

Things to Remember When Pulled Over by a Police Officer

Your heart sinks as you catch a glimpse of flashing lights in your rearview mirror. A little rattled, your mind begins racing as you wonder, “Oh no, what should I do now?” Your experience of being pulled over will be a little less stressful if you remember and follow these tips:

- **Pull over.** The first thing you should do as soon as you notice those flashing lights is pull over to the right side of the road as quickly as it is safe to do so. Turn off the car and open the window partway. If it is nighttime, turn on the internal light.
- **Keep calm and still, with your hands on the steering wheel.** You should stay in your vehicle, avoid making any sudden movements, and keep your hands in sight on the steering wheel. If you need to move, you should tell the officer what you plan to do. For example, before reaching for the glove compartment, you should say to the officer, “Officer, I am going to take my right hand off the steering wheel and reach over to the glove compartment and open it to get my vehicle registration. Is that okay with you?”
- **When asked, provide the requested documents.** You should provide your driver’s license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance when the officer asks for them. Again, you should alert the officer prior to making any movements, such as by saying, “I am now going to take my left hand off the steering wheel and reach into my back pocket to pull out my wallet so that I can get my license out. Are you okay with me doing that?”
- **Be respectful.** You should address the officer with respect and courtesy, just as you should expect the officer to address you. If the officer does not tell you the reason they stopped you, you may inquire about the reason, but you should not argue about it with the officer. If you are issued a citation and you disagree with it, the appropriate place to dispute it is in court.

Getting pulled over can put a damper on anyone’s day, but following these simple tips will help make the experience less aggravating and get you back on the road in no time.