children under
8 must be in a child seat.

Don't drink and drive. Nearly
half of all fatal crashes are
alcohol related. If you drink,
use a designated driver.

Observe and obey posted
speed limits. Speeding fines
are expensive and may
cause your insurance
rates to increase.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Milan Police Department at (309) 787-8520. Your safety is our priority!