

Kent County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) Traffic Stops : What You Can Expect

Getting pulled over by a Deputy can be a stressful and uncomfortable experience, especially if you have never been pulled over before. This information is designed to familiarize you with what to expect during a traffic stop from a Kent County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) Deputy

The primary reason for being pulled over is for your safety and the safety of others. Through driver education and enforcement, our mission is to keep you, your friends, and your loved ones safe on Kent County highways.

The KCSO has focused on five major areas that traffic accident studies have shown can reduce collisions, prevent injuries, and save lives. These areas are:

- Aggressive Driving
- Texting or talking on cellular phones
- Speeding
- Seat Belts
- DUI (driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol)

While there are many other moving violations, these five major areas significantly impact public safety.

Deputies carry out the office's primary goal of providing a safe motoring environment for the public. They are responsible for enforcing traffic laws, investigating collisions, and assisting motorists on the highways in Kent County.

We hope this information will help you feel comfortable with the contact you have with the Deputy. Please remember that the number one goal is to make sure you and your loved ones are safe on our highways.

What You Can Expect From the KCSO:

- That the Deputy is courteous and professional and will treat you in a respectful manner.
- That you will receive an explanation of why you were stopped.
- That your safety is ensured while in contact with the Deputy and that he or she will assist you in getting back on the highway safely.
- If you are issued a citation, a warning or a Safety Equipment Repair Order (SERO) that it will be explained to you as well as your options for resolving it.

If You Are Stopped By A KCSO Deputy:

As soon as you notice the emergency lights, pull your vehicle safely over to the right and stop when it is safe.

- Although you might not know the reason, you should pull over right away.
- There may be some problem with your vehicle of which you are unaware.

Remain in your vehicle while the Deputy approaches.

- Do not attempt to get out of your vehicle or approach the Deputy.
- Exiting your vehicle does not assist the Deputy and may be perceived as a threat to him or her
- For the Deputy's safety and yours, please remain in your vehicle.

Turn on your interior light if stopped at night.

- A lit vehicle will reduce the Deputy's concern regarding weapons or other possible threats within your reach.

Keep your hands easily observable, preferably on the steering wheel where they can be easily seen by the approaching Deputy.

- Reaching under your seat or into your glove box are actions that will cause the Deputy concern that you may be reaching for a weapon.

Give your license, registration to the Deputy if asked to do so.

- Maryland Law requires a driver to turn over this information upon request by a uniformed Deputy or a Deputy in plain clothes who displays proper identification.

Answer all questions honestly and be respectful.

Touching or threatening a Deputy or acting in a disorderly manner could result in the filing of additional charges against you and you may be arrested.

- If the Deputy asks you to step out of your vehicle, do so without any sudden or threatening movements.
- Give the Deputy approximately 3-5 feet of "personal" space as a safety zone to do his or her job.
- Remain in your vehicle at all times unless told to do otherwise.
- Do not become argumentative, disorderly, or abusive. If you believe that you have been unfairly treated, DO NOT argue with the Deputy on the side of the road. Your best alternative is to go to trial at the District Court where the judge will determine the merits of the traffic stop.
- You will find information on the reverse side of your citation that will explain how to pay the fine or request a trial date.
- In some cases, the Deputy may ask you for your consent to search your vehicle. You have the right to refuse a consent search.

Safety Is Our Concern: Don't Be Offended:

Most citizens already realize that law enforcement is a difficult and dangerous profession. Scores of law enforcement officers are killed each year, and hundreds more are injured and assaulted. For these reasons, law enforcement officers are trained to be extremely cautious. They place a great deal of emphasis on their safety and survival. Certain safety practices are instilled in our Deputies from their first day on the job.

Although the procedures maximize safety for the Deputy, they may seem stern, impolite, or offensive to citizens who may not consider such precautions necessary with "them." Even though you may have no intention of doing the Deputy harm, he or she will probably maintain a defensive posture until the he or she feels that there is no risk of confrontation or injury. As far as Deputies are concerned, there is no such thing as a "routine" traffic stop. Every stop has the potential for danger.

Treating Citizens With Respect:

KCSO Deputies are trained in keeping our communities safe and enhancing the quality of life for everyone in Kent County. They are taught to be respectful, professional, and courteous in all traffic stops and encounters with the public in general.

If you feel a Deputy has acted inappropriately, we want to know. Please contact the KCSO at 410-778-2279 or stop by our office which is located at 104 Vicker's Drive, Unit B in Chestertown, Maryland and tell us of your concerns, or you can visit our web page, (sheriff.kentcounty.com) for information regarding how to file a complaint. You have the right to file a complaint. You will be contacted; your complaint will be investigated and you will be notified in writing by Sheriff Price the outcome of the investigation.

Please note: A disagreement over the validity of a traffic infraction or criminal citation is not a complaint. Such disagreements should be directed to the proper court having jurisdiction in the matter.

"The Kent County Sheriff's Office strives to make a difference every day, enhancing the safety and security of our state by providing the best in law enforcement services."