



TRAFFIC STOPS

What To Do If You're Stopped By A Police Officer

OFFICER SAFETY

Most citizens already realize that law enforcement is a difficult and dangerous profession. Hundreds of police officers are killed each year, and thousands more are injured and assaulted. For these reasons, police officers tend to be extremely cautious. They place a great deal of emphasis on officer safety and survival. Certain safety practices are instilled in our officers from the first day of their careers. Although the procedures maximize safety for the officer, they may seem standoffish, impolite or offensive to citizens who may not consider such precautions necessary with "them".

Even though you have no intention of doing the officer harm, he/she will probably maintain a defensive posture until the officer feels that there is no risk of confrontation or injury. As far as police officers are concerned, there is no such thing as a "routine" traffic stop. Each stop has the potential for danger.

IN ALL POLICE ENCOUNTERS

There are times when citizens who have contact with the police come away with feelings of frustration. The Corning Police Department does not condone police misconduct of any type. In our experience, we have learned that many of those negative feelings are often a result of not knowing the reason(s) an officer has made certain requests or acted in a certain manner. Unfortunately, demands on a patrol officer do not always permit time for explanations at the time you are stopped. Hopefully, the information presented here will give you an understanding of police procedures and let you know what to expect from a police officer if you are stopped.

Questions/Compliments/Complaints

If you have a question about procedures or a complaint about your treatment, contact the Corning Police Department and ask to speak with a supervisor. You may also send a letter of compliment if you feel the officer was particularly helpful in your situation.

How to Contact the Corning Police Department

Mailing Address:

Corning Police Department
500 Civic Center Plaza
Corning, New York 14830

Emergency calls dial:

911

Non Emergency calls dial:

(607) 962-0340 Ext. 1500

WHY DO THE POLICE STOP PEOPLE?

There are many different reasons why you might be stopped by the police. Whatever the reason, the officer needs your cooperation.

- You may have committed a traffic violation.
- There may be a problem with your vehicle, (a headlight out, loud muffler, etc.).
- You may fit the description of a suspect the police are searching for.
- The officer might think you are in trouble and need help.
- You may have witnessed a crime.

If you are stopped by the police while driving, you may feel confused, anxious, or even angry. These are natural feelings, but remember, traffic stops can also be stressful and dangerous for the police officer. Each year, a number of law enforcement officers are killed or seriously injured while making the “routine traffic stop.” Police officers are especially vulnerable during the hours of darkness.

With this in mind, there are things that you, as a law-abiding citizen, can do to help lessen the unpleasantness of the experience.

REMEMBER:

In all cases, a citizen is required to cooperate with the police.



If you are stopped by the police: remember:

1. A police officer may pull you over at any time for a traffic offense or police investigation.
2. When you see the red overhead lights and/or hear the siren, remain calm and safely pull over parallel to the right side of the road.
3. Remain in your vehicle unless the officer advises otherwise.
4. Keep your hands on the steering wheel so the officer can see them.
5. Avoid any sudden movements, especially toward the floorboard, rear seat, or passenger side of the vehicle.
6. Do not immediately reach for your license or other documents until the officer requests them. NYS Law requires drivers to show their license, registration, and insurance card upon request.
7. If your documents are out of reach, tell the officer where they are before you reach for them.

8. If the stop occurs during darkness put on your dome or interior lights so the officer can easily see that all is in order.
9. If there are passengers in your vehicle, encourage them to remain quiet and cooperate with instructions. You, as the operator, are solely responsible for your vehicle and occupants.
10. The officer may issue you a ticket. If you feel the reason is vague or unclear, ask the officer for details.
11. Avoid being argumentative. Arguing will not change the officer's mind. If you contest the violation, you will have an opportunity to address the matter in Court.
12. Be honest with the officer. If you really didn't see the stop sign, or were unaware of the speed limit, let the officer know. Being honest about any situation never hurts.
13. The Corning Police Department uses one-man patrol cars. It is normal to see two or three marked units on a routine traffic stop.
14. Finally, if you receive a ticket, accept it calmly. Accepting the ticket is not an admission of guilt.

NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law requires that all drivers shall yield the right of way to emergency vehicles. Drivers are to immediately pull over parallel to the right hand side of the road, stop and remain in the stopped position until the emergency vehicle has passed.