



# LAW ENFORCEMENT **INTERACTION GUIDELINES**

As part of our efforts to facilitate safety in the city of Columbia, it occasionally becomes necessary for police officers to stop members of the public and ask for information. Being stopped by an officer does not mean you are a suspect of a crime.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN STOPPED BY AN OFFICER?**

The Columbia Police Department's highest priority is safety. A key element in this effort is to give you guidelines on how to effectively communicate and interact with members of CPD. This information is being provided to increase your understanding of how to respond if you are stopped by an officer.

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Columbia Police Department  
1 Justice Square, Columbia, SC 29201  
803-545-3500 • [www.ColumbiaPD.net](http://www.ColumbiaPD.net)

# IF YOU ARE STOPPED IN A VEHICLE:

- Slow down; safely pull over as soon as you can.
- Stay in the driver's seat with both hands in sight on the steering wheel. **Only exit the vehicle if you are asked to do so.**
- Comply with the officer's request to see your driver's license and registration.
- If the officer believes a crime has been committed your car can be searched without a court-issued warrant.
- Answer all questions pertaining to your identity.
- Remember, you are not required to give testimony against yourself. You do have a right to remain silent.
- Do not argue or walk away from law enforcement officials.
- If an officer has a "reasonable suspicion" that you may be carrying a weapon or illegal substance, you may be subjected to a "pat-down" search. Do not resist the search. This does not mean you are under arrest.

## OFFICER CONDUCT AND YOUR RESPONSE

- Do not, resist arrest for any reason.
- Keep your emotions under control.
- Do not make threatening motions or statements to the officers talking to you.
- Never attempt to interfere with the arrest of others who may be with you.
- Always note the name of the officers with whom you come into contact.
- Record, document and report officer misconduct immediately.

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To file a complaint on an officer, contact the Columbia Police Department Office of Professional Standards at 803-545-3655 or visit [www.ColumbiaPD.net](http://www.ColumbiaPD.net).