

# UW Whitewater Police



## Traffic Stops – Stopping/Approaching

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### I. Purpose

The purpose of this general order is to establish procedures for stopping and approaching vehicles on traffic stops, including unknown and high-risk stops.

### II. Policy

It is the policy of the UW-Whitewater Police Department (UWWPD) that the procedures outlined in this general order will be followed when conducting traffic stops and contacting motorists for either violations or community caretaker reasons. This policy is just a summary and Officers should follow procedures set in the Vehicle Contacts training set by the WI Law Enforcement Standards Board. All sworn staff receive training in the police academy and updates by trained state instructors at in-service training.

### III. Procedure

#### A. Safety Considerations When Initiating a Stop/Making Contact

1. Officer safety shall be a primary consideration when making any vehicle stop/contact.
  - a. Officers should attempt to initiate a stop in a location that does not endanger the officer or motorist.
  - b. Conditions to avoid include roadway factors, such as hills, curves, and intersections; environmental factors, such as ice or fog; or subject factors, such as the presence of persons who might interfere in the stop.
  - c. Officers should be aware of their location and immediate surroundings should it be necessary to seek cover during the stop.
2. Officers shall advise dispatch of the vehicle's registration number and state and the location of the stop prior to, or immediately upon initiating, the vehicle contact. In the absence of registration plates or in addition, the officer may provide a thorough description of the vehicle using CYMBOL (Color, Year, Make, Body Style, Occupants, License)
3. Authorized red and blue emergency lighting shall be used to initiate a stop and shall remain in use until the stop is complete (except during SFSTs). In addition, a siren

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may be used to notify the driver and is required to prove failure to yield or failure to obey officers.

4. Officers may utilize the offset, angle left, or in-line squad position depending on the circumstances of the contact. Each has pros and cons for the officer to decide which is the best for each type of contact.
5. Officers should continue to evaluate circumstances during the contact and may request backup at any time during the contact when the officer believes it is warranted.

## B. Approach Procedures

1. Avoid being silhouetted by your squad's headlights, minimize your use of your flashlight, minimize noise, check the trunk, and look inside the vehicle.
2. Check the rear of the vehicle, trunk, windows, rear quarter panel, backseat, and front door post.
3. The officer may position themselves at the 2 ½ position to utilize the vehicle's pillar as cover.
4. If possible, consider a passenger-side approach to the vehicle.
5. As another option, officers are trained in a Non-Approach Contact in which the officer calls the person out of the vehicle and back to their squad car. This can be done because of the number of people in the car, the possibility of a weapon inside of the car, and known subject factors. The officer can also switch to a Non-Approach option at any time during the stop when factors dictate such as an approach contact is initiated but a firearm is seen in the back seat of the vehicle.
6. Officers may have to alter their approach for special vehicles such as motorcycles, mopeds, ATVs, UTVs, or large vehicles.
7. The officer will continue a threat assessment from the time they decide to initiate the traffic stop to the time the contact is ended.

## C. Procedures for Contact with Traffic Violators/Offending Motorists

1. Be cognizant of subject stress factors.
2. Be sure you can see the subject's hands. Do not hesitate to insist that the subject keep their hands visible.
3. During traffic contacts, officers shall conduct themselves in a courteous, business-like manner treating offenders and citizens with respect.
4. Upon making contact, the officer shall identify themselves and the Department. The officer should request the driver's license, explain the reason for the contact, and should then attempt to gather the driver's reason for committing the violation.
5. The officer will also be aware of special driver circumstances, such as hearing impaired, elderly, cognitive issues, or other factors.
6. After issuing a warning, traffic school, or citation, the officer may explain why a course of enforcement action is being taken, the elements of the offense, if requested, the consequences of the enforcement action, if any, and any applicable paperwork.

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## D. High/Unknown Risk Stops:

1. Due to the unpredictable nature of high-risk traffic stop these stops should be conducted with threat assessment and officer safety as the highest priority. Some of the items that could lead to a stop becoming a high-risk stop are as follows:
  - a. Nature of the offense
  - b. Occupants with warrants for violent offenses
  - c. Pursuits
  - d. Occupant with a violent history

## E. How to initiate a high-risk vehicle contact

1. Officer should advise Dispatch and other units of the need for a high-risk traffic stop and request additional units.
  - a. Officer should delay in starting the traffic contact until after the additional units and a desirable location is reached, if possible
2. Officers should coordinate with other responding officers on contact
3. Officer should make the traffic stop and position the vehicle properly
  - a. Officers are trained in the 2023 DOJ method of vehicle position, however, if assisting other agencies some departments may be using the “legacy model” of high-risk vehicle contacts.

4. [REDACTED]

## F. How to call occupants back to officers

1. Officers should follow DOJ Training on calling people back when possible
2. [REDACTED]

## G. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

- H. For procedures of traffic stops that include operation of a vehicle by a driver under the influence, refer to General Order 61.1.10.