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# BASIC COURSE INSTRUCTOR UNIT GUIDE

22

VEHICLE PULLOVERS

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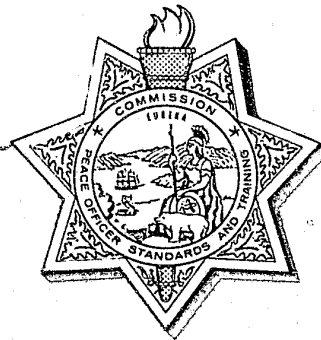
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THE COMMISSION  
ON PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

The curricula contained in this document is designed as a *guideline* for the delivery of performance-based law enforcement training. It is part of the POST Basic Course guidelines system developed by California law enforcement trainers and criminal justice educators in cooperation with the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training.

## UNIT GUIDE #22

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# CURRICULUM

## I. INTRODUCTION TO VEHICLE PULLOVERS

- A. Conducting vehicle pullovers is one of the most frequent duties that a patrol officer will be called upon to perform. A working patrol officer will commonly stop at least one car per shift and often many more.
- B. Due to its repetitive nature, a vehicle pullover carries the inherent danger of becoming routine. As a result, an officer may be tempted to become complacent and careless.
- C. Common hazards associated with vehicle pullovers include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. Aggressive actions by the violator/suspect
  - 2. Aggressive actions by bystanders
  - 3. Vehicular traffic

NOTE: It is effective to begin training by citing examples of peace officer killings and assaults that have occurred during a vehicle pullover. Likewise, many officers have been killed or injured by passing traffic while engaged in a vehicle pullover. Often these cases reveal carelessness or improper tactics. A number of effective video reenactments are available to enhance instruction.

- D. Sources of information on assaults and killings of peace officers related to vehicle pullovers include:
  - 1. FBI peace officer killing statistics (national figures)
  - 2. POST peace officer killing studies (California figures)
    - a. 1980-1986 POST Peace Officer Killing Study
    - b. 1987-1989 POST Peace Officer Killing Study
    - c. *Guidelines for Law Enforcement Officer Safety* (published by POST following completion of the 1980-1986 POST peace officer killing study)

NOTE: Copies of these studies are available by contacting the POST Media Distribution Desk. A study addressing 1990-1993 statistics is currently in progress.

- d. POST telecourse and associated student workbook - *Surviving Deadly Assaults* - July 1993

NOTE: Copies of the telecourse video and workbook are available by contacting POST Training Program Services Bureau.

- 3. Video resources

- a. POST Video Catalog
  - b. Individual agency video libraries
  - c. Commercial video catalogs
  - d. California Highway Patrol
4. Other sources of officer safety-related statistics and information including, but not limited to:
- a. California Department of Justice
  - b. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)
- E. Effective officer safety techniques should always be applied to every vehicle pullover. Officers should keep in mind and avoid committing the following "ten fatal errors":
1. Attitude (avoid distractions)
  2. Tombstone courage
  3. Not enough rest
  4. Taking a bad position
  5. Danger signs ignored
  6. Failure to watch the hands of suspects
  7. Relaxing too soon
  8. Improper use or no handcuffs
  9. No search or poor search
  10. Dirty or inoperative weapon

NOTE: Although patterns and trends in assaults and killings of officers may change, one or more of the following errors are always present in the assault or killing of an officer. Additional information on the ten fatal errors is contained in Basic Course Instructional Unit Guide #23 (Crimes in Progress). A descriptive handout is contained in the supporting materials section of that document.

- F. The nature of vehicle pullovers
1. It would be impossible to address every possible pullover situation that an officer would encounter in the field.
  2. The techniques discussed in this unit guide are intended to address the basic elements of a tactically-sound vehicle pullover. Specific situations may dictate the need for alternate procedures.

G. General considerations for vehicle pullovers

1. Officer safety
  - a. Preplanning the pullover
  - b. Appropriate use of assistance (effective use of cover/back-up officers)
  - c. Appropriate notification/use of communications resources
  - d. Application of sound tactics
2. Safety of occupant(s) in the vehicle being pulled over
3. Safety of other motorists/bystanders
4. Environmental conditions
  - a. Impaired visibility (fog, dust, smoke, sunlight in eyes)
  - b. Wet or icy road surfaces

H. Justification for a pullover

1. The officer must be able to articulate a legal reason for initiating a pullover.
2. The officer's specific actions will vary depending on:
  - a. The type of crime involved
  - b. The level of perceived risk
  - c. The type of vehicle being pulled over



## II. TYPES OF VEHICLE PULLOVERS

### A. Terminology

1. Vehicle pullovers are generally divided into three basic types or categories:
  - a. Traffic enforcement pullover
  - b. Investigative pullover
  - c. High-risk pullover

NOTE: Agency policies may differ significantly in how they describe types of vehicle pullovers. In all cases, however, the types or categories of pullovers will relate to the degree of risk that is anticipated. Some agency policies may use expressions such as "car stop", "traffic stop" or "vehicle stop" interchangeably with the expression "vehicle pullover".

### 2. Target Vehicle

- a. The term "target vehicle" is used in this curricula to denote **the vehicle which is the object of the pullover.**
- b. Use of this term is intended to provide a generic reference rather than having to use terms such as "violin's vehicle", "suspect vehicle", "violin/suspect vehicle" or similar terms repeatedly throughout the curricula.

3. A vehicle does not have to be in motion to be the object of a pullover

EXAMPLE: Checking a suspicious vehicle which is parked. In this case, the same types of tactical considerations would apply to the situation.

### B. Types of vehicle pullovers described:

1. A **traffic enforcement pullover** is made because an officer has:
  - a. reason to believe that the driver committed a traffic infraction.
  - b. no objective reason to believe that the vehicle's occupants represent an unusual risk.
  - c. an expectation that the pullover would result in a citation.
2. An **investigative pullover** is made because an officer has
  - a. reason to believe that one or more of the vehicle's occupants has engaged, or is about to engage, in criminal activity.



- b. an expectation that the pullover would involve an investigation that might lead to a physical arrest for a violation of the Vehicle Code, Penal Code or other statute.
  - c. an expectation that the pullover involves less danger than a "high risk" vehicle pullover.
3. A **high-risk pullover** is made when an officer has
- a. reason to believe that one or more of the occupants of the car may be armed, represent a serious threat to the officer or have committed a felony.
  - b. an expectation that the pullover will result in a physical arrest.
- C. The changing nature of a vehicle pullover
- 1. An officer may make observations which would cause a traffic enforcement pullover or an investigative pullover to escalate to a "high-risk" situation.
  - 2. Likewise, an officer's observations may make de-escalation appropriate.

### III. PREPLANNING THE VEHICLE PULLOVER

#### A. Risk assessment

1. Although vehicle pullovers are generally categorized into the three types described in Section II, a key consideration in preplanning a vehicle pullover is the amount of risk perceived by the officer. A pullover will always be one of the following:
  - a. "Unknown risk", which generally involves:
    - (1) Traffic/equipment violations
    - (2) Suspicious activity (investigative)
    - (3) Citizen request
    - (4) Certain misdemeanors

NOTE: Often the types of events described above are referred to as "low risk". This term is inappropriate because it suggests that no hazard exists when in fact the degree of danger is uncertain. Appropriate safety measures should be employed during all pullovers.

- b. "High risk", which generally involves:
      - (1) Felony violations
      - (2) Serious misdemeanors
      - (3) Vehicle described in crime broadcasts
      - (4) Stolen vehicles (often used in other serious crimes)

NOTE: Individual agency policies may differ regarding which types of crimes would be considered "high risk". As a general rule, high risk pullovers are conducted in any situation where officers perceive danger due to suspect's conduct or when officers have advance knowledge from personal observation, information received through dispatch, or other means which the officer may reasonably rely upon.

2. As a further step in assessing the risk represented by the target vehicle, the officer should run the vehicle license to determine if there are any wants/warrants.
3. Officers should consider requesting additional assistance/back-up if there are multiple occupants in a vehicle and the officer perceives a risk.

#### B. Considerations before initiating a vehicle pullover

1. The officer must be able to articulate a legal reason for initiating a pullover.

2. If a two-person unit, ensure that the partner officer is aware of any pertinent observations that impact the type or reason for the pullover.

C. Selecting a location for a vehicle pullover

1. The officer must be aware of the anticipated location of the pullover or defer initiating the stop until the officer is able to identify the location.
2. The officer, not the target vehicle driver, selects the pullover site. (e.g. Don't be baited into a possible ambush or unsafe area.)
3. The officer should try to initiate the pullover in a legal location out of the traffic flow.
4. The officer should be aware of physical safety hazards which include but are not limited to:
  - a. Passing traffic
  - b. Potential visibility impairments (e.g. Is the patrol vehicle clearly visible to other motorists?; Is the pullover being made on a blind curve?; Will headlamps and emergency lights potentially distract oncoming traffic?)
  - c. Illumination (e.g. too much or too little)
  - d. Potential hazard to the public (e.g. initiating a potentially high-risk vehicle pullover near a schoolground or other heavily populated area)
5. The officer should be aware of the tactical safety issues which include but are not limited to:
  - a. Possible escape routes for the occupants of the target vehicle
  - b. Possible tactical retreat routes for the officer(s)
  - c. Availability of cover and concealment
  - d. Avoidance of potentially hostile environments (e.g. angry crowd, unruly groups, etc.)
  - e. Avoidance of other interference potential (e.g. pedestrian traffic, difficulty maintaining patrol vehicle security)

D. Preparing to initiate a vehicle pullover

1. Maintain a proper distance between the patrol vehicle and the target vehicle.
  - a. Attempting to initiate a pullover when the patrol car is too far from the target vehicle may provide the violator/suspect with an opportunity to flee.

- b. Attempting to initiate a pullover when the patrol car is too close to the target vehicle may potentially cause a rear-end collision if the violator/suspect makes a panic stop.
2. Follow appropriate communications procedures.
- a. Whenever possible, notify communications that a vehicle pullover is being initiated and provide the following information:
    - (1) Anticipated location of the pullover and direction of travel
    - (2) License number and vehicle description
    - (3) Nature of pullover (e.g. stopping a suspected DUI or stopping a stolen vehicle)
    - (4) Any other information pertinent to the pullover (e.g. information on weapons, number of occupants, etc.)

NOTE: Other officers in the area may not be aware of vehicle pullovers when notification is made strictly over a computer system.

- b. It is a good idea to write down the license number and a short description of the target vehicle before initiating a pullover. Even though the dispatcher may have recorded the vehicle information correctly, this redundant information may be helpful if an officer assault occurs during the pullover.

NOTE: Individual agency policies may contain specific procedures or practices regarding vehicle pullovers. The information described above is an effort to provide generally accepted recommendations which may be useful.



#### IV. INITIATING A VEHICLE PULLOVER

##### A. Getting the driver's attention

1. When in the proper position and in a suitable location, activate the red light(s) on the patrol vehicle.
2. If the driver fails to respond to the red light, it may be necessary to do one or more of the following:
  - a. Honk the horn
  - b. Alternate high and low beams (day or night)
  - c. Pan the spotlight (but avoid keeping it in one position which might blind the driver of the target vehicle)
  - d. Use appropriate hand gestures (e.g. waving the person to the side of the road)
  - e. Use the patrol vehicle's PA system to direct the driver to pull over
  - f. Give a short blast of the siren
3. Occasionally, an officer may encounter a situation where a driver will not yield to any of the above techniques. Whereas this may be indicative of a deliberate failure to yield, officers should also consider the fact that the driver may have a disability.
4. If the target vehicle continues to fail to yield or overtly attempts to flee, the officer should follow procedures dictated by their individual agency policies.



## V. STOPPING AND APPROACHING VEHICLES

### A. Effecting the pullover

1. Responsibilities of the officer
  - a. Officers should consider requesting additional assistance/back-up if there are multiple occupants in a vehicle **and** the officer perceives a risk.
  - b. Watch occupants of the vehicle when it is yielding.
  - c. Watch for movement inside vehicle. (e.g. someone trying to discard contraband or reach for a weapon)
  - d. If the driver stops in an unsafe location, the officer should instruct the person to move the target vehicle to a safe location. If an impairment is suspected (e.g., a driver under the influence), the vehicle should not be moved by the driver.
  - e. Prior to exiting the vehicle, and if not already completed, the officer should record the violator's license plate number on note pad, dash pad, advise communications, etc.

### B. Patrol vehicle placement

1. Park the patrol vehicle an appropriate distance behind the target vehicle. The actual distance will depend upon a variety of factors including but not limited to:
  - a. The type of pullover
  - b. The type of vehicle being stopped
  - c. Available space
  - d. Environment/topography
2. Consider offset of the patrol vehicle either left or right as appropriate.
  - a. This will generally provide additional protection during the foot approach.
  - b. Offset may not be appropriate when stopping some type of nonconventional vehicles (e.g., a motorhome)
3. Use emergency lighting appropriately
  - a. Consider turning off patrol vehicle emergency lights and activating the four-way flashers.

NOTE: The use of emergency lights will be dependent upon the individual conditions of the stop and prevailing agency policy. At times it is advantageous to use a minimum amount of lighting so as not to distract passing motorists. At



other times it may be essential to use lighting so that an officer can be readily located by responding back-up units.

- b. If the location of the pullover creates a hazardous condition, it may be necessary to leave rear flashing lights activated.
- c. Depending on lighting conditions, illuminate the target vehicle with high beam headlights and spotlights.
  - (1) The spotlight should be focused on a rear view mirror of the target vehicle. This will:
    - (a) prevent the occupants of the target vehicle from observing the officer's approach
    - (b) illuminate the interior of vehicle and the occupants.

NOTE: If the patrol vehicle has more than one spotlight, the lights can be directed at different rear view mirrors (e.g., a side mirror and the interior mirror).

- (2) Consideration should be given to the effect of the patrol vehicle lights on oncoming traffic.

#### C. Safely exiting the patrol vehicle

- 1. Preparing to exit
  - a. Undo and clear the seat belt
  - b. Place the patrol vehicle transmission in park
  - c. Set the parking brake
  - d. Switch on the portable radio. If not available, activate the outside speaker and position the microphone for ready access.
  - e. Check approaching traffic and open the door only if the path is clear.
  - f. Consider lowering the driver and passenger front door windows
  - g. Unlock doors

NOTE: All the above should be done as safely **and quickly** as possible to minimize the danger the officer is exposed to while seated in the vehicle.

In addition to the considerations mentioned above, some agencies encourage officers to turn the patrol vehicle front wheels out toward the roadway. This will facilitate pulling out if the suspect vehicle flees and may also help to protect the officer in the event that the patrol vehicle is struck from behind.

2. Exiting and approaching the target vehicle

- a. Maintain observation of vehicle occupants while maintaining an awareness of surroundings and other hazards.
- b. Exit quickly and safely to avoid getting caught off guard while still sitting in the patrol vehicle.
- c. After exiting, momentarily pause to observe the target vehicle.
- d. Make a cautious approach.
- e. Stay close to the patrol vehicle to minimize the hazard from passing traffic.

D. Methods of approach

NOTE: Factors such as location, topography and the degree of perceived risk may all impact the type of approach technique which is used.

1. Driver side approach

a. Advantages

- (1) The most direct and quickest path to the violator
- (2) Provides direct contact with driver
- (3) Can see the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)
- (4) Closer observation of the driver (e.g. able to detect a possible DUI, etc.)

b. Disadvantages

- (1) Vulnerability to passing traffic
- (2) In "kill zone" on approach (e.g. The officer is in the direct line of fire of the driver of the target vehicle.)

2. Passenger side approach

a. Advantages

- (1) Away from passing traffic
- (2) Provides for an element of surprise because most violators expect the officer to approach on the left. (e.g. through TV shows, etc.)
- (3) If an officer needs to retreat, there are more options for cover and concealment.

- (4) Allows officer more options on approach (e.g. the opportunity to adjust and modify position as needed)
- (5) An angled approach enhances observation of the rear seat and other parts of the target vehicle.

b. Disadvantages

- (1) If there is a passenger in the target vehicle, the officer will need to speak across the passenger.
- (2) Pedestrian traffic may pose a potential threat to the officer.
- (3) The environment may not allow this approach. (e.g. ravine, levee, ditch, etc.)

3. Nonapproach

NOTE: In some situations, it may be to the officer's advantage to allow the driver or occupants to exit the vehicle.

a. Advantages

- (1) If the driver exits immediately, the officer can remain behind the cover/concealment of the patrol vehicle.
- (2) This allows the officer to clear the vehicle of its visible occupants without placing the officer into a relative "danger zone".
- (3) If the driver and/or occupants exit the vehicle voluntarily, the officer may legally enter into the target vehicle to retrieve registration papers. The officer will also be able to seize any weapons or contraband that are observed in plain view or that are observed as a result of retrieving the registration papers.
- (4) Nonapproach may eliminate a hazardous element of the approach by directing the driver out of the vehicle to the curb while maintaining a position of safety
- (5) The violator's action can constantly be observed, especially hand movements. During the contact, the occupants remain in the officer's field of vision (directly or peripherally).
- (6) If there are additional occupants in the vehicle the officer should position the violator between the officer's position and that of the target vehicle. This allows the officer to observe occupants by looking beyond the violator.

b. Disadvantages

- (1) Exposes the violator to the hazards of passing traffic.

NOTE: The officer conducting the pullover is responsible for the safety of the violator.

- (2) Increases the potential for assault on the officer.
- (3) Hinders the officer's ability to observe the interior of the target vehicle.

NOTE: At times a driver/occupant may spontaneously exit the target vehicle and approach the officer. Although this may be an innocent action by the person, it may also be a deliberate attempt to prevent the officer from approaching and observing contraband or weapons contained in the vehicle.

c. Officer position in a nonapproach

- (1) When electing a nonapproach strategy, the officer should remain at the patrol vehicle in a position of safety
- (2) Generally speaking, remaining seated in the patrol vehicle places the officer at a tactical disadvantage

E. Considerations for approaching the target vehicle

1. Use safety equipment properly

- a. Keep gun hand free during all approaches. (or in hand if the situation dictates)
- b. Follow agency policy concerning the use of safety equipment. (e.g. Some agencies require that officers approach with their baton in the ring.)
- c. Use the flashlight sparingly to avoid the potential of the vehicle occupants being able to track your position on approach.

2. Visually check the exterior/interior of the target vehicle upon approach

- a. The observation of the target vehicle begins at the inception of the vehicle pullover and continues until the driver leaves the scene.
  - (1) Observations made during the visual check could provide probable cause for further investigation.
  - (2) Indicators of possible criminal activity
    - (a) An empty holster, ammunition, magazine, firearm or other weapon
    - (b) Instrumentalities or evidence of a crime (e.g. a ski mask, bag of money, drug paraphernalia, etc.)

- b. Use caution. Try to evaluate the scene and be aware of anything out of the ordinary.
- c. Check the trunk of the target vehicle upon approach both visually and by hand.
  - (1) Trunk may be open, lock punched out, potential ambush situation, etc.
  - (2) An open/unsecured trunk may merit reassessing the situation and may require application of high-risk pullover techniques
- d. Observe the driver's facial expressions and non-verbal cues.
  - (1) The driver may display fear, panic or over interest
  - (2) By looking at the target vehicle's mirrors, the officer can watch the faces of the driver and any occupants.
- e. Watch the driver/occupant's hands. If hands are not visible, stop the approach and direct the driver/occupants to place their hands in plain view.

NOTE: The need for effective tactical safety must always be tempered by the need for professional and courteous conduct.

3. Considerations for nighttime approaches

- a. At night it may be desirable to consider going around behind patrol vehicle to avoid silhouetting.
- b. This may, however, momentarily obscure observation of the violator vehicle
- c. Emergency lighting may also impair the officer's vision temporarily

F. Officer positioning on initial driver contact

- 1. Make the initial contact with the driver from the area at the driver door or the front passenger door.
- 2. The officer should maintain a position behind the trailing edge of the appropriate door of the target vehicle. This will accomplish the following:
  - a. Forces the person to look back toward the officer in a position of disadvantage.
  - b. Makes it more difficult to point a weapon at the officer.
  - c. Prevents the officer from being knocked down if the door is suddenly opened.
- 3. After the initial contact and after the officer visually checks the vehicle, it may be necessary or desirable for the officer to change position.

- a. Some agency policies require that the officer pivot to face oncoming traffic while maintaining a position in front of the leading edge of the door. This is intended to provide protection from the hazards created by passing traffic.
  - b. Conversely, other agency policies require that the officer remain behind the trailing edge of the door with their back to approaching traffic.
- G. Directing driver/occupants out of the target vehicle if deemed appropriate and/or desirable
- 1. Generally speaking, it is desirable to keep the occupant(s) in the target vehicle.
  - 2. Officers should consider requesting additional assistance if there are multiple occupants in a vehicle and the officer perceives a risk.
  - 3. Situations where persons may need to be directed out of the target vehicle include, but are not limited to:
    - a. Continuing an investigation
    - b. Searching the vehicle
    - c. When an arrest is imminent
    - d. Verifying identification
    - e. Conducting a driving under the influence (DUI) investigation
    - f. When the safety of occupant(s) and/or officer are at risk from passing traffic
  - 4. Directing occupants out of the target vehicle
    - a. To enhance safety, the officer should consider opening the door. This will allow the officer to view the occupant's hands and use the door as a defense tool to prevent attack by the occupant.
    - b. The driver/occupant(s) should be directed out of the target vehicle one at a time.
    - c. Movements should be constantly monitored and the occupants should be advised to keep their hands in view.
    - d. As soon as practical, conduct a lawful search of the driver/occupant(s) for weapons.
    - e. Direct the person to a position which would allow the officer to keep the vehicle and/or other occupants in view at all times. This will provide safety for all parties involved in the pullover.

- f. Consider other lawful options to control or prevent interference by occupants. (e.g. placing persons into a partitioned patrol car, use of handcuffs, etc.)

## VI. CONTACT WITH VEHICLE OCCUPANTS

### A. Introduction

1. Courtesy and professionalism should be priorities for the officer during a vehicle pullover.
2. For most people, their only contact with law enforcement will occur during a vehicle pullover.

### B. Officer attitude

The officer's attitude can affect the reaction of the violator. The officer should:

1. make the approach in a businesslike manner.
2. employ effective verbal communication techniques. (e.g. make the greeting pleasant, briefly state the reason for stopping the violator, don't put the violator on the defensive by opening up with remarks such as, "Do you know there's a signal at Main Street?")

### C. Initial contact

Upon the initial contact, the officer should:

1. Greet the driver/occupant
2. Identify self
3. Briefly state the reason for the pullover
4. Ask if there is a legal reason for the violation
5. Request identification and registration.
6. Not accept a wallet or purse.
  - a. Have the driver/occupant remove the driver license from the wallet or purse.
  - b. When a person is asked for their driver license, sometimes they hand the officer their entire wallet or card holder. Courteously ask the person to remove the license and hand over only the license.
  - c. Refusing to accept the wallet or purse reduces the possibility of a later complaint that the officer took money, credit cards or other items.
7. Inform the driver/occupant of the action that will be taken.
8. After completing the citation, explain the citation and obtain the person's signature.



- a. A person will sometimes ask for a full explanation of the nature of their offense. Explain it to them as clearly and concisely as possible, but don't be drawn into an argument about the violation.
- b. The officer may or may not intend to cite for the violation observed, but if a citation is issued, the officer may wish to politely indicate that any recourse is a matter for the courts. It is inadvisable to engage in a debate on the matter of guilt.

D. Validity and authenticity of a driver license

1. It is important that an officer check both the validity and authenticity of a driver license for the following reasons:
  - a. To confirm that the driver is authorized to operate a specific type of motor vehicle
  - b. To enforce the provisions of the Vehicle Code which require possession of a valid driver license
  - c. To verify that the driver is complying with any restriction on the driver license
  - d. To confirm driver's identity so that the driver can be cited and released
2. The purpose of obtaining valid identification is to establish the identity of the individual.
  - a. An objective of field interviewing is to detect possible deception on the part of individuals.
    - (1) The officer may be presented with false forms of identification.
    - (2) It only takes a little time to properly check out an item of identification.
3. Officers must realize the importance of determining the validity of the information being presented.
4. Driver license
  - a. One of the most common forms of identification
  - b. Driver license form varies depending on the state of issue.
  - c. Officers should always check front and rear of the license for possible driving restrictions.
    - (1) In California, restrictions pertaining to corrective lenses are usually found on the front of a license. (Vehicle Code Section 14603)

- (2) Also in California, other restrictions are attached on the rear. (Vehicle Code Section 14603)
  - (3) License classifications, including required medical certificates, should be verified.
- d. In examining a license for alteration, the officer should check for any additions to the license.
- (1) A common alteration is the lamination of the license which the state doesn't allow. (Refer to Vehicle Code Section 12815)
  - (2) Lamination can hide a change of photograph, obliterate safety seal or disguise typed additions. Recent California driver licenses are holographic. (Refer to Vehicle Code Sections 12815 & 14610(h))
  - (3) Over the past several years, numerous modifications have been made to the driver license format; several forms of valid California driver licenses are still in circulation. When any doubt exists, ask for supportive identification.

NOTE: There are resource guides available to assist in license identification.

e. Temporary licenses

- 1. A temporary driver license is a valid form of identification and no other identification is required.
  - (a) However a temporary license is easily forged; therefore the officer might consider asking for other identification to supplement the information contained on it.
  - (b) Temporary licenses are easily obtained.
  - (c) People with suspended licenses or warrants keep applying for a temporary license to continue driving.
  - (d) A person can apply for a temporary license and use it immediately.
  - (e) If a temporary license is provided as I.D., it should be thoroughly checked out.

5. Other types of identification

a. Immigration identification

- (1) Aliens may have in their possession an alien registration card which contains the bearer's photograph and other information.

- (2) Information on the card may be out of date and should be verified with additional forms of identification.
- b. State of California identification card
  - (1) The State of California may issue an identification card to use as official identification.
  - (2) A persons may have both a driver's license and a state identification cards which will contain the same ID number.
  - (3) The card is issued through DMV. It has a similar appearance to the California driver license.
- c. Social security card
  - (1) Generally an unreliable form of I.D.
  - (2) It can be obtained by just applying for it.
    - (a) Some criminals have applied for dozens of them.
    - (b) Check passers use different ones to back up phony I.D. that they carry.
- d. Armed Forces identification cards
- e. Passports

NOTE: The above listed forms of identification are not all-inclusive and officers may encounter other types of documents which may provide satisfactory evidence of the person's identity.

- E. Considerations for writing citations, running warrant checks, etc.
  - 1. Officers should safely move to an appropriate location to write citations, run warrant checks, or complete similar tasks.
  - 2. Individual agency policies may suggest or prescribe appropriate locations.
    - a. Some agencies, for example, may discourage sitting inside a patrol vehicle to write a citation. This may be based upon the perception that this action may put the officer at a tactical disadvantage.
    - b. Returning to the patrol vehicle may be necessary, however, to access mobile data terminals (MDT), during incimate weather, or at times when minimal risk is perceived.
  - 3. Depending on the specific situation, officers should select a location which:
    - a. provides cover and/or concealment

- b. permits them to maintain visual contact with the target vehicle
- c. permits them to observe the occupants of the target vehicle.

F. Recontacting the violator

1. The officer should be cautious and not become complacent in their secondary approach to the target vehicle. The same principles discussed in the initial approach and contact apply when recontacting the driver.
2. The officer should be sure to return the driver's license and registration upon termination of the contact.
3. As appropriate, the officer should give the driver verbal instructions and assist the person to safely reenter the flow of traffic. (e.g. dimming the lights on the patrol vehicle so the driver has a clearer view of passing traffic)



## VII. HIGH RISK VEHICLE PULLOVERS

### A. Introduction

1. High-risk vehicle pullovers are conducted in any situation where officers:
  - a. Perceive danger due to the conduct of suspect(s).
  - b. Have advance knowledge from personal observation, information received through communications or other means which the officer may reasonably rely upon.
2. Individual agency policies may further describe criteria as to what constitutes a high-risk vehicle pullover.

### B. Officer safety considerations

1. Officers engaged in or conducting a high risk vehicle pullover may experience any or all of the following:
  - a. Excitement
  - b. Impatience
  - c. Confusion
  - d. Complacency
  - e. Fear
  - f. Anger
2. These problems can be overcome by
  - a. discussing hypothetical situations with your partner.
  - b. making a plan before stopping the vehicle.
  - c. applying teamwork/communication.
  - d. moving methodically -- not too fast.
  - e. improvising and adapting (remaining flexible).
  - f. exercising emotional restraint and self-control.

NOTE: Officers should remember that violators/suspects do not "go by the book."

### C. Principles of high-risk vehicle pullovers

1. Officers should not commit themselves to a high-risk vehicle pullover without sufficient personnel or equipment to perform the action effectively and safely.

- a. Make use of marked patrol vehicles to affect the pullover, if possible. This prevents recognition problems and provides better equipment available.
  - b. Officers should avoid being impatient.
    - (1) Time is generally on the officer's side; wait for assistance/back-up units.
    - (2) By having the additional personnel and using a good tactical system, officers have a tremendous psychological advantage over the suspects.
2. Direct the suspect(s) to come to the officer(s)
- a. No arrest is so important that the officers have to expose themselves to needless danger in a high-risk situation by approaching a vehicle with suspects still inside.
  - b. Use cover and concealment.
  - c. One officer with visual contact should give the directions to the suspect(s) individually to move to a position of observation and control and into a position of disadvantage. Officers should avoid taking their eyes off the suspect(s).
- D. High risk pullover techniques
1. Notify communications and follow until assistance/back-up is on scene.
- a. Give location, direction of travel and description of vehicle (and suspects).
  - b. Write license number and target vehicle description on a note pad.
  - c. Give the information on the charge the suspect is wanted for, and any known weapons.
  - d. Plan the pullover with cover units, partner and dispatcher.
2. General responsibilities of the primary officer initiating the pullover
- a. Prepare for the pullover
    - (1) Roll down patrol vehicle windows and unlock doors
    - (2) When practical and tactically sound, deploy shotgun
  - b. Properly position the patrol vehicle.
  - c. Employ appropriate lighting equipment
    - (1) Emergency lights

- (2) Headlamps
- (3) Spotlights
- (4) Alley lights
- (5) Flashlights
- d. Watch for movements inside the target vehicle.
- e. Take a proper position of cover/concealment
- f. Maintain firearm at the ready

NOTE: "At the ready" refers to how the weapon should be deployed according to academy training and the specific type of weapon involved (e.g., may imply drawn, pointed at the suspect(s), safety off, or other conditions)

- 3. General responsibilities of cover officer(s)
  - a. Placing the patrol car in a proper position to avoid silhouetting other officers with the patrol vehicle's headlights or other lighting equipment.
  - b. Taking and maintaining a proper position of cover/concealment
  - c. Maintaining their firearm at the ready
  - d. Communicating effectively with the primary officer
    - (1) Alerting the primary officer regarding any critical occurrences or officer safety issues (e.g., someone approaching from behind, movement inside the target vehicle, etc.)
    - (2) Avoiding inappropriate interruptions or giving directions which conflict with those of the primary officer
  - e. Maintaining visual contact with the suspect(s)

- 4. Directing the vehicle occupants
  - a. Use clear, audible, and direct commands

NOTE: The patrol vehicle's public address system may be employed, if appropriate.

- b. Identify self as a peace officer and direct the occupants not to move.
- c. Direct the suspect(s) to keep their hands in sight (e.g., against the windshield, outside the window, etc.)
- d. Direct the driver to turn off the engine and remove the keys from the ignition



NOTE: The driver should be given specific instructions as to what to do with the keys (e.g., place them atop the car). This may depend upon individual academy or agency practices.

- e. Direct the driver to return his/her hands to a position where they can be clearly observed.
5. Directing suspects out of the target vehicle
- a. Direct suspects out one at a time.
  - b. Direct suspects out slowly, having them keep their hands above their heads.
  - c. Visually check the suspect(s) for weapons.
  - d. Position suspect(s) one at a time. Consider the following:
    - (1) Having suspects assume a position of tactical disadvantage (e.g., prone or kneeling)
    - (2) Handcuffing suspects one at a time
    - (3) Searching all suspects thoroughly prior to placing them into a patrol vehicle

NOTE: Whether the suspects are directed back to the officer's position or whether the officer(s) advance to the suspect's position may be a matter of individual agency policies.

6. Clearing the vehicle
- a. Call out a bluff for someone hiding in the vehicle (e.g., "You, in the car, get out now!")
  - b. If appropriate, consider the use of a canine.
  - c. Approach in a low profile (crouch) position.
  - d. Feel for vibrations or movements inside the vehicle by placing hand on the trunk lid.
  - e. Use any available cover/concealment when approaching the target vehicle
  - f. Use the flashlight cautiously to illuminate the interior of the target vehicle.
  - g. After checking the vehicle interior, consider other areas of concealment.
7. Other tactical considerations
- a. If a suspect flees on foot, officers should consider the tactical considerations applicable to foot pursuits.

NOTE: It may be inadvisable to engage in a foot pursuit arising out of a high-risk vehicle pullover. Engaging in the foot pursuit may compromise the safety of the officers by causing them to cross into an unsafe (uncleared) area. Foot pursuits are discussed in greater detail in Instructor Unit Guide #21 (Patrol Techniques)

- b. Be aware of any cross fire situations.



## VIII. CONSIDERATIONS FOR PULLOVERS OF NONCONVENTIONAL VEHICLES

### A. Motorcycle pullovers

1. Motorcycle pullovers create additional tactical problems. Their maneuverability and speed and the vulnerability of the rider to injury if the motorcycle goes down as a result of the officer's action must all be considered.
2. The officer should pull in behind a motorcyclist as any other vehicle.
  - a. Problem of distance, don't follow too closely.
  - b. A motorcycle, as it pulls over, can slide or slip, especially going on to a road shoulder.
  - c. Remember, a motorcycle can pull away and can take to areas where a patrol vehicle can't go.
    - (1) Write down/radio in the license as soon as possible.
    - (2) Get a good I.D.
3. Once motorcycle is stopped, follow established procedures for citation, or in case of felony, search and arrest procedures.
4. Have the operator/rider shut off engine, remove keys, remove helmet, leaving it with the motorcycle, and step away from the motorcycle
5. Have the operator/rider move away from the motorcycle for the following reasons:
  - a. Potential for weapons on the motorcycle. (See DOJ Disguised Weapons Manual)
  - b. Officer/citizen safety
  - c. Vehicle mobility

### B. Camper and van stops

1. The van provides a unique set of circumstances for the officer because of the shape and concealment possibilities.
2. The pullover procedures may vary with a van as far as position, pullover, use of lights, etc.

NOTE: Traditional positioning (e.g. offsetting) will obscure an officer's view of the passenger's side door of a van.

3. The difference begins with the exit from the patrol vehicle. Because of concealment and officer vulnerability, extra caution is required regardless of reason for stop.

4. The removal of suspects from vans and campers varies considerably from passenger car procedures. The officers must become quickly aware of the vehicle's peculiarities (side doors, rear doors, curtains, tinted windows, etc.) in order to provide adequately for their safety.
5. The following examples are general guidelines for most van and camper pullovers.
  - a. Traffic enforcement pullovers:
    - (1) The patrol vehicle should, within reason, be stopped back far enough to afford officer(s) a view of all potential exits.
    - (2) The officer(s) may consider an approach to the vehicle or the removal of the driver based on the circumstances of the stop.
  - b. Investigative pullovers of campers and vans
    - (1) Investigative pullovers of campers and vans should be conducted with at least two officers present.
    - (2) The cover officer takes a position of cover as far forward and to the right as possible.
    - (3) In some cases the officers may remain behind the passenger door of the police vehicle. (i.e. cover not available)
    - (4) The primary officer directs the driver of the van to turn the ignition key off, leave the van, and bring the keys to the rear of the van.
    - (5) The primary officer directs the driver suspect to open the rear door of the van, and/or side door.
    - (6) The primary officer then directs the driver suspect to stand to the passenger side of the vehicle.
    - (7) While the primary officer is performing this task, the cover officer's main responsibility is to cover his/her partner and watch the passenger suspect(s).
    - (8) After the primary officer directs the driver suspect to stand to the passenger side of the vehicle, the cover officer takes on the added responsibility of watching suspect.
    - (9) The primary officer checks for other occupants, then directs the passengers out of the vehicle.
    - (10) The primary officer may move to the passenger side of the van during this procedure in order to achieve greater safety and to obtain a better position of observation.

- (11) If there were other suspects in the rear of the van, the remaining suspects should be removed one at a time by the primary officer, through either the rear or side door.
- (12) The primary officer then conducts the investigation.
- (13) Remember, an investigative pullover, such as this one or a traffic enforcement pullover, may escalate at any time into a high-risk arrest situation. Procedures outlined here may have to be changed at any time.

C. High-risk pullovers (vans and campers)

1. The procedures in removing suspects from a van or camper are different from procedures for removing suspects from a regular vehicle. As in other high risk stops, at least two officers should always be present.
2. In most van stops, the primary officer is in control of the stop at the beginning. The first suspect to be removed from the van is the driver suspect by the driver officer. (On some occasions, responsibility may switch to the cover officer).
3. The removal of the suspect driver should begin only after the van or camper is secured, which is done in the same manner as a regular vehicle, except the suspect driver is never told to throw the keys to the van out on the ground. The cover officer again should be behind the patrol vehicle door or behind available cover to the right/rear of the van.
4. The primary officer directs the van driver to hold the keys to the van and place both hands out the van driver's side window.
5. When the officer is satisfied that the keys are the only object in the suspect's hand, the officer directs the suspect to open his door via the outside handle and step from the van.
6. The suspect should be directed to exit the vehicle, extend suspect's arms over suspect's head, lock out their elbows and spread their fingers. The officer might ask the van driver how many other people there are in the van.
7. The driver should be told to close the door.
8. The van driver would be directed to the rear of the van and directed to open the rear doors of the van (if it has a rear door) and spread curtains, etc. that blocked observation into the van. (Be careful to maintain sight of the suspect's hands during this process.)
9. If the van or camper has a side door and no back door, the van driver would be directed to the rear of the van where the suspect would then be directed by the cover officer to open the side door and move curtains, etc.
10. On vans with side doors and no back door, the cover officer should remove all other suspects after the driver suspect has been secured.

11. When a van with a back door has been opened and the driver suspect properly secured, either officer may be responsible for removing the rest of the suspects depending on which officer has better visibility and control. The officer not removing suspects would guard. The other suspects in the van would be removed by either the rear or passenger door of the van, depending on their location in the van.
12. After all suspects have been removed from the van or camper, the officer(s) would clear (make sure the vehicle is empty) the vehicle.
13. The target vehicle should then be searched by one officer.

D. Bus pullovers

1. A bus presents significant tactical problems for several reasons:
  - a. Traffic enforcement pullovers of buses generally present a significant public relations problem with the passengers.
  - b. A bus pullover presents the same tactical problems in addition to concerns about the safety of the passengers.
  - c. Because of the size of the bus, the driver often cannot see the officer.
2. Pullover considerations for traffic enforcement pullovers of buses
  - a. The same basic concerns regarding positioning, use of light, horn, etc. apply to a traffic enforcement pullover of a bus. A safe stop location becomes a significant issue.
  - b. Approach the front bus door from the curb side.
  - c. Request the bus driver to set his brake, turn off the motor, and leave the vehicle.
  - d. In a situation where the officer may have to arrest the bus driver, (i.e. drunk)
    - (1) Contact communications, have them request bus organization or firm to send out new driver.
    - (2) Stay with bus until driver replacement arrives.
3. Pullover considerations for investigative pullovers of buses
  - a. At least two officers should be present.
  - b. The officers may consider an approach to the vehicle or the removal of the driver/occupants based on the individual circumstances of the stop.
4. Pullover considerations for high-risk pullovers of buses

- a. In high-risk bus pullovers, officers are faced with major concerns:
  - (1) The vulnerability of the patrol vehicle (versus size and weight of bus), and
  - (2) The sight advantage suspects have from the bus as the officer approaches.
- b. In pulling over a bus for a high risk stop, the officer will need support and backup.
- c. Direct suspects and passengers to exit the vehicle.
- d. After all visible occupants have exited the bus, search for any remaining suspects.

E. Semi-truck pullovers

- 1. In a semi-truck pullover, the officer is faced with a situation similar to that of a bus.
  - a. Vehicle size
  - b. Vehicle weight
  - c. The driver should not be routinely told to turn off ignition due to potential engine damage.

NOTE: Semi-truck should not be stopped on a grade as they cannot be restarted if loaded.

- 2. In addition, with a semi and trailer there is an problem of visibility.
- 3. Considerations for traffic enforcement pullovers of semi-trucks
  - a. The same basic considerations as to position, pullover technique, use of light, horn, etc., apply to traffic enforcement pullovers of semi-trucks.
  - b. Instruct the driver to leave the vehicle.
  - c. Officers should not climb up on the tractor
- 4. Investigation pullovers of semi-trucks
  - a. At least two officers should be present
  - b. The investigative pullover of a semi-truck presents two specific concerns:
    - (1) The vulnerability of the patrol vehicle in relation to the semi-truck (size and weight)
    - (2) The sight advantage suspects have of the officer's approach.



- c. Direct driver and passenger out of the semi-truck.
  - d. Check cab and sleeper area for additional suspects.
5. High-risk pullovers of semi-trucks
- a. Always use backup.
  - b. Use the patrol vehicle or other available cover for protection.
  - c. Have suspects individually exit the vehicle.
  - d. After all suspects are secured check the cab and sleeper for hidden suspects.

F. Motorhome pullovers

- 1. Motorhomes possess some of the unique features of both buses and semi-trucks.
- 2. Additionally, motorhomes pose problems of numerous exits, hiding places for suspects and weapons, suspect mobility from front to rear, curtains, etc.
- 3. Traffic enforcement pullovers of motorhomes
  - a. Basic pullover considerations (e.g., use of lights, horn, etc.) apply to pullovers of a motorhome.
  - b. Consideration should be given to increasing distance based on the vehicle's unique characteristics.
  - c. The officer(s) may consider an approach to the vehicle or the removal of the driver based on the circumstances of the stop.
- 4. Investigative pullovers should be conducted in the same manner as for vans.
- 5. High-risk pullovers of motorhomes should follow the same basic techniques as for high-risk van pullovers.

## IX. PHYSICAL SEARCHES OF VEHICLES

### A. General considerations for the physical searches of vehicles

1. Any physical search of a vehicle must be lawful. The particular circumstances of the pullover may limit the scope of the search.
2. The objective of the physical search of a vehicle is to locate any weapons, contraband or evidence which may be located therein.

NOTE: Specific information concerning the legal aspects of searching vehicles is addressed in Basic Course Instructor Unit Guide #16 (Search and Seizure)

3. Officers should be aware of specific personal safety hazards associated with physical searches of vehicles which include, but are not limited to:

- a. Edged weapons
- b. Sharps or other biological hazards (e.g. needles)
- c. Chemicals (e.g. drug lab material)
- d. Booby traps (e.g. explosives)

### B. Search techniques

1. A fundamental principle of physically searching a vehicle is to maintain control of the situation at all times.
  - a. Consider the use of assistance/back-up officer(s), if available.
  - b. It may be necessary to prevent interference by persons (witnesses, victims and the curious) or even other officers.
  - c. A key factor in maintaining control is the proper removal and control of suspects. This may necessitate an additional officer(s).
  - d. Never "relax". This may be the moment the suspect has waited for, and apparent relaxation may encourage the suspect to take some action which the suspect might otherwise fear to try.
  - e. Evidence must be secured and safeguarded for the prosecution and involved property may need to be preserved.
2. Initiate a systematic search of the entire vehicle
  - a. Plan the search
    - (1) Consider the nature of the area to be searched
    - (2) Consider the nature of the object(s) being sought. (i.e. contraband and weapons)

- b. Search systematically (e.g., start at the top and work down, work from the front to the rear, from the inside to the outside, etc.).
3. The extent of the physical search may be limited by a number of factors including, but not limited to:
  - a. The particular circumstances of the pullover
  - b. Time limitations
  - c. Legal restrictions

C. Searching specific areas

1. Searching the interior of the target vehicle.

Areas which may contain weapons and/or contraband include, but are not limited to:

- a. Glove compartment
- b. Under the dashboard (e.g., the maze of wiring under the dash board to see if anything is attached to it)
- c. Back of the ignition (e.g., to see if it is being operated properly or by some means of "jumper wiring.")
- d. Back of the rubber cover of the brake pedal, clutch pedal and accelerator pedal
- e. Under speaker covers
- f. Fire wall area, door panels and side kick panels. The sides of the kick panels are usually covered by cardboard or fiberboard which are fastened down by small clips or screws. Many items can be hidden in the lower portion of the doors.
- g. Air ducts of the ventilation system
- h. Ash trays. If there is anything in the ash trays, empty the contents on a sheet of paper. Many items can be hidden in the ashes.
- i. Steering column (for anything that may be taped to it)
- j. Cigarette lighter and the housing into which it fits.
- k. Knobs on the dashboard to determine if they might operate a hidden compartment located in the vehicle.
- l. Courtesy lights on the dash board or roof (especially if they do not light)
- m. Under the floor carpet and floor mat

- n. Both sides of the sun visors for anything that may be attached. Many items can be hidden between a mirror and the sun visors or registration and the sun visors. (checks, money, narcotics, etc.)
  - o. Floor under the front seat.
  - p. Underside of the front and rear seats for anything that might be attached
  - q. Check between the seat and the kick panel located on the right and left sides of the front seat.
  - r. Crevice area down between the seat cushion and the back of the seat.
  - s. Upholstery of both seats for any tears or seams that have been opened and resown.
  - t. Seat covers (making sure that nothing is concealed between the seat and the seat cover)
  - u. Surface of the door and window handles for anything that might be attached to them. (Narcotics may be hidden inside a handle)
  - v. Arm rests.
2. Searching the exterior of the target vehicle.

Areas which may contain weapons and/or contraband include, but are not limited to:

- a. Surface of front and rear fenders for anything that might be hidden or attached there.
- b. Behind the rear bumper and the rear license plate.
- c. Area where the neck of the gas tank is located.
- d. Area between the radiator and grill and lower portion of the hood.
- e. Engine compartment and motor accessories.
- f. All outside accessories that are false or "ornaments."
- g. Trunk (e.g., look inside spare tire coverings, boxes, bags, containers that are found in the trunk). Go through any clothing found in the trunk.
- h. Tail light assemblies
- i. Hub caps (for anything hidden behind them)
- j. Center post (to make certain that the center post is stationary)

- (1) Some burglars will remove the center post and weld it in position to the front or rear doors on the right side of vehicle.
  - (2) When the rear door is opened, the front door and center post open with it, providing ample room for loading stolen goods (e.g., televisions, safes, etc.).
- k. Any trash containers or litter bags found in the car, attached to the door, dashboard, etc.
- l. Any miscellaneous items found inside the vehicle.
- (1) If they are in a container, examine each as you remove it.
  - (2) Check all clothing found in vehicle, check books, blankets, etc.

**SUPPORTING MATERIAL**

**AND**

**REFERENCES**

This section is set up as reference information for use by training institutions. These materials can be used for instruction, remediation, additional reading, viewing, or for planning local blocks of instruction. This list is not an endorsement of any author, publisher, producer, or presentation. Each training institution should establish its own list of reference materials.

**TOPICAL LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS AND  
REFERENCES INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION**

Traffic Stop Problems.

## TRAFFIC STOP PROBLEMS

No one enjoys getting a traffic ticket, especially if the citation procedure takes longer than the violator anticipates. Varying degrees of verbal abuse by the violator may be anticipated. This can range from half-spoken mutterings about "there never being a copy around when you need one," or "why aren't you out looking up all the real criminals who are running loose," to questions regarding the legitimacy of your ancestry or even membership in the human race. By and large, you must realize that a certain amount of this "comes with the territory," and learn to ignore it. At the least, you must refrain from engaging in it yourself.

Never make any remarks or use any language that would ridicule, belittle, or embarrass the violator. You can satisfy your own ego later by detailing the violator's shortcoming to your partner or fellow officers. Absolutely nothing will be gained by getting into a name-calling contest in the street. There is much to be lost, however, and that includes not only your professional image but future cooperation from the violator, and probably from anyone else who hears of it either first or second-hand. It could often result in the initiation of a personnel complaint. Do not become personally involved in the issuance of the citation; you are just doing your job.

Sometimes a violator will take the opportunity to let you know of his/her importance or political connections. . . "Officer, I'm sorry if I seem in a hurry, but I'm late for a luncheon appointment with the mayor. . . ." Obviously, this isn't going to influence you in favor of the violator, but do be courteous enough to listen. He/she may have something to say which would constitute a valid reason for his/her actions, and in your mind, justify his/her release without issuance of a citation. This, of course, depends on all the circumstances and your judgment of them.

Often the violator wants to know how much a ticket will cost him/her actions, and in your mind, justify his/her release without issuance of a citation. This, of course depends on all the circumstances and your judgment of them.

Often the violator wants to know how much a ticket will cost him/her. Usually this is an innocent and natural concern arising from the realization that what he/she has done is going to separate him/her from some of his/her money. Sometimes, however, the violator will have been raised in another section of the country where it might have been possible that some officer was known to be "in business for himself/herself." The whole uncomfortable business of deciding whether to arrest someone for attempting to bribe an officer or to chalk it up to his ignorance can be avoided by handling questions regarding the amount of bail in the approved manner. The facts are that you don't know how much bail may be. You have a pretty good idea, probably, if everything is as it appears, but only the clerk of the court in which the violation is to appear knows the exact amount, and the violator should be advised that he must appear to find out. Don't advise him/her to call the Traffic Violations Bureau. Don't advise him/her on the policies of the court, of the DMV, or of the Traffic Violations Bureau. Don't recommend handling it by mail or through a service organization such as the Automobile Club.

Answer any proper questions to the best of your ability, but don't be placed in the position of advisor and don't offer unsolicited explanations of the theory of the law or its enforcement (people have a "traditional" right to expect either a lecture or a ticket, not both). The one exception to the matter of advising is in the meaning of signing the ticket. For an adult, you should briefly explain that signing doesn't constitute an admission of guilt but is merely a promise to appear at the designated place on or before the date and time you've indicated. For juveniles who are, in all other respects, treated the same as adults, the advice should include mention whether or not he/she is to bring one of his/her parents or legal guardian.



Earlier we mentioned the need to maintain as favorable an image as possible under the circumstances. This is important enough to warrant further comment. Traffic citations constitute the only contact with police that most people have. And, as mentioned, this is usually not a favorable basis for contact in the mind of the citizen. Since this same majority of the community is so important to us in terms of cooperation and support, the value of a courteous, professional approach to the situation on our part should be obvious. The law has been violated by the person you're dealing with, but he's/she's not "it" in some sort of game to be played by police on one side and the rest of the world on the other, and nothing you do or say should risk making him/her feel that you think he/she is.

The whole purpose of traffic law enforcement is the protection of the citizens - including the violator - from the harmful results of bad driving practices. It's not a matter of conveying the impression that, "I'm doing this for your own good." The future cooperation of all citizens, again including the one you cite, is absolutely essential if accidents are going to be reduced. Part of the way this cooperation can be achieved is by having the citizens respect the law and the department. so, any contact you have with citizens, including issuance of traffic citations, must leave them with no basis for complaint to you, the department, or the people they contact socially.

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ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

POST Video Catalog, 1993, 1601 Alhambra Blvd., Sacramento, CA, 95816, (916) 227-4856.