

WHAT TO DO WHEN STOPPED BY THE POLICE



The Port Huron Police Department would like to offer some tips and suggestions to help when interacting with the police that will make the experience less stressful and will help to ensure your safety and the safety of the officer.

WHY DO POLICE STOP CITIZENS OR VEHICLES?

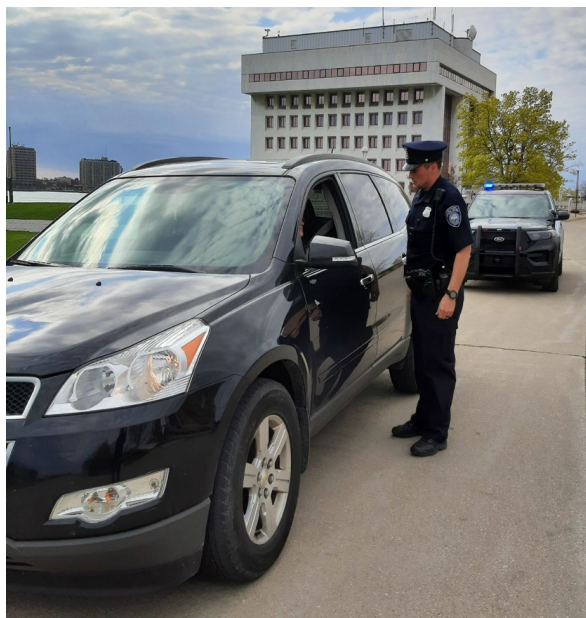
- Person appears to need assistance.
- Traffic violation
- Person suspected of violating the law
- Person fits the description of a suspect
- Person has been pointed out as a suspect
- Person may have witnessed a crime
- Officer seeking information about a crime
- Officer is making a community contact

IF APPROACHED OR STOPPED BY A POLICE OFFICER

- Keep your hands where the officer can see them and don't put them in your pockets.
- Follow the officer's instructions.
- Speak to the officer with the same level of respect that you expect from the officer.
- Remain calm and do not escalate the situation.
- Do not touch the officer as this could be interpreted as an aggression toward the officer's safety.
- Do not run as this may imply that you think you are guilty of something and the officer will likely chase you.
- Tell the officer if you have a weapon and do not reach for it.
- If the officer has reason to believe that you are armed, then they have a right to pat you down for weapons to ensure everyone's safety.
- The officer's questions are to clarify information and are not an accusation of wrongdoing.
- Your answers should be factual to the best of your knowledge as lying to an officer about a serious crime may be illegal and have serious consequences.
- The officer will probably conduct a warrant check and proper ID will speed up this process.
- Your cooperation will greatly reduce the time the officer contacts you.

TRAFFIC STOP - WHAT TO DO

- Slow down and pull to the right, or onto a side street.
- If you feel unsafe or suspect it's not really the police, turn on your emergency flashers and continue slowly to a well-lit location like a gas station. If still unsure, dial 9-1-1 to get confirmation.
- If stopped at night, turn on the dome light.
- Spotlights and flashlights are used to illuminate the scene for everyone's safety, not to intimidate you.
- Do not exit your vehicle, but wait for the officer.
- Keeping your hands visible, such as on the steering wheel, is best.
- If you have passengers, tell them to sit quietly with their hands visible.
- Communicate your actions to the officer so that he/she knows what you are doing.
- You must provide your driver's license, registration, and insurance, if requested by the officer.
- If your documents are out of reach, tell the officer where they are before you reach for them.
- After supplying these documents is the time to ask why you were stopped if the officer has not already told you; you may certainly ask the officer for more information at this time.
- If asked to exit your vehicle, follow the officer's instructions.
- If issued a ticket, there is a legal process to challenge the ticket if you choose; debating the ticket on the roadside will not achieve results.
- A ticket does not make you guilty of anything. You have a right to a hearing in Court and the ticket contains information on how to exercise that right.
- Your car can be searched with your consent or if the officer has probable cause to believe that there is evidence of a crime in the car.
- Be aware that officers are trained to be on high alert for their safety in traffic stop situations because so many officers have been harmed while on traffic stops.
- Notify the officer if you have a CPL or a weapon in the vehicle.



POLICE AT YOUR HOME

- Usually if a police officer knocks on your door, it is for one of the these reasons:
 - To interview you or a member of your household as a witness or a suspect to an incident that is being investigated.
 - To serve an arrest warrant
 - To serve a search warrant
 - To make a notification
- If they are not in uniform, make sure they really are law enforcement officers by requesting to see a badge and identification card.
- Whenever police come to your door, they should willingly provide identification and state their purpose for being there.
- Confirm that the officers are at the right house by asking, "How can I help you?" or "What brings you to my home?"
- An officer may enter a residence if:
 - The resident gives consent.
 - The officer has an arrest or search warrant.
 - There are emergency circumstances such as pursuit of a fleeing suspect or evidence may be lost if not immediately seized.
 - Performing a community care-taker function such as first-aid or preventing harm to someone.
- In the case of a warrant, you may ask to see a copy of the warrant. However, if it is an arrest warrant, they are not required to have it with them to make an arrest.

SEARCHES BY POLICE

- If you give permission, an officer can search your person, vehicle or property.
- You may be searched without your consent when:
 - Arrested
 - If a search warrant has been issued.
 - If an officer has a reasonable belief that you have committed or will commit a crime.
- Frisk - An officer may pat you down for a weapon if the officer has reason to believe that you may be armed and dangerous.

SUBJECT CONTROL

- Police officers in Michigan are trained to use only the force reasonably necessary to make the arrest.
- **If arrested, do not resist - this may justify a need for greater force by the officer.**
- Excessive force beyond that needed to perform the officer's duty is not tolerated and illegal.

VIDEO RECORDING

- You do have the right to record an interaction with the police.
- An officer will only seize the recording if the officer believes the recorded video or audio contains evidence that must be protected.
- You will also be recorded by the officer's body worn camera and/or in car camera.

YOUR RIGHTS IF ARRESTED

- After being arrested, if questioned about a crime:
 - You have the right to remain silent.
 - Anything you say can be used against you in a court of law.
 - You have the right to talk to a lawyer and have him/her present with you while you are being questioned.
 - If you cannot afford to hire a lawyer, one will be appointed to represent you at no expense.
- Officers are not required to advise suspects of their Miranda rights immediately upon arrest.
- Phone calls after arrest are not a right. Phone calls may be allowed if you are cooperative.

IF YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE BEING TREATED UNPROFESSIONALLY

- **Comply now ... Complain later**
- Contact the officer's immediate supervisor
- Telephone: 810-984-2378
- Fax: 810-987-9860
- Email: phpdadmincontact@porthuron.org
- If not satisfied, complete a formal complaint at the police station
- Challenge traffic tickets in Court, not on the road

PLEASE REMEMBER

- Officers have a tough and dangerous job.
- Their physical stance during contact with you may seem awkward, but officers are trained to position themselves in a way that enhances their safety - this is not intended to offend others.
- Officers are trained to place a great deal of emphasis on their safety and survival.
- Officers usually do not know you, we are learning about each other together.
- Encounters with police should end with the citizen feeling that they were treated with respect; the officer should come away with the same feeling.
- The same officer who gave you a ticket this morning will risk his or her life for you this afternoon.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Get to know your local police, stop in and say hello
- Join a police volunteer program (VIPS)
- Enroll in a Citizens' Police Academy
- Become a police officer, jobs posted at
 - porthuronpolice.org
 - michiganpolicechiefs.org
 - michigan.gov/mcoles



CONTACT US

(810) 984-8415
www.porthuronpolice.org