

Office of the Sheriff, Santa Clara County
Vehicle Stops, Basic – 4 hours
2270-20831-
Revised 01/08/2021

Course Objective:

The students in this course will receive instruction on how to perform a basic vehicle stop. The student will be provided with tactics, legal information, and techniques on how to safely execute a vehicle stop.

Performance Objectives:

Using group discussion, learning activities and practical application the students will identify the legal liabilities, safety hazards, and proper procedure for conducting basic vehicle stops.

I. Introduction

- a. Instructor Introductions
- b. Course Objectives and Overview

II. AB392 and SB230 / Use of Force Legal Issues

- 1. Emphasis on de-escalation / Tactical repositioning
- 2. Emphasis on duty to intervene
- 3. Policy Considerations / Changes
- 4. Duty to warn
- 5. At Risk Populations

III. Types of Vehicle Stops

- a. Traffic Enforcement
 - i. Reasonable suspicion/probable cause to believe that driver committed a traffic violation
 - ii. Vehicle's occupants represent no unusual risk
 - iii. Expectation that vehicle stop will result in a citation
- b. Investigative
 - i. Reasonable suspicion/probable cause to believe that the occupant(s) of the vehicle engaged or is about to engaged in criminal activity
 - ii. Expectation that an investigation might lead to a physical arrest
 - iii. Reasonable expectation that the vehicle stop involves less danger than a "High Risk" vehicle stop, but more than a traffic enforcement stop
- c. High Risk
 - i. Reasonable suspicion/probable cause to believe that occupant(s) in vehicle may be armed or represent a serious threat to the officer, or have committed a felony
 - ii. Reasonable expectation that an arrest will be made

IV. Vehicle Stop Locations

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- a. Traffic Hazards
 - i. Passing Traffic
 - ii. Visibility Impairments
 - iii. Hazards to the Public (i.e. schools, hospitals, etc.)
- b. Escape Routes
 - i. Can the suspect easily drive away?
 - ii. Can the officer escape if needed?
 - 1. Cover and concealment
- c. Number of People Present
- d. Lighting conditions
 - i. Dark alleys
- e. Proper position of primary and backup units
 - i. Are the officers able to quickly exit the patrol vehicle?

V. Vehicle Information Prior to Stop

- a. Radio Communication
 - i. Concise and clear
- b. Location
 - i. Cross streets
 - ii. Direction of travel
 - 1. Divided Highway Information
 - iii. Know the location of the vehicle stop.
 - 1. Delay the vehicle stop until you have selected a location you are able to identify
- c. Vehicle License Plate and/or Description
 - i. Phonetically and “Plain-Talk”
 - ii. Wait for acknowledgement and read back from dispatch
- d. Any other known information
 - i. If no license plate
 - 1. Vehicle description
 - a. Year
 - b. Make
 - c. Model
 - d. Type
 - e. Color
 - f. Distinguishing characteristics

VI. Proper Distance and Position of a Patrol Vehicle

- a. Prevent Escape Routes
 - i. Maintain proper distance between vehicles
 - ii. Too far provides the opportunity for violator/suspect vehicle to flee
- b. Avoid a hazard
 - i. Too close to violator vehicle can cause a rear end collision

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- c. Create a Safety Corridor
 - i. Patrol vehicle offset for safety of officer and occupants
 - 1. ½ of patrol vehicle width to the left of violator vehicle
 - ii. Patrol vehicle one car length behind violator vehicle

VII. Initiating a Vehicle Stop

- a. Gaining Driver's Attention
- b. Use of Emergency Lights
- c. If driver fails to respond, use any of the following:
 - i. Use of Siren
 - ii. Use of Horn
 - iii. Use of Headlights
 - iv. Use of Hand signals
- d. Use of PA System
- e. Spotlight
 - i. Not blinding the driver while vehicle is moving
 - ii. Illuminating the interior of the stopped vehicle
 - iii. Focusing on rear and side mirrors to blind the occupants of the officer's approach

VIII. Hazards of Vehicle Stops

- a. Location of the Stop
 - i. If the location of the stop is unsafe, instruct the driver to move vehicle to safe location
- b. Reason of the Stop
 - i. 4th and 14th Amendments
- c. Officer's Approach
 - i. Driver's side v. passenger side approach
 - ii. Tactical Seatbelt removal
 - 1. Quick vehicle exit
- d. Position the Officer Takes
 - i. Behind vehicle "B" pillar
- e. Contact with the Violator
 - i. Obtaining the violator driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance
 - ii. Not accepting the violator's wallet in response to a request for a driver's license
- f. Visibility
 - i. Tinted windows
 - ii. Items inside of violator vehicle

IX. Primary and Back Up Officer Responsibilities

- a. Primary Officer

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- i. Maintains cover behind driver door and make assessment
 - 1. Status of violator vehicle and occupant(s)
 - 2. Safety hazards
- ii. Approaches the violator vehicle in the lane created by offsetting patrol vehicle
- iii. Check rear trunk by pushing down
- iv. Visually search interior of vehicle
 - 1. If rear windows are tinted, ask driver to roll them down
- v. Does not move past “B” pillar
 - 1. Forces driver to look back at officer
 - 2. Makes it more difficult to point a weapon at the officer
 - 3. Prevents officer from being knocked down or hit with the door
- vi. Makes all verbal contact with violator vehicle occupants
 - 1. Identifies themselves
 - 2. Identifies agency affiliation
 - 3. Provides reason for the stop
- vii. Obtains required paperwork
- viii. Completes all radio traffic at the patrol car

b. Back Up Officer

- i. Observes violator vehicle occupant(s) while maintaining awareness of the surrounding area
- ii. Exit patrol vehicle quickly upon stopping.
- iii. Maintain a cover position behind patrol vehicle door or other nearby cover while driver officer is exiting patrol vehicle
- iv. Makes a cautious wide angle approach
- v. Verbalizes any threats to primary officer

X. Directing Occupants During a Stop

- a. Legal aspects of directing the occupants to remain or exit vehicle
 - i. Driver v. passenger restrictions

XI. Dealing with Violator Reactions

- a. Techniques for dealing with violators who present the following;
 - i. Embarrassment
 - ii. Anger
 - iii. Fear
 - iv. Rationalization or excuse for violation

XII. Tactical/Professional Conduct

- a. Tactical Communication/ De-Escalation techniques
 - i. Do not Argue with Violator

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- ii. Maintain professionalism
- b. Body Worn Camera

XIII. Disposition of Vehicle Stops

- a. Citations
 - i. Promise to Appear
 - ii. Refusal to sign citation
 - 1. Vehicle Code 40302(b)
- b. Warning
 - i. Education of violations

XIV. Special Circumstances

- a. Removing occupant(s) from vehicle
 - i. Probation / Parole
 - ii. Vehicle Searches
 - iii. Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Investigations
 - iv. Effect an arrest
 - v. Information verification
 - vi. Safety of officer(s) and vehicle occupant(s)

XV. Approaching Vehicles Other than Automobiles

- a. Motorcycles
- b. Campers and vans
- c. Buses
- d. Trucks
- e. Tractor/trailers

XVI. Scenario Based Exercises / Practical Application

- a. Safety briefing
 - i. Students and role players **will not** be in possession of: firearms, ammunition, knives, batons, Tasers, or OC spray
 - 1. Orange (inert) guns will be provided to students
 - ii. Vehicle walk through
 - 1. Lighting mechanism
 - iii. Students will be broken up into to small groups
 - 1. Two students will be assigned to scenarios
 - 2. Other students will be either:
 - a. Assigned as role players
 - b. View the scenario from a safe distance
 - 3. After each scenario, a detailed briefing will occur

b. Required Learning Activity

- i. The student will participate in a learning activity depicting a situation in which the subject is initially noncompliant with verbal

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instructions to sign the citation. The student will demonstrate the communication skills to resolve the conflict including:

1. Making an “ethical appeal” based upon a peace officer’s professional presence and providing the subject with an opportunity to voluntarily comply (asking)
 2. Identifying the law, policy, or rationale that applies to the situation, answering the subject’s implied question “why?”, and providing another opportunity for the subject to voluntarily comply (setting context)
 3. Explaining the options or courses of action which could be taken by the peace officer and their potential personal consequences to the subject, and providing the subject with yet another opportunity to voluntarily comply (presenting options)
 4. Taking the action appropriate to the situation if the subject fails to voluntarily comply (e.g., arrest)
- ii. The student will participate in a learning activity involving a vehicle stop. The student will demonstrate the following:
1. Greeting
 2. Identifying self and department
 3. Requesting driver’s license, registration, and proof of insurance
 4. Explaining the reason for the stop
 5. Making decision to warn, cite, or arrest
 6. Closing appropriate to decision

XVII. Closing

- a. Questions
- b. Course Evaluations