

TRAFFIC STOP SAFETY CHECKLIST

Slow down, communicate clearly, and keep movements predictable.

If the stopping location is unsafe: Reduce speed, activate your signal and hazards, and proceed only far enough to reach the nearest reasonably safe, well-lit location. Do not accelerate or attempt to evade the stop.

PULL OVER SAFELY

- ☐ **Acknowledge the stop.** Use your turn signal, slow smoothly, and pull as far out of active traffic as practical. Avoid curves, bridges, narrow shoulders, and places that block traffic.
- ☐ **Set the vehicle.** Shift to park, apply the parking brake, turn off the engine, lower the driver's window, and silence audio. At night, turn on the interior light.
- ☐ **Stay seated and visible.** Remain in the vehicle unless directed otherwise. Keep your seat belt fastened and place your hands where they can be seen; ask passengers to do the same.

DURING THE CONTACT

- ☐ **Wait before reaching.** Do not search for documents while the officer approaches. When asked, explain where each item is and retrieve it slowly.
- ☐ **Provide required documents.** Be prepared to present your driver license, registration, and proof of insurance as required in the jurisdiction.
- ☐ **Communicate calmly.** Listen fully, speak clearly, avoid sudden movements, and tell the officer before reaching toward a glove box, console, bag, or pocket.
- ☐ **Follow directions.** If an instruction is unclear, ask for clarification. Do not physically resist or argue the merits of a citation at the roadside.
- ☐ **Keep passengers settled.** Passengers should remain calm, keep hands visible, and avoid unnecessary movement or interruption unless addressed.

WHEN THE STOP ENDS

- ☐ **Read what you receive.** Confirm the citation or warning instructions, court or response deadline, and how to obtain additional information.
- ☐ **Re-enter traffic carefully.** Return documents to a safe place, buckle up if instructed to remove the belt, signal, and wait for a safe gap before merging.
- ☐ **Document concerns afterward.** Write down the time, location, agency, officer information, and facts while fresh. Use official complaint, court, or legal channels rather than confronting anyone at the scene.

Recording and legal rights: Rules differ by jurisdiction. If you record, do not handle a phone while driving, interfere with duties, or disobey safety instructions. This checklist is not legal advice.