

# Georgia Department of Public Safety Policy Manual

<b>SUBJECT</b> <b>TRAFFIC STOPS</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER</b> <b>11.03</b>
<b>DISTRIBUTION</b> <b>SWORN EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>DATE REVISED</b> <b>3/4/2011</b>

## 11.03.1 Purpose

To establish proper procedures to be utilized by sworn members of the Georgia Department of Public Safety in the performance of their duties while conducting a traffic stop.

## 11.03.2 Policy

It shall be the policy of the Georgia Department of Public Safety to train and require sworn members to adhere to the guidelines set forth in this policy in order to ensure safety and uniformity when stopping and approaching persons who have committed violations.

## 11.03.3 Procedures

- A. A member shall have a legitimate basis to affect a traffic stop (e.g. probable cause, articulable suspicion, or other public safety interests). In conducting the stop, members shall take every reasonable precaution to manage the risk to themselves and others. In the interest of safety, members may direct the individual to another location prior to taking action.
- B. On all traffic stops, members shall advise the Troop Communication Center via radio or Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) of their location (including county if via radio), the license plate number and description of the vehicle, unless exigent circumstances exist. The radio shall be used for emergency traffic only (e.g. vehicle stops, calls for assistance, immediate BOLO information). The radio shall not be used for routine traffic (e.g. going in/out of service, clearing vehicle stops, etc.).
- C. Members may use the public address system as deemed necessary when a clear threat exists to the member or the public.
- D. Contact with the vehicle occupants shall be done in the safest and most appropriate manner.
  1. Whenever possible, the patrol vehicle shall be parked to the rear of the violator's vehicle and positioned so as to afford the greatest degree of protection to the member and the motorist. At night, the patrol vehicle should be positioned to utilize the take down lights to illuminate the violator's vehicle and its occupants.
    - a. The member shall have the option of asking the driver to remain in the vehicle or step from the vehicle to a place where the reason for the stop can be discussed in reasonable safety.

- b. Unless the member deems otherwise necessary, all occupants shall be asked politely to remain in the vehicle, while the member is conducting the stop.
2. Members shall greet the driver in a professional manner.
3. Members shall identify themselves by using their name and rank.
4. The member shall ask the driver for their driver's license and other appropriate documents. Members shall not accept a wallet, purse, case, holder, etc. The license shall be removed from any container by the violator.
5. The driver shall be politely informed of the reason for being stopped.
6. With the exception of a felony/high risk traffic stop members shall:
  - a. Take appropriate enforcement action;
  - b. Explain all the procedures that the subject should follow in order to bring the matter to a conclusion;
  - c. Strive to leave the subject with the impression that the member has performed a necessary task and conducted it in a professional manner, and
  - d. Courteously attempt to favorably alter the subject's future driving behavior.

#### E. Felony/High Risk Traffic Stops

Traffic stops constitute a significant and persistent danger for law enforcement officers. Felony/High Risk vehicle stops may pose an even greater hazard. During such stops, members shall employ caution and should observe the following procedures in order to maintain control of the situation and to avoid subjecting themselves or others to unnecessary danger.

When conducting felony/high risk stops members shall apply training received and generally should:

1. Advise the Communications Center, pursuant to the provisions of paragraph B above.
2. Ensure the stop is made in a controlled manner with backup officers present.
3. If within the member's control, conduct the stop at a location that would pose the least amount of threat to members of the public.
4. Order the offending driver to shut off the ignition switch, turn on the interior lights if dark outside, roll the driver's window down and place the keys outside the vehicle away from all occupants.
5. Order the offender(s) to slowly exit the vehicle one at a time from the driver's side door and make a complete 360-degree turn with their hands in the air to enable a cursory weapons check.

- a. If a weapon is spotted, advise all other officers and tell the offender that it is seen.
  - b. Do not attempt to retrieve it at this time.
6. Have the offender face away from the officers and walk backwards toward the patrol vehicle with hands in the air, and then lie on the ground "spread eagle" position face down.
7. Allow the backup officers to take the occupant into custody, secure, and then search them. At this point, any weapons shall be removed and secured. This shall be repeated each time an occupant is brought back from the vehicle.
8. Provide cover while the backup officer checks the vehicle for hidden occupants.